

The Primacy of Peter

By Greg Durel

It is stated, by some, the Apostle Peter had primacy over the other apostles. He is sometimes referred to as the "Prince" of the apostles. All of this, of course, has no basis whatsoever in Scripture and, as a matter of fact, is contradicted in at least three places in the New Testament. Let us look at some New Testament facts:

1. Peter's name appears 153 times in the New Testament.
2. Paul's name appears 153 times in the New Testament as well. If Peter had primacy, if he was the "Chief Apostle" certainly his name would appear more than the Apostle Paul's. Does not the President of the United States' name appear more often than the Vice President's name in the media, or anywhere else for that matter? When we leave the historical narrative of the Gospels, the transitional narrative of the Book of Acts, and journey into the Epistles, which is the practical application of the truths found in the Gospels, we should note even more facts.
3. Peter's name appears only seven times in the Epistles.
4. Paul's name appears thirty times in the Epistles, more than four times to one over Peter's. One would think, when looking for the practical application of the Christian life, that the "Chief Apostle" would be the one to turn to, but the reality is that we must look to Paul over Peter more than four to one for that application.
5. Anyone who reads the New Testament would have to agree that we live under grace and not under the law. When we look to the writings of the Apostle Peter, I and II Peter, we find that Peter mentions the word grace a total of ten times with no true definitive explanation of grace at all. When we turn to the writing of the Apostle Paul we find the word grace mentioned ninety times or nine to one over that of Peter, and in Paul's writings, grace is defined and redefined so that even a child could understand it.
6. Many who promote the "primacy" of Peter also state that the New Testament does not claim inspiration for itself, but in the writing of Peter himself. In II Peter 3:15, 16, Peter admits that the Lord gave revelation to Paul that He did not give to Peter. He admits further in those passages that Paul's writings are inspired and furthermore he very plainly admits that they, in fact, are Scripture. If we accept the divine origin of the Bible, we must recognize that the writings of Paul and of Peter are both inspired and they are Holy Scripture. Upon further reading of the New Testament, we find that Peter wrote 4,041 inspired words. We also find that Paul wrote 43,402 words of Scripture or more than ten to one. "The Primacy" of whom?
7. The book of Acts records the history of the infant church. After Acts 12:18, Peter appears in 15 chapters of the book.
8. In Galatians 2:11-16, we find Paul had to face down the "Prince" of the apostles because he was teaching heresy. It was Paul who corrects Peter's theology on the vital doctrine of

grace. Further, in Galatians 2:6-8 we see the Scriptures very clearly states that "God accepts no man's person," that is, no one has primacy. Furthermore, the Bible states that as the Gospel of the circumcised, the Jews, was given unto Peter, equally the Gospel of the uncircumcised, the Gentiles, was committed to Paul. Who do you suppose had the biggest constituency? In verse 8 it is stated clearly and without doubt that Paul and Peter were equal and there was certainly no primacy of anyone acknowledged. But that isn't all.

9. At the first "Church Council" in Jerusalem, Acts 15, we find the apostles present at this meeting. Peter is there, and James is there, etc. We find Peter standing to speak and clearly stating in verse 10 and 11 that the Old Testament as well as the New Testament believers are saved apart from works despite the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. We find Barnabas speaking, Paul speaking, but the important and significant facts that should be noted here are that the apostle James presided over the council and not Peter, and it is clear in verse 19 that James, NOT Peter renders the decision at this council.

10. In Paul's Epistle to the church in Rome, he made it clear that he would not even think of coming to Rome if another apostle had been there, yet alone the chief apostle (Romans 15:20). When he sends his greetings to the believers there, he mentions 27 people but never mentions Peter. Peter was not mentioned because he was not nor had he ever been there. Peter states in his Epistle that he was in Babylon and not in Rome. Which was only natural because he was the apostle to the Jews and not the Gentiles.

11. Furthermore, in Acts 8, it became necessary to send apostles to Samaria to confirm and establish the Gospel. We find in verse 14 that Peter was sent and not the person sending. The "Vicar" of Christ is not sent by the bishops, but he sends them.

12. For some, only "the words of Christ in red" are authoritative. For that mindset we turn to the Gospel of Luke 22:24. There we find "a strife" amongst the apostles concerning who should have primacy. In verse 25, Christ clearly indicates that the false dichotomy of clergy and laity is a practice of pagans. In verse 26 and 27 Christ states that in Christianity God is no respecter of persons and true humility of service is the path to true Christlikeness.

Now, if that were not enough, for the most logical, open-minded individual, let us put an end to the nonsense of the "primacy" of Peter and the most foolish notion that Peter was the first pope and "Vicar" of Christ. Let us call to the witness stand the noble apostle Peter himself, and from his own mouth and his own testimony, let us see clearly that he is not the pope, and that he is not the "Vicar of Christ," and that he is not "the Chief Apostle," and that he has no "Primacy" whatever.

13. In 1 Peter 5:1 the apostle, writing in 63 A.D., thirty years after the ascension of the Savior, said, "The elders which are among you I exhort, I WHO AM A FELLOW ELDER, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." Now Peter has had thirty years to contemplate Christ's remarks in Matthew 16. He walked with Christ personally for three years and, three decades later has absolutely no understanding that he is a pope, a primate, a chief or anything except an elder in the church. The Word of God says, "let God be true and every man found to be a liar." Can we not once and for all let God be true and let every man who promotes the primacy of Peter and the very nature of the papacy itself be found to be a liar?