

## THE POPE AS VICAR OF CHRIST?

The apostle Peter, the alleged first pope, supposedly wrote 2 Peter in the Bible. This crazy letter says extraordinary things about the Bible. It stated that even though Peter actually heard the voice of God when Jesus was transfigured that this voice was not as certain as what God said and predicted in the Old Testament. This indicates that the evidence for Jesus Christ should be gleaned from the Old Testament and that even the apostles should not be believed when they testify that Jesus rose unless it can be determined that the Old Testament God forecasted it. Jesus himself according to Luke 16:31 reasoned that if the Old Testament says something it is right and even a resurrection miracle has less credibility. He stated that if people don't believe in the Old Testament they will not be persuaded even if they see a man rising from the dead to warn them. This is a deadly sanction for rabid fundamentalism. It has spilled so much blood in the world.

When the Old Testament is more sure than even the direct voice of God that means that the Old Testament words must be literally the words of God as fundamentalists believe – the Old Testament is verbally inspired.

The pope claims to succeed Peter. A real successor of Peter would uphold his legacy of fundamentalism.

The pope is seen as the earthly head of the true Church. Secular society sees him as just the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Roman Catholic doctrine says that the apostle Peter was the first pope. Peter was the first bishop of Rome and so the man who becomes bishop of Rome becomes pope and head of the Church as he succeeds Peter. The fact that an ossuary has been found on the Mount of Olives bearing Peter's name Simon Bar Jonah does not faze the Catholic Church. Peter indeed was probably never bishop of Rome and died and was buried in Jerusalem.

The pope claims to be the successor of St Peter the apostle on whom Christ built the one true Church, the Roman Catholic Church and that all Christians have a duty to obey him. He goes as far as to claim to be infallible. There is no evidence that if Jesus made Peter the rock that he meant he was to be the head of the Church. Peter might have been only the chief organiser of the Church meaning that if the pope is his successor the pope like any organiser may be rebelled against and broken away from if he does not do his job.

Jesus would have meant that if Peter was the rock he would only be that as long as he stayed firm so it is a conditional role he got. The pope claims that his office is unconditional for the Church needs him. So the papacy was not instituted by Jesus.

The pope sees no evidence for his infallibility and his kingship over the Church so he has stolen his position. He has stolen the place of Christ and is antichrist.

Pope John Paul II claimed that the papacy never misleads the Church and yet he came out against the Bible teaching on the brightness of capital punishment! To say as he did that capital punishment is evil for the person might be innocent however unlikely this seems, accuses Jesus of backing up an evil God who commanded executions by stoning for apostasy, heresy and sexual sins. This is the man who insists that condoms must not be used even by a married man trying to avoid giving AIDS to his wife!

The Church says Peter was the rock that is to say the foundation of the Church. If Peter was the rock the Church was built on, it follows then that Peter and the pope, if he is really his successor, have to hold the Church together. This would require one to believe that the Roman Pontiff is infallible or acting without error when he excommunicates. The Church dares not teach this for history shows persons and groups being thrown out of the Church by one pope and this action being apologised for by another pope. If the pope were really the rock he wouldn't be able to excommunicate unfairly.

If Jesus promised us popes to be the rock the Church was built on, then he broke his promise for many of them have been wimps and disasters. They cannot be described as rocks. At times, two or more men claimed to be pope and nobody knew for sure who was the real pope. How then could the papacy be rock?

There is no good evidence that Peter was the rock in the Catholic sense. For example, he doesn't leave any affidavits saying he was head of the Church. Nor does he mention that bishops of Rome will be his successors. Peter might have been one of many bishops in Rome - if he died there at all. For all one knows, maybe the Peter that allegedly died a martyr's death there could have been a mistaken identity. Peter would need to designate a successor to be the new rock after his death. None of this happened. The evidence is not convincing enough then that Peter can be considered to be the rock the Church is built on in the sense of father, infallible teacher and monarch over the Church. A rock that leaves inadequate evidence that it is

the rock is not a rock at all. Worse, even if Peter was the rock in the Catholic sense there is still no reason to believe that the popes, even if they are his successors, are his equals or were meant to be.

If Jesus made a false prophecy or Matthew mistakenly imputed one to him, then we cannot take Matthew 16 as support for the papacy. It is unreliable.

Infallibility is the power of the Roman Catholic Church and the pope to work out doctrines and declare them revealed by God while being guarded by God against error. Most Roman doctrines have come out of this belief in the power to define what is true doctrine. If the Church is wrong then the doctrines are not binding for belief and the whole Catholic faith falls apart. The Roman Catholic Church claims that it is infallible when its bishops meet in an ecumenical council and when the pope makes an ex cathedra statement. They must intend their teaching to be infallible and binding on the Church. Jesus is said to have given the Church this power when he said the gates of Hell would never prevail over his Church and when he promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles to guide them into all truth. But at most Jesus promised his Church would be indefectible, never depart far enough from the faith to block the salvation of its members. And no Church has all the truth.

The Catholic Church says that infallibility is not inspiration but protection from error. This is a lie for you must need some inspiration to avoid error. The Church says that inspiration doesn't happen since the time God wrote the Bible and the traditions of the Church for there is no public revelation since the apostles. This proves that infallibility cannot happen. The Church is totally incoherent in its claims about the infallibility charism. This being so even if it has the power to be infallible it cannot use it.

The Church does its homework before declaring a doctrine to be true. The Church says that the conclusion is infallible but the reasons for the conclusion are not. So the Holy Spirit protects from making the wrong conclusion when the research is undertaken but he doesn't guarantee that the research will be well done. In that case, the research can't be very important and so we are talking about inspiration here. If the research is important, then the reasons for the conclusion are also infallible.

What infallibility supposedly does is show that a doctrine was taught by the apostles at least implicitly or by implication for nothing can add to their teaching. That is why giving an infallible statement is called defining or making known. First of all it is made known to the pope for example but it is foolish to think it's not infallible until he reveals it. Can you believe that the decision of Pope Pius IX that the Virgin Mary was conceived without sin wasn't infallible until he announced it? No way. If God revealed it was already infallible and the pope merely recognised its infallibility. It is not about his infallibility but its own.

Don't say that the pope was infallible during his research for he intended to define the doctrine and if he didn't intend that he wouldn't have any infallibility. He intends an infallible revelation as a possibility. If Pius IX had been led to the conclusion that the Immaculate Conception was false then he would not have made the announcement. We would have a dogma saying that the Immaculate Conception wasn't true. Anything a pope says could possibly be turned into a dogma so everything a pope teaches is open to being made infallible. The intention idea solves nothing.

Infallibility in itself would only make sense if the pope was infallible all the time. Even the most extreme Catholics don't think that he is.

Vatican I was the ecumenical council that made it a dogma or binding belief that the pope was infallible. Vatican I put limits on papal infallibility. It said the pope was only infallible when he spoke clearly that he was making any dogma part of the faith. Despite all that, it is obvious that it makes the pope more infallible than it looks. The Church only pretends that it accepts papal infallibility under strict conditions because it knows fine well that popes are capable of serious error and to go too far with papal infallibility will only make a laughing stock of the Church. But nevertheless its cover-up doesn't work and the pope is still left more infallible than even he would want to be!

Pius IX proclaimed the Immaculate Conception as infallible dogma BEFORE any definition came from the Church that he was infallible. This proves that the pope must be regarded as infallible all the time for he is to be obeyed even without a definition and he can define without being defined infallible. The pope then is the only thing that is needed if you want infallible teaching and ecumenical councils aren't. This gives absolute power, at least potentially, to the pope! It contradicts the biblical view that the apostles shared authority with Peter. There was no greatest among them in terms of rank.

Papal infallibility is not a harmless doctrine for the Catholic is asked to die for it if asked to renounce it or be put to death.



