

Biblical Notes — Matthew 16:18

18 – I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. (18. καγὼ δέ σοι λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ πύλαι Ἄιδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς)

Jesus never says “You are Peter and upon you I will build my Church”, or “you are Petros (a rock or boulder) and upon this Petros (a rock) I will build my Church”. Matthew uses two words in the Greek (Πέτρος) and (πέτρᾳ). Petros is not the same word as Petra. Petros is a detached rock, and petra is a rocky cliff. Petra isn’t linked to Peter. You can’t read Petros into the passage twice. The establishment of the Church came through the *apostles and prophets* not simply through Peter. Ephesians 2:20 NASB having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, I can also refute this argument from the angle of Paul.

“(a) Paul mentioned Peter more than once but he never mentioned him with any special title of honor, such as vicar or pope, or gave any indication that he held him above any of the other apostles. (b) Paul taught that those who attached themselves to Peter (or to any other apostle or person) as a distinct group were guilty of schism, because Christ is the head (1 Cor. 1:12-13; 3:22). (c) Paul did not mention the papacy when referring to the officers of the church (1 Cor. 12:29, Eph. 4:11). (d) Paul as an apostle claimed authority over the Roman church itself (Rom. 1:5-6; 16:17). (e) Paul was “behind the very chiefest apostle in nothing” (2 Cor. 12:11-12). (f) Paul expressly denied that Peter was the pope and further maintained that whatever Peter was to the Jews, he, Paul, was to the Gentiles. This certainly is incompatible with any idea of a pope in Paul’s day (Gal. 2:7,8). (g) Paul rebuked Peter without any mention of Peter’s supremacy (Gal. 2:11).

— Joseph Zacchello, Secrets of Romanism (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1948), 43-44.

As you can clearly see, Paul never regarded Peter as a Pope, or that Jesus was instituting the papal system.