

THE VATICANUS, CEMETERY IN ROME WHERE PETER IS SUPPOSEDLY BURIED

There is a Catholic myth that Jesus founded the papacy and chose Peter as the first pope. Peter supposedly went to Rome and that is why the bishop of Rome is his successor and the head of the Church. Evidencing this is impossible. The evidence is against it. One attempt to show it is true is arguing Peter is buried in Rome.

There is supposed to be a Peter buried in the Vaticanus cemetery under St Peter's basilica. This Peter buried in this cemetery, of all places, could NOT be the Apostle Peter. In the first place, Peter was a Jew, and they had to be buried in their own cemeteries. This is quite a big step from not even being able to eat with gentiles to be buried in the special cemeteries reserved for the chief pagans and self-proclaimed Gods or "Patrons". And even if by a happen-chance a Jew could be buried in a Roman cemetery, it is most unlikely that a Jew -- especially one who attacked the Roman religion as the Apostle Peter did -- would ever have been allowed into the most holy of pagan cemeteries! This cemetery was reserved for prophets, soothsayers and the great ones of pagan Rome. I personally think that the apostle Peter would not be caught dead in a pagan cemetery.

If this Peter buried in Rome is the Peter of the New Testament, then when he had struggled with prejudices against Christian Gentiles so that even Paul had to tell him off publicly then it is true that he would not have been allowed to have been buried in a pagan cemetery. Even Paul wouldn't approve of such a burial. And the Church cannot offer any evidence that if there is a Peter buried in the tomb that it says is Peter that it is the apostle. Some Catholic scholars noting that Paul said that the Peter he met in Jerusalem seemed to be one of the heads but he didn't care who he was and noting that Jesus said Peter was the rock he would build his Church one hold that there was more than one Peter in a leadership role in the Church. If there were two then why not three or more?

The well-known tradition of Peter being crucified upside down dates from the end of the second century. Now this was almost 150 years after his death. Had Peter died in Rome that way, we would not have the tradition appearing so late! Clement of Rome would have mentioned it in the letter attributed to him. The Clement Letter calls Peter and Paul martyrs but martyrs just means people who testified to the faith not those who died for it. It only came to mean people who gave their lives for their faith later so for all we know, Peter could have died in his bed in Jerusalem (Scottish Journal of Theology, Michael D. Goulder, Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies, University of Birmingham, 2004). The Clement letter gives names of people, including Peter and Paul, who suffered because of jealousy as examples. Not all in the list were those who died because of jealousy. Clement is supposed to be the third bishop of Rome and the third pope though the letter doesn't say who or what he is or even mention that Clement wrote it (page 34, St Peter and Rome). He was probably just a secretary for the Church in Rome. The letter was sent by the Roman Church and not any individual who can be called a pope! Roman Catholicism lies when it says Pope Clement wrote this letter and it shows his authority over other Churches.

The Clementine Homilies and Recognitions say that the apostle James in Jerusalem is bishop of bishops and Lord of bishops of the Church of Jerusalem and the Church everywhere - which denies that Peter was pope. It was James (page 36, St Peter and Rome). Read them online.

The early Christian evidence from believers who hated St Paul indicate an explanation for the legend about Peter being in Rome. Paul was in Rome. The believers hated him and condemned him under the name of Simon Magus. They produced writings to condemn him. The Simon Magus name was used instead of his real name to avoid their writings being destroyed by the believers who accepted Paul as a true apostle and prophet of Jesus Christ. The result was stories about Peter battling with the heretic Simon Magus in Rome and overcoming his teaching and doing better miracles than his. Simon dies as a result of a miracle going wrong. Paul isn't mentioned at all. Clearly Simon Magus was Paul though stories and legends about the real Simon Magus were mixed into the accounts. The motive for such lies was that since Paul was in Rome, the anti-Pauls had to invent the idea of Peter going there to destroy his work.

Liberal Catholic theologians may say that even if Peter was never bishop of Rome or head of the Church he still should have been looked up to by the Church as pope and they will say that the papacy developed over time. They will say God developed it this way. And they say that we know he did so for the papacy is needed and the true Church accepts it and the true Church cannot err when it intends to be infallible.

The pope then is successor of Peter not because Peter was bishop of Rome but because God worked on Rome to make it lead the Church. Any city would have done but God chose Rome. This scheme gets around the uncomfortable fact that there were no bishops as such when Peter was alive.

This view means that even if Peter never was a bishop anywhere or was never in Rome the Church can conclude that it was God that chose the bishop of Rome to take his place and it was not Peter who did that. The view is nonsense for God could have wanted the Church run by a council of Twelve bishops or something rather than a pope.

And the papacy being good for the Church is certainly a matter of opinion! Think today how the papacy has managed to be the best friend the AIDS virus ever had through its banning of condoms and manipulating governments and health agencies to keep condoms from the poor who really need them. The Church has erred for it says God can forgive sins when the sins are repented simply because the sinner wants to avoid the fires of Hell. So it is the punishment that is hated not the sin. Infallibility cannot give a justification for belief in the papacy as a divine institution. If the way these liberals say God worked out the succession from Peter is plausible, then why did he let there be two popes, one fake and the other true, when neither side knew who the real pope was? Face it liberals. If you admit that Peter was never bishop of Rome and in Rome then admit that the papacy is a godless addition to the faith and a man-made production.

