

## **CHAPTER ONE: HOUSE OF THE FISHERMAN**

Peter was raised in a fishing community and later moved to Capernaum where he owned a fishing business. Not much is known of Peter's early life, but with a little investigation we can piece together a good bit of information. For historical information available in and outside of the New Testament, read *Upon this Rock* by Stephen Ray.

### ***Questions for further discussion and study:***

1. What city was Peter from (Jn 1:44), and where did he live at the time he was called by Jesus (Lk 4:31, 38)?
2. During his three-year ministry, Jesus appeared to reside at what could be called his "home base for operations." Where was this house (Matt. 4:13; Luke 4:31)?
3. Who else lived in the house or very nearby (Mk 1:29-30)?
4. What do we know of Peter's family (Jn 1:42; Mt 10:2; Lk 4:38)?
5. What was Peter's profession (Mt 4:18)? (Since we discovered fishhooks in the video, read the interesting story mentioning a fishhook in Mt 17:24-27)
6. What do we know of Peter's business and partnerships (Lk 5:3, 10)?
7. What did the fishermen do besides fish (Mk 1:19)?
8. How dangerous was travel and fishing on the Sea of Galilee (Lk 8:22-25)?
9. How do we know Peter was a pretty rugged and tough man (Jn 21:11)? How many large fish in a net do you think you could drag up onto the shore?

10. What did the Jews in Jerusalem think of Peter's education (Acts 4:13)?
11. Why do you think Jesus did not choose disciples from the scholars and Pharisees in Jerusalem?
12. How did Jesus call Peter to be his disciple, and how did Peter respond (Mt 4:18-22; Jn 1:40-42)?
13. How did Jesus reaffirm this command after his resurrection (Jn 21:19)?
14. Jesus commands you to follow him; how do you obey his command?
15. Why did Jesus leave Nazareth and come to live in Capernaum (Lk 4:16-31)?
16. What did Jesus do in Bethsaida (Mk 8:22)?
17. What did he do in Capernaum (Mk 1:21-28; 2:1-13)?
18. What was the crowd's response to Jesus' miracles in Capernaum and Bethsaida (Mt 11:20-24)?
19. How would you and your friends have responded?
20. Who built the synagogue for the Jews in Capernaum (Lk 7:1-10)?
21. How did God respond to such a man later (Acts 10:1-4) and what did Peter say (Acts 10:34-35)?
21. Read two of Jesus' teachings presented at the synagogue in Capernaum (Mt 4:13-17; CCC 1338; Jn 6:24-59).
22. If you had been a Jewish listener, what would you have thought about Jesus' teaching and how would you have responded?

23. What prophecy did Jesus quote to teach that he was the light among the Gentiles (Isaiah 9:1-2)?
24. What did Jesus do in the synagogue and how did the people initially react to Jesus' teaching and authority (Mk 1:21-28)?
25. What is significant about Jesus teaching from the barque – or boat – of Peter (Lk 5:3)?
26. How do you respond to Jesus teaching from the barque of Peter at the Church today?
27. When many disciples walked away from Jesus, what did Peter say (Jn 6:66-69)?
28. What made Peter stay with Jesus and how should you follow in his footsteps (CCC 1336)?
29. What, if anything, would cause you to walk away from Christ or his Church?
30. What did Jesus promise about Peter's future career (Mt 16:19)?

## **CHAPTER 2: UPON THIS ROCK**

Jesus took Simon and the other disciples into northern Galilee, into the region of Caesarea Philippi. This city was once named Paneas, after the Greek god Pan. It was here that Jesus came to commission Simon and to give him a new name – Peter – which means Rock. It is on this Rock that Jesus builds his Church.

### **Questions for further discussion and study:**

#### **Caesarea Philippi**

1. Where did Jesus take the disciples in Matthew 16:13?

(Read Matthew 16:13-20 to establish the background for this chapter.)

2. Read Luke 3:1. Why do you think the older city name of Paneas was changed to Caesarea Philippi? What two officials were commemorated by the new city name?
3. Consider the ruggedness of the walk over the dusty, stony ground, and the lack of accommodations. Given the uniqueness of the site at Caesarea Philippi, why do you think Matthew mentions the geographical location where Jesus said these profound words?
4. Recalling the discussion in the video, why is it significant that Jesus traveled all the way to Caesarea Philippi?
5. Notice the times when Jesus purposely chose "props" or "backdrops" to emphasize his teaching (e.g., Mt 6:25-30; Mk 9:36-37; Jn 2:18-22). Explain how the rock, the temple dedicated to Caesar, the god Pan (Greek god of sheep and shepherds), the water flowing from the rock, the "bottomless" cave and other aspects of this magnificent site provide a backdrop for Peter's new appointment.
6. Explain how the false and pagan is used to contrast and emphasize what is true and Christian.
7. Read CCC 552. How had Peter "defined" Jesus (Mt 16:15-16)?
8. How did Jesus then "define" Peter (Mt 16:18)?
9. Who spoke for the rest of the disciples (Mt 16:16)?
10. What was the source of Peter's information on the identity of Jesus (Mt 16:17)?

11. Since Caesarea Philippi was a place to worship pagan gods, how does Peter's statement about the living God stand in stark contrast?
12. Jesus said he was the son of what (Mt 16:13)? Peter said Jesus is the son of whom?
13. What does this tell us of the two natures of Christ?
14. Throughout the history of Israel, who alone had the specific name "Rock" (Deut 32:4, 15, 18, 30)?
15. What does this name change tell us about God's work in Peter? In what ways does Peter become more stable and "rock-like"? How does God's willingness to share this descriptive name with Peter demonstrate God's delegation of authority in the Church (CCC 552)?
16. Notice how Jesus had predicted this name change earlier (Jn 1:42).
17. Who else had had a name change and what did it signify (Gen 17:5)?
18. Discuss how names and name changes were very important to the Jewish people. God is called Rock because he is a place of refuge, strong, dependable, and trustworthy. Knowing that, do you think Peter was a *rock* independent of God or a rock that shares in God's "rockness", ie., his stability?
19. Jesus spoke Aramaic and in Aramaic the word "rock" was *kepha*. "Cephas" is the Greek transliteration of *kepha*. Notice how Peter is referred to in certain key passages of the New Testament (Jn 1:42; 1 Cor 15:5; Gal 1:18)? What does this tell us of Paul's view of Peter?
20. What was Peter's new designation and his new relation to Jesus (CCC 586, 522)?

21. How does Christ rule in his Church (CCC 869)?

## VICINITY OF GALILEE

22. What incredible mission was given to the Apostles on the top of the mountain, presumably Mount Tabor (Mt 28:16-20; CCC 2, 1122)?

23. What else had happened, presumably on this mountain (Lk 9:28-36)?

24. How were Peter and the apostles reminded of this mission (Acts 1:8)? Discuss their subsequent success.

25. Read John 21 and discuss this post-resurrection appearance of Christ.

26. How was Peter appointed as the shepherd of the sheep (vs. 15-17)?

27. In Scripture, *feed* often means caring for and teaching, *tend* means to govern. How do Jesus' words help explain Peter's new appointment?

28. Discuss the responsibilities of a shepherd. Consider the sheep's relationship to and dependence upon the shepherd. How did the words "feed my sheep" re-emphasize the words spoken at Caesarea Philippi?

29. Was this particular commission given to all the apostles or to Peter alone, and how did Peter and the other apostles work together (CCC 857)?

30. How is Peter's office unique and crucial (CCC 877)?

31. How is the Church of Rome unique and crucial (CCC 834)?

32. In the video there was a young female lamb named

Prospère that was still suckling from her mother. Could she have been used as a sacrifice at Passover (Ex 12:5)?

33. Could she have been used for other sacrifices (Lev 4:32)?
34. How is Jesus related to the sacrifices of the Old Testament (Jn 1:29; 1 Cor 5:7; Rev 5:6)?
35. Read about the fishing trip in John 21 with the following in mind: 1) the water symbolizing the world and the shore symbolizing meeting Jesus in eternity, and 2) Peter as the "fisher of men", dragging the net full of fish to Jesus without a tear (schism). Was Peter able to gather the fish without help from Jesus or the other apostles? What other possible types or "pictures" can be seen here?
36. Take a look at Luke 22:32: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have *you* [plural], that he might sift *you* [singular] like wheat, but I have prayed for *you* [singular] that *your* faith [singular] may not fail; and when *you* [singular] have turned again, strengthen your *brethren*." How does Jesus acknowledge Peter's supremacy in this statement?
37. Interestingly, St. John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) wrote, "He [Peter] was the chosen one of the Apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the leader of the band ... Jesus putteth into his hands the *chief authority among the brethren....*" and "[Peter] was even *entrusted with the chief authority over the brethren* (Homily 88 on John).

### **CHAPTER 3:THE KINGDOM AND THE KEYS**

Jesus was a Jew from the tribe of Judah. He sits on the throne of his father David and has delegated the keys of the kingdom to Peter, his Royal Steward. After Jesus ascended into heaven, Peter immediately began leading

the Church. He preached the first sermon on Pentecost, made crucial decisions on faith and morals, and faithfully filled the office to which Jesus had appointed him.

### **Questions for further discussion and study:**

1. After Jesus commissioned Peter, how did Peter exercise the authority of the keys in the early Church?
2. Read Isaiah 22:15-23. This passage is the background for the words of Jesus, who was himself from house of David and the tribe of Judah. What do you learn about the royal office of steward in the kingdom of Judah?
3. Compare Isaiah 22:22 with Matthew 16:19. Knowing the Old Testament is the foundation for the New Testament, what can we learn about Peter's new relationship with King Jesus?
4. What happened to King David (Acts 2:29; 1 Kgs 2:10)? Who was to sit on his eternal throne (Dan 7:13-14; Lk 1:26-33)?
5. What happened to Jesus (Acts 2:30-36)?
6. Is Jesus a king with a kingdom (Lk 1:30-33; Dan 7:13-14; CCC 664)?
7. The royal steward "stood in" for the king in his absence. Where did Jesus go (Jn 14:1-4; Acts 2:9-11; CCC 659, 665)?
8. Who now carries the keys of the kingdom as the royal steward and what does that mean to Christians today?
9. What kind of authority did the steward exercise in the kingdom?
10. Over what form of government does Jesus assign Peter as his vicar (Mt 16:19)?

11. Discuss some of the characteristics of a kingdom and how it is different from a democracy.
12. Look up the words "hierarchy" and "magisterium". What do these words mean?
13. What happens to a government office if the office holder dies? In the kingdom of Judah, did one chief steward of the royal house succeed another?
14. Consider how a president and his cabinet might be similar to a king and his royal officials.
15. How do presidents and kings administer their affairs?
16. How would the Old Testament office of chief royal steward help explain the papacy and the Chair of Peter?
17. What do keys represent? Can just anyone enter your home and possess it? How do keys symbolize a homeowner's exclusive dominion of his property? Think of other real and symbolic uses and images involving keys.
18. What does "binding and loosing" mean (Mt 16:19; CCC 1444-1446)?
19. What kind of authority was invested in Peter and the apostles (Jn 20:23; Mt 18:17; CCC 553, 1461)?
20. If Jesus gave men such authority in his Church, how should believers respond to the appointed leaders? Discuss Luke 10:16 (CCC 87, 858).
21. Who decided and proclaimed that Judas needed a successor to fill his vacated office (Acts 1:12-26)?
22. At Pentecost, who was the first to present the Gospel of Christ and open the waters of baptism to the three thousand new converts (Acts 2:1-3, 14, 37-41)?

23. What vision did Peter receive in Joppa (Acts 10:9-23)?
24. Why couldn't the Jews eat a lobster (Lev 11:9-12)?
25. What do we know about the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 10:1-8)?
26. Who was the first to open the waters of baptism for the salvation of the Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10:1-48)?
27. Was it lawful for Jews to visit or eat with Gentiles (Acts 10:28)?
28. How did Peter change the face of the Church in Acts 10?
29. Around the perimeter of the Temple were signs stating: "No foreigner is to enter within the forecourt and the balustrade around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his subsequent death". What was required to be a member of God's Old Covenant people (Gen 17:10-14; Ex 12:48)? How did Peter's declaration about Gentiles change their access to God (Acts 15:6-11; Eph 2:11-22)?
30. Who was the head of the early Church?
31. Who stood up and defined the theology and practice of Gentiles becoming Christians (Acts 15:1-12)?
32. How was this council in Jerusalem (c. AD 49) a prototype of the future Ecumenical Councils of the Church (see especially v. 22-29)?
33. How did Peter and the apostles and elders work together in the council?
34. How do the Pope and bishops work together today (CCC 880-881)?

## CHAPTER 4: THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHAIR

Peter traveled to Rome and was later martyred in Nero's Circus near Vatican Hill. The Chair of Peter is the sign of the Pope's unique authority. The background for the authority represented by the Papal chair is rooted deep in the history of Israel. *Upon This Rock* by Stephen Ray provides comprehensive historical and archeological evidence to document Peter's presence, bishopric and martyrdom in Rome.

### Questions for further discussion and study:

1. Understanding that "Babylon" was a *code word* or symbolic term used by the Jews and early Christians for pagan Rome, from where did Peter write his first epistle (or letter) (1 Pet 5:13)?
2. Which church is called the "see" (or bishopric) of Peter (CCC 194, 877)?
3. Read the following paragraph from Tertullian (c 160- c. 225) and consider the comparison between John and Peter. In what city did the early Christians believe Peter served the Lord?

"And accordingly it makes no difference whether a man be washed in a sea or a pool, a stream or a fount, a lake or a trough; nor is there any distinction between those whom John baptized in the Jordan and those whom Peter baptized in the Tiber [River]" (*On Baptism*, 4).

Origen, a biblical scholar (c. 185-c. 254) wrote, "...having come to Rome, [Peter] was crucified head downwards; for he had requested that he might suffer in this way". How did Jesus predict that Peter would die (Jn 21:18-19)? First-century writers used such expressions to refer to crucifixion often. In this context what might Jesus

mean in v. 19 when he says "Follow me"? (This is the oldest written mention of Peter's martyrdom by crucifixion and it was well known to the Christians for whom this Gospel was written.)

The street running into St. Peter's Square is the Via Conciliazione. Look up the definition of "conciliation" and "reconciliation" (See also CCC 981, 822, 1424, 1455), and consider how the name of this street might be significant.

4. What do the fountains inside St. Peter's Square and the holy water fonts in churches remind us of (Ex 30-32; Jn 3:3-5; Rom 6:3-4; CCC 1215)?
5. Look up the word "cathedral." What does this type of church have to do with the word "chair"? What does every Catholic church have (CCC 1184)?
6. Read Matthew 23:2. In the time of the Jews, who sat in the *cathedra* (chair or seat)?
7. The Church of St. John Lateran in Rome is the cathedral church of Rome and the Mother Church of the World. Where do you think the Chair (Cathedra) of the Pope resides?
8. How did Moses judge and teach the people and what position or posture did he assume (Ex 18:13-16)?
9. What position did he take?
10. What position did Jesus assume to teach in the synagogue (Lk 4:20-21)?
11. What kind of chair was at the front of Jewish synagogues (Mt 23:2)?
12. How did Moses pass his teaching authority on to Joshua (Num 27:16-23)?

13. Where did the "laying on of hands" originate? How was it used in the early Church and today (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; CCC 1556)?
14. Read CCC 891-892. What is meant by papal infallibility and what are the conditions for the exercise of this infallibility?
15. Does this mean that *everything* the Pope says or does is infallible or are there specific conditions under which the Pope is infallible? Discuss the conditions.
16. How does Jesus confer authority and infallibility to Peter, and later to the apostolic college (Mt 16:19; 18:17-18)?
17. How do the bishops of the Church share in the charism of infallibility? What kind of authority does the bishop of Rome possess due to his office (CCC 882)?
18. What relation does the Pope have to St. Peter (CCC 882)?
19. What happened to Peter's office and authority after his death?
20. If an office holder dies, does the office cease to exist?
21. What did Clement of Rome, a personal associate of Peter himself, write about succession in 96 (CCC 861)?
22. What did Peter say about the apostolic office (Acts 1:15-26, especially v. 20b)?
23. Consider the words of St. Macarius (died c. 394) and discuss the connection between the authority of Moses and the authority of Peter.  
"For of old Moses and Aaron, when this priesthood was theirs, suffered much; and

Caiphas, when he had their chair, persecuted and condemned the Lord. . . . Afterwards Moses was succeeded by Peter, who had committed to his hands the new Church of Christ, and the true priesthood" (Homily 26).

24. Read CCC 553 and 881 and explain the Church's teaching on the keys, the rock, the Church, Peter, binding and loosing, and succession.
25. How do you honor Jesus and his Church—and honor Peter and his successors?
26. How should a loyal subject of the king relate to the king's hand-picked and faithful steward?
27. To whom was this delegated authority given (Mt 16:19; 18:1, 15-20)?
28. Opposing or disobeying the king or his royal steward are not acceptable options while living within the King's realm. If the Kingdom of God has one king and one royal steward, how should a Catholic respond to the Pope? How does this relate to non-Catholic Christians?
29. How does this apostolic office affect your personal life?

## **THE CATHOLIC CHALLENGE**

Having viewed *Peter, Keeper of the Keys* and gone through the study guide, you are well-equipped to understand Peter and his role in the church from a Catholic, biblical, and historical perspective. Be prepared to answer some common, sometimes tough questions about Peter and the Primacy of Rome as you find here in *The Catholic Challenge*.

1. How do we know Jesus gave Peter special authority among the apostles?
2. Why do we call Peter the first Pope? What does the

two-thousand year continuity of Popes tell us about the stability of the Church and her indestructibility?

3. How can anyone, including the Pope, be infallible (and what does infallible mean)? How could "fallible" men write inspired, infallible Scripture?
4. How can you demonstrate that the apostles recognized Peter's primacy and authority in the early Church?
5. What or who is the "rock" on which Jesus would build his Church and what does this mean to you, the Church, and other believers?
6. Explain the foundation for successors to Peter's role in the Church and how they exercise the same authority as Peter?
7. How did the Bishop of Rome become recognized as the successor to Peter?
8. What about the few "bad" Popes? Why doesn't their conduct invalidate the office of the Papacy?
9. Why do Catholics call the Pope "Holy Father"?
10. Look up the word "vicar". What does it mean to call the Pope "Vicar of Christ"?
11. The doctrine of the Trinity and the collection of books in the New Testament canon took time and development over the centuries. How might the development of the papacy be similar?
12. How do you respond to the teaching authority of the Pope?
13. Do you trust the Pope and the Church to speak faithfully for Jesus Christ?
14. Why might it be important to share these truths with others who are not familiar with Church history and the fullness of the Catholic faith?

## FOR FURTHER READING

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