

DID PETER HAVE AUTHORITY OVER ALL THE APOSTLES?

A Biblical Study of The Catechism of the Catholic Church:

Bible Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions about Catholic Beliefs and Practices

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Passages of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to Consider:

- **“The sole Church of Christ [is that] which our Savior, after his Resurrection, entrusted to Peter’s pastoral care, commissioning him and the other apostles to extend and rule it. ... This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church, which is **governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him.**” (CCC 816)**
- **“For it is through Christ’s Catholic Church alone, which is the universal hope toward salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained” (CCC 816)**
- **“Just as the office which the Lord confided to Peter alone, as first of the apostles, destined to be transmitted to his successors, is a permanent one, so also endures the office... Hence the Church teaches that ‘the bishops have by divine institution taken the place of the apostles as pastors of the Church, in such wise that **whoever listens to them is listening to Christ and whoever despises them despises Christ and him who sent Christ**” (CCC 862)**

Scriptures to Consider:

- Mark 3:14–19 “And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach [15] and have authority to cast out demons. [16] He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); [17] James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); [18] Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, [19] and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.” (ESV)
- Acts 11:4 “But Peter began and explained it to them in order” (ESV)
- Matthew 15:15 “But Peter said to him, ‘Explain the parable to us.’” (ESV)
- Acts 2:14 “But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.’” (ESV)
- Acts 2:38 “And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (ESV)
- Acts 2:42 “And they devoted themselves **to the apostles’ teaching** and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (ESV)
- Acts 5:29 “But Peter and the apostles answered, **‘We must obey God rather than men.’**” (ESV).
- Matthew 18:17–20 “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. [18] Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. [19] Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. [20] For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (ESV)
- 1 Corinthians 16:10 “When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am.”
- 1 Corinthians 16:16 **“be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer.”**
- 2 Corinthians 8:23 “As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.”

- Revelation 21:14 “And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and **on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**” (ESV)
- Acts 10:44–48 “While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. [45] And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. [46] For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, [47] “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” [48] And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.” (ESV)
- Romans 1:7 “To all those in Rome who are loved by God and **called to be saints**”

Questions to Consider:

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church references Jesus’ “choice of the Twelve with Peter as their head” (CCC 765) and solely references Mark 3:14-15 for the evidence of this claim. **Does Mark 3:14-15 reference Peter as the head of the church in any Bible? Why not?**
- Why do these big claims (CCC 816 & CCC 862) have no Scripture cited for their support in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*?
- Why does Peter have to answer to the authority of the church at Jerusalem in Acts 11 if he is the head authority?
- Did Peter act more like the spokesman for the apostles or as the authoritative leader of the apostles?
- Why does Paul appear and teach so much more than Peter in the New Testament if Peter was the first Pope? What about the other leaders who feature prominently in the early church like John and James (brothers of Jesus)?
- Why are some decisions made by the church body and not solely by Peter?
- Why did believers receive the Holy Spirit before taking the Eucharist in Acts 2:38? Isn’t that out of order for the Catholic sacraments?
- **Why would Peter speak Acts 5:29 if he was also asserting Papal infallibility and the Magisterium of the Church?**
- Why does church discipline’s final step in Matthew 18:17-20 speak about coming before the gathered body of the church and not the church leadership/pastors/priests/bishops? Why is this binding and loosing language used in reference to the church body (“two or three are gathered in my name”) and not in reference to Peter or a Pope/Bishop/Priest?
- Isn’t the “loosing and binding” authority shared with the local churches? In 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 2 Corinthians 13:10, Titus 2:15, and Titus 3:10-11
- Is the authority of Timothy and Titus based on them being a bishop and having apostolic authority, or being a “fellow laborer”?
- **If the future heavenly holy city of Jerusalem has the name of the apostles on it (Revelation 21:14), why doesn’t it recognize Peter as the head, or the first Pope/Bishop, or with some other sort of special recognition?**
- Why are all alive Christians referred to as saints in the New Testament? Is this term only referring to deceased believers specially designated by the Catholic Church?