

John 1 part 6

In this lesson, we will see Jesus call his first disciples (John, Andrew, Simon, Philip, and Nathanael). We also see Him change Simon's name to Kayfas (Cephas).

I. THE FIRST TWO DISCIPLES ARE CALLED – v.35-42

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

This would be better rendered in the word order of the original Greek, “*The next day, again John was standing...*” It is stating that on day one, John was questioned by the Scribes and Pharisees (v. 19-28). On day two, he sees Jesus for the first time, and proclaims Him to be the Lamb of God (v.29-34).

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

On day three, John (standing by two of *his* disciples) again sees Jesus, and proclaims that He is the Lamb of God (v.35,36).

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

These two are likely John, and Andrew.

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

Have you ever wondered where “rabbi” comes from? How do you say “Thank you very much” in Hebrew? תָּהֲדָה רַבָּה “Todah rabbah”. “Rav” in Hebrew can mean *many, much, or great*.

Rabbi (רַבִּי) or *Rabbee*, as it is in the Greek (Ράβη) literally means “*my great(one)*”.

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

This would have been about 4 O'clock in the afternoon.

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

II. WHO WAS JOHN'S AUDIENCE?

- **Jews and Greeks, comprising a world-wide audience.**
 - **This is seen in John 1:1, 10-12, 17**
 - **This is also seen in the phrase “being interpreted”**

III. WHAT DOES PETER'S NAME MEAN?

What is a *Pope*? It is the claim that apostolic succession continues with the Popes of the Roman Catholic Church unto this day, and can be traced back all the way to the apostle Peter. Is the Roman Catholic Church the true Church? Was it ever the true Church? Within “Christianity” is there *only*, and has

there **always only** been Catholic and Protestant? What did Jesus mean in his famous statement to Peter in Matthew 16:18-19? (It is also found in Mark 8, and Luke 9) The answers to all of these questions are of the utmost importance in our quest for the truth.

In his article *The First Pope*, **Anura Guruge describes who the original “Pope” was in fact, and how this position came to be:**

The overriding problem is that the term ‘pope’, in the context it is now used, only became the exclusive prerogative of the Bishop of Rome in the late 4th century, during the reign of Siricius, December 384 to November 399. Prior to that the Greek pappas and the Latin papa was commonly used in their original sense to refer to any priest or prelate, in much the same way that today’s Catholic priests are called ‘father’. It is the retroactive application of this title to those prior to Siricius, in particular the first 9 listed as ‘popes’, that causes issues. The term ‘pope’ or an office comparable to that of a ‘pope’ are not mentioned in the Bible.¹

In order to adequately examine this doctrine, we must view the famous Matthew 16 passage in its entirety. It is within the very words of Jesus that we find the answer.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.²

The crux of this passage is not the person of Peter, nor is it the declaration of who (if anyone) would be the “Vicar of Christ”. The focal point is not Peter, but *Peter’s statement*. In order to understand this deduction, we must first understand something about Peter’s name, and about the word “rock”.

All the way back in the first chapter of John, *Peter or better*, Simon is brought to Jesus by his brother, Andrew:

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.³

When Jesus meets Simon “One who has heard”, Jesus renames him using the Aramaic word for stone, *Cephas* (Κηφᾶς “Kay-fas”). This is quite possibly the root from which “Caiaphas” is derived. What is the Greek word for stone? *Petros* – aka, *Peter*. After Peter proclaims that Jesus is indeed the promised Messiah, Jesus’ responds with, “*Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*”⁴

Peter’s statement is the subject that this verse is centered upon. Jesus continues in verse 18, “*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*”

If we would look into the actual words that Jesus uses in this passage, we would find that Peter is not the “rock”. Jesus tell Peter, “...thou art ‘Petros’(a small stone), and upon this ‘petra’(large mass of rock, or a ledge) I will build my church.

Peter himself uses the word ‘*Petra*’ a few times in Scripture... let’s see who he refers to:



*Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. **This is the stone** which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.⁵*

*Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner **stone**, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him (Jesus) shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the **stone** which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a **stone** of stumbling, and a **rock of offence**...⁶*

Both 'stone' in Acts 4 and 'rock' in 1 Peter 2 are the Greek word *petra*. When the word 'stone' is used three times in the 1 Peter passage, it is the Greek word *lithos*.

Jesus is not referring to Peter as "the rock", but is making a play on words using Peter's name. It can even be inferred that Jesus is contrasting Peter as a 'small stone' with the 'large mass of rock' which was Peter's statement, "...Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

It is this truth upon which the church would be built, not on a man. It may be also important for us to note that the word 'church' in Matthew 16 is not a reference to a building, or even an organization. It is the Greek word *ekklesia*, meaning 'assembly' parallel to the Hebrew קְהֻלָּה 'qa'hal'.

Interestingly, just a few verses later we find Peter rebuking Jesus when he tells his disciples about his imminent suffering and death. Peter basically tells Jesus that this just couldn't happen. Jesus then responds to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."⁷

On top of all of these deductions, may it also be noted that according to R.C.C. tradition, the title of "Pope" evolved out of one single position – the bishop of Rome. If their claims that Peter was the first Pope, aka the first Bishop of Rome, then it would only be expected to find Biblical evidence of Peter holding this position. "Rome" is mentioned nine times in the New Testament, and not a single one of them has any connection with Peter. How do the Catholics attempt to circumvent this lack of evidence? They allege that as Peter is giving his salutations at the end of first Peter, when he mentions being in Babylon, he really means Rome.

There may be an endless amount of Catholic tradition and legends which support their claim to validity as the true church, and the veracity of the Papacy, but an unbiased look at history, and an impartial examination of the pages of the Bible will lead us to a vastly different conclusion.

IV. JESUS CALLS PHILIP AND NATHANAEL – v.43-51

43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

The name of this city (which is apparently the town of Peter's origin, though not his current dwelling) should not be confused with Bethesda (Bet-Chesdah – "House of Grace") where the impotent man was healed. That is in Jerusalem. Bet-tzaidah means "house of hunting".

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have

found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Nazareth had a stigma attached to it. It wasn't any place great to hail from. It's like saying "Can anything good come out of Angier?"

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Jesus knew that Nathanael's heart was sincere. Natan-el means "Gift of God".

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

This shouldn't be taken as a statement of condemnation, but of fact.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. This is an amazing statement akin to Peter's declaration of who Jesus was.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

- The stress of "hereafter" is *from this point forward*.
- "Ye shall see heaven opened" would most likely be figurative for Nathanael. This carries the idea that Nathanael would see *the evidence of the heavens opening* in the earthly ministry of Christ.
- The statement that Jesus makes next most certainly refers to "Jacob's ladder" seen in **Genesis 28:10-16**.

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

By their ascending and descending upon him it is probable that he meant that Nathanael would have evidence that they came to his aid, and that he would have "the" kind of protection and assistance from God which would show "more fully that he was the Messiah." Thus his life, his many deliverances from dangers, his wisdom to confute his skilled and cunning adversaries, the scenes of his death, and the attendance of angels at his resurrection, may all be represented by the angels descending upon him, and all would show to Nathanael and the other disciples most clearly that he was the Son of God.⁸

¹ <http://popes-and-papacy.com>

² Matthew 16:13-20.

³ John 1:40-42.

⁴ Matthew 16:17.

⁵ Acts 4:8-12.

⁶ 1 Peter 2:6-8.

⁷ Matthew 16:23.

⁸ Barnes Notes on the Bible - John 1:51