**Is the Pope from God?**

**Introduction:**

People are fascinated by the Pope, the pageantry surrounding him, the secrecy, the power, the wealth. But what does God think of the Pope, the papacy in general, and the entire Roman Catholic Church? Let’s open the Bible and also look at history to determine whether the Pope and the Catholic Church are from God.

**Body:**

1. **Was Peter the Rock?**

* Catholics turn to Matthew 16:18 to claim that Peter was the rock upon which the universal church was to be built and that he was therefore the first Pope. “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” NKJV
* In this text, the Holy Spirit referred to Peter using the Greek word “petros”: a stone which can be easily moved. The Greek word translated “rock” is “petra” which describes a solid mass or ledge of rock. This rock is not referring to Peter himself, but rather to the statement he had just made. Matthew 16:16-17 “Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’ ” NKJV
* Many verses in both the Old Testament and the New Testament refer to Jesus, the Messiah, as the rock. Isaiah 28:16 is quoted in Romans 9:33 “As it is written: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’” NKJV and I Peter 2:4-8. “Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’ Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,’ and ‘A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.’” NKJV These all say that the rock is Christ! Also twice in I Corinthians Paul explains that the rock, the foundation, is Christ. I Corinthians 3:11 “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” NKJV I Corinthians 10:4 “and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” NKJV
* So it is crystal clear that Peter was not the rock upon which the church was to be built, but rather what he stated about Jesus being the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

1. **Was Peter the Chief Apostle?**

* The claim is made that since Peter is always named first in the list of the apostles that this signifies that he was the chief apostle and was given preeminence. Note I Corinthians 3:21-22 “Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world of life or death, or things present or things to come – all are yours.” and I Corinthians 9:5. “Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?” NKJV
* The apostle Paul said he was not inferior to the other apostles. II Corinthians 11:5 “For I consider that I am not at all inferior to all the most eminent apostles.” NKJV
* Also, Peter refused for anyone to bow down to him. Acts10:25-26 “As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I myself am also a man.’ ” NKJV
* Peter was even rebuked by Paul. Galatians 2:11-14 “Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, ‘If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?’ ” NKJV

1. **Was Peter the Only One Given the Keys to the Kingdom?**

* First note Matthew 18:18. “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. NKJV Jesus repeats what He said in Mathew 16:19 “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” and applies it to all the apostles. Matthew 18:1 “At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, ‘Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ ” NKJV
* When the church was established, all the apostles spoke to the assembly and used the keys to open up the Kingdom. Acts 2:14, 37 “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.’ 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ ” NKJV

1. **Was Peter the First Pope?**

* Catholic doctrine teaches that Peter was the Bishop of Rome and therefore the Pope. Being the Pope he was also head of the entire church. A successor would be required at the death of each Pope.
* When Christ established His church, He never taught that a single bishop [elder, pastor] was to be over a church or group of churches. Nowhere in the New Testament is this allowed or authorized. Rather a group of men [two or more] were to head each congregation. See Titus 1:5, 7. “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you – 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money.” NKJV Acts 20:28 “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” NKJV Acts 14:21-23 “And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” NKJV

**Conclusion:** We have seen from examining Scripture that there is no support for the office of Pope nor was Peter ever a Pope. This teaching is clearly a man-made doctrine with no approval from God whatsoever. Bobby Stafford September 17, 2017