

Did Peter go to Rome?

By [COGwriter http://www.cogwriter.com/peter.htm](http://www.cogwriter.com/peter.htm)

Peter was one of the original 12 apostles chosen By Christ. Peter, along with the [Apostle John](#), played a prominent role in the early Christian church.

He was the Apostle to Israel while [Paul](#) was the Apostle to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:9). And in general, during his lifetime, Peter seemed to be the top leader of a widely geographically separated Christian church. Essentially Peter was the first among equals (the apostles).

However, he was only one of 12 original apostles, and there is nothing in scripture that suggests that the place of his death (which is not known as a certainty) should become the permanent headquarters for the true church. Nor is there any indication that the true Church should be forever based out of a single city or from Rome.

Actually, most of the books of the New Testament that were addressed to Christians in certain geographical locations, were addressed to those in Asia Minor as it was apparently the area where most early, non-Jewish, Christians dwelled. There were at least 10 books of the New Testament directly written to the church leaders in Asia Minor. The ones written to those in Asia Minor include Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Timothy (Timothy was in Ephesus), Philemon, 1 Peter, 3 John, and Revelation. In addition to these 10, there may be more as 1 & 2 John and 2 Peter, and possibly Jude may have also been mainly directed to one or more of the churches in Asia Minor (which would make 14 of them). There is only one book written to those in Rome (and it never mentions any of the so-called Roman bishops), with 2 to Corinth, 2 to Thessalonica, 1 to Philippi (which is near Asia Minor), and 1 to Crete (Titus), a total of 7 not addressed to specifically to those in Asia Minor.

This article will mainly rely on [Roman Catholic](#) approved writings, including using the *Rheims New Testament of 1582*, for much of its supporting statements.

Roman Catholic Views and Comments on Peter

The following, from *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, is a fair representation of how the average Roman Catholic views church history:

...Christ not only established the episcopate in the persons of the Twelve but, further, created in St. Peter the office of supreme pastor of the Church. Early Christian history tells us that before his death, he fixed his residence at Rome, and ruled the Church there as its bishop. It is from Rome that he dates his first Epistle, speaking of the city under the name of Babylon, a designation which St. John also gives it in the Apocalypse (c. xviii). At Rome, too, he suffered martyrdom in company with St. Paul, A.D. 67 (Joyce G.H. Transcribed by Douglas J. Potter. *The Church. The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume III. Copyright © 1908 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight. Nihil Obstat, November 1, 1908. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

But is that account completely accurate?

Or what about the following?

The Apostolic Ministry of St. Peter...A.D...

42-49 First sojourn in Rome...

54-57 Second sojourn in Rome; Gospel of Mark written under Peter's direction...

62-67 Third sojourn in Rome; canonical Epistles of Peter...

67 Martyrdom in Rome and burial near the Necropolis at the Vatican

(Ray S.K. *Upon This Rock*. Nihil Obstat Robert Lunsford. Imprimatur + Carl F. Mengeling, Bishop of Lansing. Ignatius Press, San Francisco, p. 67).

Roman Catholic scholars teach:

...that Peter founded the Church of **Antioch**, indicates the fact that **he laboured a long period there**, and also perhaps that he dwelt there towards the end of his life...It is also probable that **Peter pursued his Apostolic labours in various districts of Asia Minor** for it can scarcely be supposed that the entire period between his liberation from prison and the Council of the Apostles was spent uninterruptedly in one city, whether Antioch, Rome, or elsewhere... Peter returned occasionally to the original Christian Church of Jerusalem...The date of Peter's death is thus not yet decided; the period between July, 64 (outbreak of the Neronian persecution), and the beginning of 68 (Kirsch J.P. Transcribed by Gerard Haffner. St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XI. Copyright © 1911 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by Kevin Knight. Nihil Obstat, February 1, 1911. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

ALTHOUGH CATHOLIC TRADITION, BEGINNING IN the late second and early third centuries, regards St. Peter as the first bishop of Rome and, therefore, as the first pope, there is no evidence that Peter was involved in the initial establishment of the Christian community in Rome (indeed, what evidence there is would seem to point in the opposite direction) or that he served as Rome's first bishop...He often shared his position of prominence with James and John...However, there is no evidence that before his death Peter actually served the church of Rome as its first bishop, even though the "fact" is regularly taken for granted by a wide spectrum of Catholics and others (McBrien, Richard P. Lives of the Popes: The Pontiffs from St. Peter to Benedict XVI. Harper, San Francisco, 2005 updated ed., pp. 25,29).

It is not biblically clear that Peter founded the church in Antioch (Stephen or Barnabas seems more likely, see Acts 11:19-22), but he probably spent a lot of time there Antioch (Galatians 2:11). However, **it is clear even from Catholic history that Peter did not found the Church in Rome, spent little time in Rome, did not fix his residence there, and was not the first "bishop of Rome"**.

This area of Antioch is near the southern border of Asia Minor. It is not in or anywhere near Rome.

The Catholic Encyclopedia admits this about Peter,

...we possess no precise information regarding the details of his Roman sojourn (Kirsch J.P. Transcribed by Gerard Haffner. St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XI. Copyright © 1911 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight. Nihil Obstat, February 1, 1911. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

No precise information means that the Roman Church has essentially relied on after the fact writings, nearly all of which were written over 100 years after Peter's death, that say that he was in Rome and/or died in Rome. But even those accounts suggest that he was not there very long. (It should be noted that there are later accounts that Peter actually died in Jerusalem or Asia Minor, but they also are of questionable reliability.)

Thus the earlier claim about Peter that "*Early Christian history tells us that before his death, he fixed his residence at Rome*" is clearly false.

Furthermore, according to Catholic sources, there were no bishops in Rome prior to the second century (and Peter died in the first century):

We must conclude that the New Testament provides no basis for the notion that before the apostles died, they ordained one man for each of the churches they founded...**"Was there a Bishop of Rome in the First Century?"...the available evidence indicates that the church in Rome was led by a college of presbyters, rather than by a single bishop, for at least several decades of the second century** (Sullivan F.A. From Apostles to Bishops: the development of the episcopacy in the early church. Newman Press, Mahwah (NJ), 2001, p. 80,221-222).

Interestingly, a Catholic respected scholar, Origen of Alexandria, wrote this about Peter:

Peter himself seems to have observed for a considerable time the Jewish observances enjoined by the law of Moses, not having yet learned from Jesus to ascend from the law... Peter "went up into the upper room to pray about the sixth hour. And he became very hungry, and would have eaten"...Peter is represented as still observing the Jewish customs respecting clean and unclean animals. (Origen. Contra Celsus, Book II, Chapter 1)

So, Peter was believed to have Jewish practices as late as the time of Origen, and according to the Bible never ate unclean meat (Acts 10:14).

Most in the Greco-Roman churches do not seem to understand this about him.

Peter and The Book of Romans

Interestingly, when personally addressing the leadership for the Christians who lived in Rome, Paul never mentioned Peter or any who were later claimed to be Roman bishops, even though he listed at least 27 others (see Romans 16). *The Catholic Encyclopedia* article about the *Epistle to the Romans* mentions this about Paul not mentioning Peter:

The complete silence as to St. Peter is most easily explained by supposing that he was then absent from Rome. Paul may well have been aware of this fact, for the community was not entirely foreign to him. An epistle like the present would hardly have been sent while the Prince of the Apostles was in Rome and the reference to the ruler (xii, 8) would then be difficult to explain. Paul probably supposes that during the months between the composition and the arrival of the Epistle, the community would be more or less thrown on its own resources. (Merk A. Transcribed by W.G. Kofron. Epistle to the Romans. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XIII. Copyright © 1912 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight. Nihil Obstat, February 1, 1912. Remy Lafort, D.D., Censor Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

Another explanation is that Peter simply was not in Rome long enough for Paul or any early writer to consider that Peter was actually the bishop of Rome.

Note that it takes MONTHS from when Paul could have written the epistle for it to be able to get to Rome.

How could Paul have possibly assumed that that Peter was not in Rome then and would not be in it for months? Only because he knew that Peter had not fixed his residence there, nor was Peter some type of bishop of Rome!

If Peter was the bishop of Rome, Paul would have most likely at least referred to him or his absence in this epistle, as at some time he would have expected Peter to read it in Rome. But this never took place. Since it is believed that the book of "Romans was likely written in the fall of A.D. 57" (The Nelson Study Bible, New King James Version. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1997, p. 1876), it is most likely that Peter had not even been to Rome (as until at least 54 A.D. he had meetings in Jerusalem--see below).

And the other reality is that modern Catholic scholars admit that Peter and the other Apostles were not a bishops, and could not have taken up residence in any city:

A "bishop" is a residential pastor who presides in a stable manner over the church in a city and its environs. The apostles were missionaries and founders of churches; there is no evidence, nor is it likely at all, that any one of them ever took up permanent residence in a particular church as its bishop (Sullivan F.A. From Apostles to Bishops: the development of the episcopacy in the early church. Newman Press, Mahwah (NJ), 2001, p. 14).

The cited Catholic quotes show that the Church of Rome acknowledges that Peter labored in Asia Minor (hence, he could not truly have been the bishop of Rome then as they are quite far apart--it normally took MONTHS to travel from Rome to Asia Minor in those days, plus there were no telephones or fast ways to communicate), tended to return to Jerusalem (which is relatively near Asia Minor), spent little (if any) time in Rome, could not have been the bishop of any city, and that there are no precise details of anything that Peter did in Rome. While it is possible that Peter visited and even died in Rome (and this has been contested by some scholars), that of itself would not seem to be a reason for the city of Rome to have to be the place of the headquarters of the true church.

The Keys and the Cathedra

There also is no known early document that states that upon his death Peter bequeathed the *cathedra* (the ecclesiastical chair) to anyone (recall also that Jesus Himself died in Jerusalem, and the importance of His death to the Church is more significant than that of Peter).

When Jesus discussed the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:18) with Peter, this was in Galilee. When the Holy Spirit was given in Acts 2, this was in Jerusalem. Later, Peter and the other apostles spent a great deal of time in Asia Minor. Furthermore, Rome was a Gentile area, not full of circumcised Israelites.

Who does the Bible teach had that responsibility?

Look at what Paul wrote:

7. But contrariwise when they had seen that to me was committed the Gospel of the prepuce, as to Peter of the circumcision

8. (for he that wrought in Peter to the Apostleship of the circumcision, wrought in me also among the Gentiles) (Galatians 2:7-8, Rheims NT of 1582, unless otherwise indicated).

Thus it does not appear that Peter was considered to be the bishop of Rome during Paul's lifetime (and they both died about the same time) as Rome was clearly a Gentile area.

If Peter, and he alone, had the keys, the fact that, according to *The Catholic Encyclopedia* "Peter pursued his Apostolic labours in various districts of Asia Minor" shows that PETER COULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE BISHOP OF ROME FOR MUCH OF THE TIME THAT HE "HAD THE KEYS"! IT IS AN ABSOLUTE FACT THAT PETER WAS NOT THE BISHOP OF ROME BEGINNING WITH THE START OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH that began on the Pentecost after Jesus was resurrected (Acts 1-2). NOR COULD PETER HAVE POSSIBLY BEEN BISHOP OF ROME FOR MUCH OF THE THIRTY-PLUS YEARS AFTER THAT TIME AS HE TRAVELED WITHIN ASIA MINOR AND TO JERUSALEM REPEATEDLY.

Rome is simply not close enough to Asia Minor or Jerusalem for Peter to have been based out of Rome. Thus Antioch or other regions within Asia Minor would seem to have been the main areas that Peter possibly could have had an episcopate. Actually, the book of Galatians specifically mentions that Paul visited Peter on two occasions, and both of those were in Jerusalem and not Rome. Why? Because Rome was not the headquarters of the Church at a very late time in Peter's life. This is clearly documented from the Bible (Roman Catholic approved Rheims translation):

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,
16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,
17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days (Galatians 1:15-18).

21 Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

22 And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ (Galatians 1:21-22).

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me...

9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised (Galatians 2:1,9).

What does all that mean? Well, since according to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, "St. Paul's conversion was not prior to 34, nor his escape from Damascus and his first visit to Jerusalem, to 37" (St. Paul. Catholic Encyclopedia, 1911), the earliest possible date for Paul to have made his second recorded visit with Peter was 54 A.D. (3 years plus 17 plus 34 A.D., and it may have been later, like 57 A.D.). And from there, Peter told Paul to go to the Gentiles again. Hence Peter could not have become the Apostle to the Gentiles in Rome until much later (if at all)!

Interestingly, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* admits,

It is comparatively seldom that the Fathers, when speaking of the power of the keys, make any reference to the supremacy of St. Peter (Joyce G.H. Transcribed by Robert B. Olson. Power of the Keys. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume VIII. Copyright © 1910 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight. Nihil Obstat, October 1, 1910. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

Hence, it may be that the idea that Peter was the *only* apostle that church leadership could be traced through and that it must be Rome does not appear to have much early support (more information can be found in the article [Was Peter the Rock Who Alone Received the Keys of the Kingdom?](#)).

The Book of Acts Shows That Peter Did Not Proclaim the "Gospel to the Circumcision" in Rome

As previously cited, the Apostle Paul taught that the gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter (Galatians 2:7). That being the case, if Peter was "Bishop of Rome" from 42 A.D. until his possible death in the 60s A.D. (as many Catholic sources suggest), then certainly he would have proclaimed the kingdom of God to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

Yet the Book of Acts shows that this did not happen. Notice what occurred around 60 A.D.:

16. And when we were come to Rome, Paul was permitted to remain to himself with a soldier that kept him.
17. And after the third day he called together the chief of the Jews. And when they were assembled, he said to them, Men brethren, I doing nothing against the people, or the custom of the fathers, was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans,
18. Who when they had examined me, would have released me, for that there was no cause of death in me.
19. But the Jews contradicting it, I was compelled to appeal unto Caesar, not as having anything to accuse my nation.
20. For this cause therefore I desired to see you and to speak to you. for, because of the hope of Israel, am I compassed with this chain.
21. But they said, to him, We neither received letters concerning thee from Jewry, neither did any of the brethren that came hither, report or speak any evil of thee.
22. But we desire of thee to hear what thou thinkest: for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is gainsaid everywhere.
23. And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him unto his lodging very many: to whom he expounded, and testifying the kingdom of God, and using persuasion to them of JESUS out of the law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
24. And certain believed those things that were said: but certain believed not (Acts 28:16-24, Rheims NT of 1582).

So it was Paul who proclaimed the kingdom of God to the leaders of the circumcision. Leaders, who prior to Paul's testimony, basically only knew that it spoken against. If Peter had been "Bishop of Rome" for the 18 years prior, it is certain that the Jewish leaders would have known MUCH about Christians beyond that there were spoken against.

Was Peter the Only Leader of the Early Church?

It should be noted that even some Catholic writers believed that the authority granted in Matthew 16:19 was not limited to Peter. For example:

St. Augustine in several passages declares that the authority to bind and loose was not a purely personal gift to St. Peter, but was conferred upon him as representing the Church (Power of the Keys. The Catholic Encyclopedia).

And that, to a degree, is correct. If Christ only gave Peter, and not the other apostles, the power to bind and loose, He would not have said the following to all the disciples:

18. Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.
19. Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning every thing whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them of my father which is in heaven.
20. For where there be two or three gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18:18-20).

Jesus was speaking to all of His disciples (those who became apostles) in the verses above, "AT that hour the Disciples came to JESUS, saying. Who, thinkest thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matthew 18:1). This would have been the perfect opportunity for Christ to state Peter if he would be. **Obviously, the disciples did not understand that Peter was to be the greatest based on what Jesus taught in Matthew 16:18-19.** Instead, after explaining how they needed to be humble, Jesus taught that they all had binding and loosing authority in the church.

Notice what the Apostle Paul understood:

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me...
9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised (Galatians 2:1,9).

He understood that at the time he wrote that, that Peter along with James and John were leaders in Jerusalem. It is reported that John lived for three decades after Peter died. And the Apostle John being a leader while Peter was alive, clearly would be a leader after Peter's death.

Notice what *The Catholic Encyclopedia* records this John,

John had a prominent position in the Apostolic body. Peter, James, and he were the only witnesses of the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mark, v, 37), of the Transfiguration (Matt., xvii, 1), and of the Agony in Gethsemani (Matt., xxvi, 37). Only he and Peter were sent into the city to make the preparation for the Last Supper (Luke, xxii, 8)...John alone remained near his beloved Master at the foot of the Cross on Calvary with the Mother of Jesus and the pious women, and took the desolate Mother into his care as the last legacy of Christ (John, xix, 25-27). After the Resurrection John with Peter was the first of the disciples to hasten to the grave and he was the first to believe that Christ had truly risen (John, xx, 2-10)... "the disciple whom Jesus loved". After Christ's Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, John took, together with Peter, a prominent part in the founding and guidance of the Church...the Apostle and Evangelist John lived in Asia Minor in the last decades of the first century and from Ephesus had guided the Churches of that province...After Domitian's death the Apostle returned to Ephesus during the reign of Trajan, and at Ephesus he died about A.D. 100 at a great age (Fonck L. Transcribed by Michael Little. St. John the Evangelist. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume VIII Copyright © 1910 by Robert Appleton Company Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight Nihil Obstat, October 1, 1910. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

In spite of these admissions, most Roman Catholics believe that after Peter died that [Linus](#) (who perhaps was a presbyter) became the leader of the entire church and was over John in authority. Paul mentioned Linus, though Peter never did:

Make haste to come before winter. Eubulus and Pudens and Linus and Claudia, and all the brethren, salute thee.

Biblically, that is all that we have related to Linus. Historically, we have no letters written to or from him.

It is no surprise that since John outlived Peter and all the other original apostles that any church leadership succession would have transferred to him.

Recall that even the Catholics admit that John guided the churches in Ephesus.

It would seem illogical that since many of the Catholics claim to have had four 'bishops of Rome' (after Peter) before John died, that John, an original apostle, would be subservient to them. This is especially true since none of those 'bishops of Rome' claim to have held the position of apostle--a bishop is essentially an elder who is a pastor or overseer (compare Acts 20 vs. 17 and 28).

Even the noted Catholic scholar F.A. Sullivan writes,

"...in Luke's day, local church leaders could be called either elders or overseers, without a clear distinction between the terms" (Sullivan F.A. From Apostles to Bishops: the development of the episcopacy in the early church. Newman Press, Mahwah (NJ), 2001, p. 65).

Overseers in this passage is the translation from the Greek term *episkopoi* which also means bishop.

As the Bible shows, an apostle is the highest spiritual position in the church, "And some verily God hath set in the Church first Apostles" (1 Corinthians 12:27 Rheims, vs. 28 in KJV). Thus it does not seem biblically reasonable that an elder in Rome ruled the true Church at a higher level than a prominent apostle ordained by Jesus and noted to be a pillar by Paul.

Furthermore, we have five books of the Bible (The Gospel according to John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and the Apocalypse/Revelation) written by John, plus he is mentioned in all the other Gospel accounts, plus several of the epistles. Also, John's successor according to early Catholic sources, was [Polycarp of Smyrna](#), who was a faithful saint according to Roman Catholics. And we have letters dating within perhaps a decade from John's death both to and from Polycarp.

Where Did Peter Live? Where Did Peter Die? Where Was Peter Buried?

Well, Peter traveled extensively, so he probably did not live in any area very long.

Peter originally lived near Galilee (Matthew 4:18). He was in or near Magdala of Galilee (Matthew 15:39;16:5) when Jesus spoke to him the famous passages in Matthew 16:16-19, where Jesus discussed building His church. So should this make Magdala the capital of the Christian church? Notice that Peter was not in Rome, and even if he ever was in Rome, it would have been over three decades later. After leaving Judea, Peter was busy helping build the church in Antioch and

Asia Minor. He spent nearly all of his remaining time in the area from Judea to Asia Minor. And most of the time, he was shown to be with the Apostle John (Acts 3:1-11; 4:13; 8:14; Galatians 2:9; 2 Peter 1:17).

As shown before, Peter often came back and visited Jerusalem. He also preached in Samaria (Acts 10:14-15), in Joppa (Acts 10:5) and Caesarea (Acts 10:24).

He did visit Antioch as Paul in Galatians 2:11 stated:

And when Cephas was come to Antioch, I resisted him in face, because he was reprehensible.

Peter at a minimum, visited people from a church in Babylon:

The Church saluteth you, that is in Babylon, coelect: and Mark my son I Peter 5:13.

The ANNOTATIONS from Chapter 5 of the *Rheims New Testament of 1582* on pages 513-514 states:

Oecumenius upon this place: and many more agree, that Rome is meant by the word Babylon, here also as in the 16 and 17 of the Apocalypse...Yet our Adversaries fearing hereby the sequel of Peters or the Popes supremacy at Rome, deny that ever he was there, or that this Epistle was written there, or that Babylon doth ere signify Rome. But they say that Peter wrote this Epistle at Babylon in Chaldea, though they never read either in Scriptures or other holy or profane history, that this Apostle was ever in that town.

Thus, many Roman Catholic scholars believe that the statement in I Peter 5:13 is proof that Peter was in Rome, though others are not convinced:

Horne, in his Introduction, vol. 4:p. 425, mentions four opinions on this subject. According to Bishop Pearson, Mill, and Le Clerc, it was Babylon in Egypt; according to Erasmus, Drusius, Beza, Dr. Lightfoot, Basnage, Beausobre, Dr. Cave, Wetstein, Drs. Benson and A. Clarke, it was Babylon in Assyria; according to Michaelis, it was Babylon in Mesopotamia; and according to Grotius, Drs. Whitby, Lardner, Macknight, and Hales, Bishop Tomline, and all the learned of the Romish communion, it is to be taken figuratively for Rome, according to what was done by John in Revelation 17:and 18:What renders the last opinion very improbable is, that to date an epistle at a place to which a figurative name is given, is without another instance in Scripture, and the thing itself seems quite absurd. The language of prophecy is quite a different matter. Paul wrote several of his epistles at Rome, and in no instance did he do anything of this kind. Such an opinion would have never gained ground, had there not been from early times a foolish attempt to connect Peter with Rome. (http://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/comment3/comm_vol45/htm/iv.htm 01/27/06)

Part of the reason for the confusion is that there were two-three towns named Babylon at that time, and that [Roman Catholics](#) believe that the Babylon in the Book of Revelation/Apocalypse refers to Rome, so the verse in 1 Peter probably does as well.

However, Catholics are correct that the Babylon in the Book of Revelation is Rome, as the following Catholic scholar wrote:

There was a strong anti-Roman tradition in the early Church. Rome was the harlot city soaked in the blood of the saints, the centre from which spread out wave after wave of persecution. The Book of Revelations' gloating vision of the coming ruin of Rome, 'Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great' (Revelations 14:8), remained a persistent strand so long as the empire continued to persecute the church, and survived even into the Middle Ages (Duffy, Eamon. *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes*. Yale University Press, New Haven (CT), 2002, pp.2,6).

But notice that there is a difference in the name of the Babylon in 1 Peter and Revelation. While 1 Peter 5:13 uses the term Babylon, which could obviously refer to the city with that name, Revelation 14:18 calls it "Babylon the Great" while Revelation 17:5 refers to it as "Mystery Babylon the Great"--hence in Revelation we clearly are seeing a reference to a city other than one name Babylon--and throughout history, most who professed Christ and looked into these passages in Revelation understood that Rome was "Babylon the Great" (the Bible, in Revelation 17:9, shows that Babylon the Great also sits on seven hills--and so does the city of Rome).

What about Peter's death? Notice what the *Rheims New Testament* records that Peter wrote just prior to it:

14. Being certain that the laying away of my tabernacle is at hand, according as our Lord JESUS Christ also signified to me.
15. And I will do my diligence, you to have often after my decease also, that you may keep a memory of these things.
16. For, not having followed unlearned fables, have we made the power and 'presence' of our Lord JESUS Christ known to you: but c made beholders of his greatness.
17. For, he receiving from God his father honour and glory, this manner of voice coming down to him from the magnificent glory, *This is my beloved son in whom I have pleased myself, hear him.*
18. And **this voice we heard** brought from heaven, **when we were** with him in the holy mount. (II Peter 1:14-18).

This is problematic as far as Rome is concerned. The reason is that the above passage seems to be teaching that John was still with Peter (John was part of the "we heard"). This is indirectly acknowledged by the ANNOTATIONS from Chapter 1 of I Peter from the *Rheims New Testament of 1582* on page 515 as it states:

c By this it is plain, that either John, James, or Peter must be the author of this epistle, for these three only were present at the Transfiguration. Matt. 17:1

Since the particular above James is believed to have been killed by 39 A.D. in Judea (Acts 12:1), either Peter died near then (which he did not, he died around three or so decades later) or the Apostle John must have still been with Peter. And since there is no evidence that the Apostle John went to Rome in the 60s A.D. (the available evidence, including from Roman Catholic sources) suggests that John was in Jerusalem or Asia Minor at that time. Plus, if John was in Jerusalem or Asia Minor then, since Peter seems to be claiming that John was with him, then Peter would have been in Jerusalem or Asia Minor just prior to his death. Hence, to claim that Peter spent much time in Rome or died in Rome seems to be inconsistent with the biblical record.

Some Catholic sources report that Clement allegedly was appointed to take over from Peter then:

St. Clement in his Epistles to St. James, our Lord's brother, witnesseth, that St. Peter encouraging him to take after his decease the charge of the Apostolic Roman See, promised that after his departure he would not cease to pray for him and his flock, thereby to ease him of his Pastoral burden (Annotations, Rheims New Testament, p. 516).

However, the Vatican no longer accepts that Clement wrote that letter and instead claims that Peter somehow put Linus in charge (although other sources state that Paul did that) and thus it has various contradiction involving Peter, his sojourn, and his alleged "[apostolic succession](#)" (it would seem that if any one succeeded Peter, it would be the Apostle John as he outlived Peter for perhaps three decades or so.)

The place of Peter's burial is also controversial.

Essentially according to the Quo Vadis legend, Peter was buried in Rome. However, that account was not written until over a century after Peter died.

But there was something else that some have pointed to:

It is not before around 160 CE that we see some kind of interest by Roman Christians in the site by the construction a simple monument that consisted of a niche and a courtyard (the *Tropaion Gaii*). The monument was probably used for gatherings, but not as a marker as an individual grave, since memory of Peter's original burying place was lost by the time the *Tropaion* was erected. The existence of the *Tropaion* did not result in the development of a Christian burial site, but was integrated into a middle-class non-Christian burial street. Only in the age of Constantine the site was firmly and finally taken over by Christians, thereby obliterating all earlier traces of burial activity apart from the immediate space around the *Tropaion*. (Zangenberg, Jürgen; Labahn, Michael. Christians as a religious minority in a multicultural city: modes of interaction and identity formation in early Imperial Rome : studies on the basis of a seminar at the second conference of the European Association for Biblical Studies (EABS) from July 8-12, 2001, in Rome. *Volume 243 of Journal for the study of the New Testament Library of New Testament Studies, the Series European studies on Christian origins*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004, p. 132)

Furthermore that site must not have been accepted originally as , according to the *Liber Pontificalis* (the Book of Popes) it was Roman bishop Cornelius who supposedly moved the body of Peter to its present location (nearly two centuries after Peter died). Here is one written account:

XXII Cornelius (Pope 251-253)...He during his pontificate at the request of a certain matron Lucina, took up the bodies of the apostles, blessed Peter and Paul up out of the catacombs by night; first the body of blessed Paul was received by the blessed Lucina] and laid in her own garden on the Via Ostiensis, near the place where he was beheaded; the body of the blessed Peter was received by the blessed Cornelius, the bishop, and laid near to the place where he was crucified, among the bodies of the holy bishops, in the shrine of Apollo, on the Mons Aureus, in the Batican, by the palace of Nero, on June 29. (Translated by Louise Ropes Loomis. *The Book of the Popes (Liber Pontificalis)*. Originally published by Columbia University Press, NY 1916. 2006 edition by Evolution Publishing, Merchantville (NJ), pp. 25-26).

Hence, one of the earliest Catholic writings attempting to demonstrate that Rome had a series of early bishops/popes states that Peter was NOT originally buried in Rome. There would be no point in moving Peter's body if people actually had believed that the *Tropaion Gaii* marked the spot.

Interestingly the conclusion of the one who supposedly identified the body of Peter in Vatican Hill was that he was not convinced it was Peter:

Antonio Ferrua ...was the Jesuit archaeologist responsible for uncovering what is believed to be the tomb of St Peter in the grottoes under St Peter's Basilica in Rome...Ferrua's discovery came, however, quite by chance. In 1939 Pope Pius XI died and plans were made to bury him beside Pius X in the crypt below the basilica. But when workmen began to dig under St Peter's they came upon the floor of Constantine's original basilica, beneath which was a necropolis, a street of Roman tombs dating from the 2nd century AD...Under the supervision of Monsignor Ludwig Kaas, the Administrator of St Peter's, the Vatican appointed four archaeologists, including Ferrua, to investigate the tombs...Ferrua's discovery was shrouded in controversy; in 1953, after the death of Monsignor Kaas, it was revealed by a workman that he had discovered some other bones which Kaas had ordered to be removed from the repository and stored at the Vatican. When these were later identified as the remains of an elderly man, it was concluded that these were the bones of the saint. "The relics of St Peter," announced Pope Paul VI on June 26 1968, "have been identified in a manner which we believe convincing"; the following day, after a ceremony in front of the aedicula, the remains were restored to the repository.

Ferrua was more circumspect. Aware of the scepticism that surrounded even the analysis of the Greek fragment - which others had read as *Petros endei* or "Peter is not here" - he recently told the Italian Catholic newspaper *L'Avvenire* that he was "not convinced" that the saint's bones had been found...A man of deep faith, Ferrua was a rigorous scholar, much admired for his refusal to allow his beliefs to compromise his work (The Rev Antonio Ferrua. *Telegraph*, London - May 29, 2003 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1431338/The-Rev-Antonio-Ferrua.html> viewed 07/20/09).

Thus, the one credited for finding Peter's body was unconvinced by the evidence he had investigated.

It should be noted that there is also the view that Peter died in Judea and was interred in the Mount of Olives—an ossuary box bearing the inscription “Shimon Bar Jonah” has been found and some believe it may be referring to the Simon Bar-Jonah (Fingegan J. *The Archaeology of the New Testament*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, reprint 1979, pp. 359-375) that became the Apostle Peter as per Matthew 16:17—and although that is inconclusive, it is probably stronger contemporary “evidence” than Rome seems to have as Peter's original burial site.

Here is some limited information about it written by F. Paul Peterson in 1960, edited by James Tabor, and somewhat shortened by me:

While visiting a friend in Switzerland, I heard of what seemed to me, one of the greatest discoveries since the time of Christ—that Peter was buried in Jerusalem and not in Rome...

After talking to many priests and investigating various sources of information, I finally was greatly rewarded by learning where I could buy the only known book on the subject, which was also written in Italian. It is called, “*Gli Scavi del Dominus Flevit*”, printed in 1958 at the *Tipografia del PP. Francescani*, in Jerusalem. It was written by P. B. Bagatti and J. T. Milik, both Roman Catholic priests...

In Jerusalem I spoke to many Franciscan priests who all read, finally, though reluctantly, that the bones of Simon Bar Jona (St. Peter) were found in Jerusalem, on the Franciscan monastery site called, “*Dominus Flevit*” (where Jesus was supposed to have wept over Jerusalem), on the Mount of Olives...the names of Christian Biblical characters were found

on the ossuaries (bone boxes). The names of Mary and Martha were found on one box and right next to it was one with the name of Lazarus, their brother. Other names of early Christians were found on other boxes. Of greatest interest, however, was that which was found within twelve feet from the place where the remains of Mary, Martha and Lazarus were found—the remains of St. Peter. They were found in an ossuary, on the outside of which was clearly and beautifully written in Aramaic, “Simon Bar Jona”...

Then I asked, “Does Father Bagatti (co-writer of the book in Italian on the subject, and archaeologist) really believe that those are the bones of St. Peter?” “Yes, he does,” was the reply. Then I asked, “But what does the Pope think of all this?” That was a thousand dollar question and he gave me a million dollar answer. “Well,” he confidentially answered in a hushed voice, “Father Bagatti told me personally that three years ago he went to the Pope (Pius XII) in Rome and showed him the evidence and the Pope said to him, ‘Well, we will have to make some changes, but for the time being, keep this thing quiet.’” In awe I asked also in a subdued voice, “So the Pope really believes that those are the bones of St. Peter?” “Yes,” was his answer. “The documentary evidence is there, he could not help but believe.” ...

I did not have the opportunity to see priest Bagatti while in Jerusalem. I wrote to him, however, on March 15, 1960, as follows: “I have spoken with a number of Franciscan priests and monks and they have told me about you and the book of which you are a co-writer. I had hoped to see you and to compliment you on such a great discovery, but time would not permit. Having heard so much about you and that you are an archaeologist (with the evidence in hand), I was convinced, with you, concerning the ancient burial ground that the remains found in the ossuary with the name on it, ‘Simon Bar Jona’, written in Aramaic, were those of St. Peter.” It is remarkable that in his reply he did not contradict my statement, which he certainly would have done if he honestly could have done so. “I was very much convinced with you – ... that the remains found in the ossuary ... were those of St. Peter.” This confirms the talk I had with the Franciscan monk in Bethlehem and the story he told me of Priest Bagatti’s going to the Pope with the evidence concerning the bones of St. Peter in Jerusalem. In his letter one can see that he is careful because of the Pope’s admonition to keep this discovery quiet. (Peterson F. Paul. Saint Peter’s Tomb: The Discovery of Peter’s Tomb in Jerusalem in 1953. <http://www.jesusedynasty.com/blog/2007/04/03/has-the-ossuary-of-simon-peter-aka-simeon-son-of-jonah-been-found/> viewed 02/17/11)

The Jerusalem burial of Peter is not currently taught by the Church of Rome. Thus, it appears to me, at least, that scholars (including Catholic ones) tend to understand that it is questionable if Peter was buried in Rome and if his body is actually in St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City (see also [What Do Roman Catholic Scholars Actually Teach About Early Church History?](#)).

Yes, Peter Had Preeminence, But...

While Peter did have preeminence, it needs to be understood that he did not allow people to bow down before him:

25. And it came to pass, When Peter was come in, Cornelius came to meet him, and falling at his feet adored.

26. But Peter lifted him up saying, Arise, myself also am a man. (Acts 10:25-26, RNT)

25 As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.” (Acts 10:24-26, NKJV)

And while Roman Catholic pontiffs may claim that they do not allow actual worship/adoration of themselves, they certainly do allow (and historically, sometimes demanded, that people bow before them).

Thus, the Peter of the Bible did not act like many Roman Catholic pontiffs. Nor did he dress like them (see).

One thing that I should make clear here is that we of the Philadelphia remnant of the Church of God do believe that while Peter was alive, Peter did have preeminence.

And that is not simply my opinion. Notice what the late [Herbert W. Armstrong](#) taught:

In founding God’s Church, Jesus worked primarily through one man, Peter, even though He originally chose His 12 disciples. Few have ever noticed that Peter was the real leader. Acts 15: Here is the crux chapter, not generally understood... The Jerusalem conference showed that PETER was preeminent over even Paul, although Paul was the ONE MAN God worked through primarily in the ministry to gentiles... This crucial crux chapter has been misunderstood, twisted and distorted. I have tried to take space to MAKE IT CLEAR in this article (Armstrong, Herbert W. Originally published in Worldwide News article 2/19/78 and quoted in the Living Church News. Jan-Feb 1999; p.7).

RC Meredith wrote:

It should also be very clear that the living Christ has always directed each phase of His Work primarily through **one man** at a time. Moses directed different phases of God's Work within the Israel of his day, and after him Joshua, then Samuel, then others. God indicates that He primarily used the Apostle Peter to direct the Work to the Jews, and the Apostle Paul to direct the Work to the Gentile world: "But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised" (Galatians 2:7–9). The above scripture shows that although Barnabas was an apostle, and James and John were "pillars"—certainly leading apostles—the Gospel to the circumcision had been committed to Peter's overall direction...

Some have also misunderstood the account of the Jerusalem conference, as given in Acts 15. There certainly was an open and brotherly atmosphere in that landmark conference. There was obviously a good deal of hearty and perhaps even heated discussion among the "apostles **and** elders" (v. 6).

But, "And when there had been much dispute, **Peter** rose up and said to them: 'Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us'" (vv. 7–8). Then Peter proceeded to explain God's decision to give the Gentiles the Holy Spirit without having them first become circumcised (Meredith RC. Correct Church Government is Vital. Living Church News. March-April 2008, pp. 3-5, 17-19).

The Roman Church claims Peter died in Rome and somehow placed Linus in charge to succeed him, and that the true church must be traced through Rome. However, there is no actual proof of that, plus according to the Bible that is not possible as the same city could not have continuous leadership for Christians (Hebrews 13:14).

Since the Bible teaches that the highest office of the Church would be that of an apostle (1 Corinthians 12:28), any succession of leadership that could have passed from the Apostle Peter would have passed to another apostle if one was alive, and according to scripture (as well as historical accounts, this would seem to have had to go to the [Apostle John](#)).

The Idea that Peter Was Not the Only Possible Apostle the Church Could be Traced Through is Not a New Idea

While some Roman Catholics like to suggest that they have the only apostolic succession, this is not the view of the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#), the Churches of God, or even by one of their most renowned historians, Tertullian.

Towards the end of the second century or the beginning of the third century, Tertullian wrote the following:

Anyhow the heresies are at best novelties, and have no continuity with the teaching of Christ. Perhaps some heretics may claim Apostolic antiquity: we reply: Let them publish the origins of their churches and unroll the catalogue of their bishops till now from the Apostles or from some bishop appointed by the Apostles, as the Smyrnaeans count from Polycarp and John, and the Romans from Clement and Peter; let heretics invent something to match this (Tertullian. *Liber de praescriptione haereticorum*. Circa 200 A.D. as cited in Chapman J. Transcribed by Lucy Tobin. Tertullian. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XIV. Copyright © 1912 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight. Nihil Obstat, July 1, 1912. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

Since the two groups (Rome vs. Smyrna/Asia Minor) had different beliefs by that time (please see the article [Location of the Early Church](#)), they were not the same by the end of the second century (though they probably were together under Pauls'/Peter's/John's leadership in the first).

Yet it is clear that there were two possible ways (according at least to Tertullian) that the church could be traced. From Peter to John to Polycarp and their descendants or from Peter to Clement and their descendants (note that here and elsewhere, Tertullian never acknowledges Linus as an apostolic successor).

Concluding Comments

While I am not completely sure what town was referred to by Peter in 1 Peter 5:13, I would like to make the following brief comments:

- 1) If the Babylon in I Peter 5:13 does not refer to Rome, then there is absolutely no contemporaneous evidence that Peter ever was in Rome, and thus the idea of him being the first bishop of Rome would be absurd.
- 2) Even if Peter ever was in Rome, the fact is that Paul was in Rome before Peter, and thus has a greater claim to have been the first bishop of Rome.
- 3) The Book of Acts demonstrates that Paul was the first to speak to the Jewish leaders in Rome about the kingdom of God--thus it makes no sense that Peter could have been "Bishop of Rome" for the 18 years prior to this.
- 4) The fact is that neither Peter nor Paul founded the church in Rome (this is documented in the article [What Does Rome Actually Teach About Early Church History?](#)) thus there probably was an earlier leader other than them.
- 5) There were no bishops in Rome prior to the second century according to many Catholic sources.
- 6) Even if Peter did go to Rome, he was never there long enough to fix his residence there.
- 7) Even if Peter did fix his residence there (and there is no clear contemporaneous evidence that he did, even writing one letter would not prove it), that of itself does not mean that some church leader in Rome automatically would have the authority over all the Christian churches.
- 8) If Peter was the first among equals, then after his death one equal to his apostolic rank would be the logical leader.
- 9) The Apostle John was alive for decades after Peter died. It makes no sense that he, an apostle, would have a lower rank than a leader in Rome, who was probably just an elder/presbyter.
- 10) If Rome was the place that had what many Roman Catholics call *the cathedra* of authority of the true Church, the Apostle John who warned about false teachers, etc. could have made the understanding of where the true Church was by indicating that it was Rome. Yet, instead, according to Roman Catholic sources, his last writing appears to warn against Rome.

So Peter may have been to Rome, may have died in Rome, or perhaps neither. But either way, he along with the Apostle John were leaders of the early church. And while we have early sources (from within a decade or so of John's death) indicating who John's successor was, we have no contemporaneous evidence suggesting that any one other than John was Peter's *de facto* successor.

And no true successor of Peter would behave in the grandiose ways that many [Roman Catholic](#) pontiffs have.

An article of significant related interest may be [Apostolic Succession](#).

Thiel B. Peter and Rome. www.cogwriter.com (c) 2006/2008/2009/2011/2012/2012 0513