

THE FEAST DAY OF PETER AND PAUL

Peter: The Rock Paul's Revelations

**June 29, 2010
Revision B**

**GOSPEL: Matthew 16:13-19
EPISTLE: 2 Corinthians 11:21-12:9**

Peter and Paul were both martyred in Rome at about the same time. Some claim they were martyred on the same day, but this is not conclusive. In the martyrologies of both East and West (The Prologue of Ochrid, and Butler's Lives of the Saints, respectively), the Feast Day of both Peter and Paul is June 29. They were not martyred at the same location, however. Paul, being a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29) merited a quick death and was beheaded; Peter, who was not a Roman citizen, merited no special favor and was crucified (upside down at his request).

Today's Gospel lesson from either Matthew 16, Mark 8 or Luke 9 is used regularly in the West at about this time or in August. Today's Epistle is also used in the West at about this time of year or just before Ash Wednesday prior to Lent. In the East, today's Epistle lesson is also used for the 19th Sunday after Pentecost.

In celebrating the lives of Peter and Paul together, we recognize that the Gospel for the circumcised was committed to Peter and that for the uncircumcised to Paul (Galatians 2:7-9). Yet there was considerable overlap and working together of Peter and Paul, especially in Antioch in the late 40's and early 50's AD (Galatians 2:11-15). In addition, Paul's custom was to stop first at the Jewish Synagogue when he entered a city (Acts 17:1-2, 10). Only after they rejected him did he go to the Gentiles (Acts 13:42-49). Peter, on the other hand began by preaching to the Jews, but his later missionary journeys took him very far afield to places dominated by Gentiles such as Asia, Macedonia, Britain and Italy (see Appendix A pp. 34-37 for Peter's Missionary Journeys).

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PETER: THE ROCK

June 29, 2010
Revision B

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 16:13-19 (Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-20)

Today's Gospel lesson took place in Caesarea Philippi (v.13), which was Northwest of Galilee, and which was a largely Gentile town. The date was mid 29 AD or almost a year before the Crucifixion. The Twelve had been sent out two by two by the Lord about 6 months earlier (Matthew 10:5-23) to heal the sick, cleanse lepers, cast out demons and raise the dead. In six days, the Lord planned to reveal Himself (Matthew 17:1) for Who He really was in Glory on the mountain of Transfiguration. [There is some disagreement among archaeologists today as to whether this was Mt. Herman near Caesarea Philippi or Mt. Tabor in Galilee.]

Peter's Confession

The Lord had just warned His disciples to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (v.12). The Pharisees as a group came together during the Maccabean period as a group of Scribes bent on upholding the Mosaic Law, especially regarding uncleanness. They were supported in this by the vast majority of the people. The Sadducees, on the other hand, represented the priests and their families (Acts 5:17) and had strong differences of opinion from the Pharisees (Acts 23:1-9). One thing they did agree on was the rejection of Jesus as Messiah.

In Caesarea Philippi, Jesus had retreated somewhat from the Pharisees and Sadducees after a confrontation with them (vv.1-4). There in Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples a question: "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?" (v.13). John Chrysostom pointed out that they were in a region where they could more freely speak their mind without criticism from the Jewish leaders. And Jesus did not ask who the Jewish leaders said that He is, but who people in general said He is (Homily Liv on Matthew 16).

The disciples responded: "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets" (v.14). Each of these answers had some reasoning behind it. Herod had thought that Jesus was a resurrected John the Baptist (Matthew 14:1-2) and that this was the source of His power. Elijah had been promised to come just prior to "the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord" (Malachi 4:5). Jeremiah had been taken into Egypt with some of the leaders of Israel just prior to the Babylonian captivity (Jeremiah 43:1-7, 44:1) and was martyred there. Legend had it that Jeremiah concealed the Ark of the Covenant (which had fallen into disuse) before going to Egypt. Since the disciples were looking for the Kingdom of God in Glory, all these speculations about Jesus had some logic behind them.

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Peter, however, answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (v.16). This was not the first time the Twelve had acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God. Nathanael had said so first (Spring 27 AD) at his calling when Jesus told him He saw him in secret (John 1:48-50). The Twelve had admitted this also (Spring 29 AD) after Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:33). Jesus had taught that He was the Son of God (John 3:16-18; 5:25; Matthew 11:27) prior to Peter’s confession and even the Gergesene demoniacs admitted it (Matthew 8:29). But yet Peter was called blessed for his confession whereas Nathanael and the Twelve weren’t.

John Chrysostom saw in Peter’s confession a cornerstone of divine doctrine. In Greek and Roman mythology, being a son of the gods was rather commonplace. There were many sons of the gods, some legitimate and some illegitimate. Yet Peter’s confession was set apart as a revelation from the Father (v.17).

To show this, Chrysostom pointed out that as Peter had referred to His Lord: “Christ, the Son of the Living God”, so His Lord referred to him “Simon Bar-Jonah” or Simon son of Jonah (vv.16-17). Like Father, like Son. “Unless Peter had rightly confessed Him as begotten of the very Father Himself, this was no work of revelation; had he accounted our Lord to be one of the many, his saying was not worthy of a blessing. For (the Twelve earlier) confessed not such a sonship as Peter, but accounted Him to be truly Son as one of the many, and though peculiarly so beyond the many, yet not of the same substance. Peter’s statement was then no longer a human opinion but a divine doctrine” (Ibid.).

This is a cornerstone of the Faith in that we need to recognize Jesus as God Incarnate. As Jesus told Nicodemus, he who believes this “will not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

The Rock for Building the Church

Following Peter’s confession, Jesus referred to him as a Rock and said, “On this rock I will build My Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (v.18). This was not the first time Jesus had called Peter a rock. Over two years earlier, John the Baptist had pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God (John 1:29,36) to Andrew and the Apostle John. Andrew then went to find Peter, his brother, saying, “We have found the Messiah” (John 1:41). When Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, Jesus said, “You are Simon, the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas (which is translated, a rock)”. The Greek word *petra*, often translated “Peter”, means a large rock. Cephas comes from the Chaldean word *kafe*, also meaning rock. Peter seems to be referred to more often in later years by the name the Lord gave him (Peter or Cephas) than by the name his parents gave him (Simon or Simeon).

Chrysostom pointed out that the Father had also referred to Jeremiah in similar terms as Jesus did Peter. He called Jeremiah a fortified city, a pillar of iron and a wall of bronze in his fight against the kings, princes, and priests of Judah (Jeremiah 1:18-19). Yet Jeremiah had to deal with only one nation; Peter took on the whole world (Ibid.).

Much disagreement has developed in later centuries over whether “the rock” referred to Simon’s person or Simon’s confession. The Orthodox Church has always maintained that “the rock” is Peter’s confession and that this confession is a cornerstone to the faith. The gates of

Hades has not prevailed against Simon's confession; but it has prevailed against his person. For example, Peter denied the Lord three times (Matthew 26:69-75) in what was described as Satan sifting Peter like wheat (Luke 22:31). Peter also played hypocrite in Antioch and had to be corrected by Paul (Galatians 2:11-14).

John Chrysostom referred to Peter as "the leader of the apostolic choir" (Ibid.). On Pentecost, it was Peter who spoke out boldly with the Eleven (Acts 2:14), preaching to the crowds. It was Peter also who spoke to the crowds on Solomon's Porch (Acts 3:11-12), who spoke to the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8), who spoke to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-9), and whose shadow healed sick people (Acts 5:15). But yet, at the Council of Jerusalem in 48 AD, after Peter, Paul and Barnabas had spoken (Acts 15:7-12), James, the Lord's brother and Bishop of Jerusalem, rendered the decision of the council (Acts 15:19).

In our Gospel text, the Lord also said that He will give to Peter "the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you (singular) bind on earth shall be, having been bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be, having been loosed in heaven" (v.19). On the evening of the Resurrection, He repeated this to the Eleven, minus Thomas: "If you (plural) forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23).

The context of the "binding and loosing" is the inner workings of the Church in our Gospel text. A few weeks later, the Lord elaborated on this, again in the context of the Church, where two or three are gathered together in His Name (Matthew 18:20). There He gave instructions regarding one brother sinning against another: First speak to him alone; if he won't listen, take one or two others that by the mouths of two or three witnesses every word may be established. The two or three witnesses comes from Mosaic Law regarding capital punishment (Deuteronomy 17:6); evidence from two or three witnesses represented confirmation (Deuteronomy 19:15). This principle of two witnesses was used at Jesus' trial, but the testimonies of the false witnesses was inconsistent and didn't agree (Mark 14:56-59).

In the Church, if the two or three witnesses establish a brother's sin and he doesn't repent, the Lord said to take the matter to the Church for judgment. If he refuses to hear the Church, "let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:17-18). As in the Mosaic Law, an issue of capital punishment is involved. "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

Thus it is difficult to overstate the importance of the Church. Ignatius of Antioch (1st Century) stated, "All are to respect the deacons as Jesus Christ and the bishop as a copy of the Father and the presbyters as the council of God and the band of the Apostles. For apart from these no group can be called a Church" (Trallians 3:1).

From the viewpoint of those who have leadership roles in the Church, Hebrews states, "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls as those who must give an account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable to you" (Hebrews 13:17). To illustrate this, the Lord, after His Resurrection, asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Each time Peter responded "yes". Following Peter's

affirmation, the Lord said to Peter, “Feed My lambs”, “Tend My sheep”, “Feed My sheep” (John 21:15-17). Thus leaders in the Church imitate the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18).

Peter took this to heart for the rest of his life. He took four major missionary journeys as follows:

Journey	Dates	Places
1	44-45	Syria, Asia Minor
2	46-48	Syria, Asia Minor
3	49-55	Macedonia, Achaia, Italy, Spain, Carthage, Egypt
4	55-67	Egypt, Africa, Rome, Britain

Everywhere he went, he made it a point to confirm those in the Faith and to feed the Lord’s sheep. For a brief overview of Peter’s journeys, see Appendix A pp. 35-38. For more details, see The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles’ Convent, pp. 2-23.

PAUL'S REVELATIONS

**June 29, 2010
Revision B**

EPISTLE LESSON: 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9

Today's Epistle is used in the West either on the 9th Sunday after Pentecost or two Sundays before Lent. In the Orthodox lectionary, today's Epistle lesson is also used for the 19th Sunday after Pentecost.

The lesson focuses on some of the visions and revelations that the Apostle Paul experienced. These visions were great revelations, but Paul had kept silent about them for 14 years (2 Corinthians 12:2). Since 2 Corinthians was written in 55 AD, this places the time of the revelations in 41 AD, which would be about 7 years after Paul was converted on the road to Damascus. Thus the visions occurred while Paul was in Tarsus (Acts 9:29-30) and about 4 years before Barnabas brought him to Antioch to help out with the Church there (Acts 11:25-26). For more details on this and for a history of the early life of Paul, see the Epistle lesson for the 20th Sunday after Pentecost.

The Apostle John experienced similar visions and revelations (Revelation 1:10-11, 17, Revelation 4:1-2), which occurred on "the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10) or Sunday. (Ignatius in 107 AD wrote that Christians no longer keep the Sabbath but live in accordance with the Lord's Day: Magnesians 9:1). John did not say whether he was bodily translated to heaven (Revelation 4:1-2). Like Paul, he may not have known.

Why did Paul keep silent about these things so long? And why did he break silence at this time? He states that it is not profitable for him to boast of such things (2 Corinthians 12:1). However, the Corinthians had been putting up with others that had boasted (foolishly) of their own visions (2 Corinthians 11:18-20). While Paul was reluctant, he could also see that some of the flock in Corinth were in danger of perishing: those that had not repented from uncleanness, fornications and lewdness (2 Corinthians 12:31). He needed to get their attention regarding the things he had been saying and show them that the Gnostic heretics they had been putting up with hadn't seen what he had seen.

John Chrysostom adds that Paul was caught up into Paradise -- at the beginning of his apostleship -- so that he might not be inferior to the rest of the apostles, or seem to be. For they had accompanied Christ but Paul had not (Homily XXVI on 2 Corinthians 12).

The third heaven, which Paul and John saw in their visions, is a term used by First Century Jews to describe heavenly realms. For example, the sun is described as stopping in mid-heaven, or the second heaven, for Joshua (Joshua 10:13). Birds also fly in mid-heaven (Revelation 8:13; 19:17), where the boundaries between the heavens are undoubtedly somewhat blurred.

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In order that Paul might not get too conceited concerning his visions, the Lord also gave him a “thorn in the flesh”, “a messenger, of Satan” to literally beat him up. (Greek: *kolaphizo* = to strike with the fist). Much speculation has been made concerning whether this was some physical problem or whether it refers to some people that Paul fought against. Verses 9-10 imply a physical weakness; however, John Chrysostom states that the thorn in the flesh was Alexander the Coppersmith and those with him (Ibid.).

Alexander was most likely the son of Simon of Cyrene, who had been pressed into service to carry Jesus’ cross at the crucifixion (Mark 15:21). Simon, Alexander and Rufus were probably among those men from Cyprus and Cyrene (Acts 11:20) who had started the Church in Antioch.

Rufus was in Antioch when Paul and Barnabas were sent off on their First Missionary Journey and when Paul and Silas were sent off on the Second. After the Second Missionary Journey, Rufus was sent to Rome by Peter and Paul and was there when Paul wrote Romans (Romans 16:13). Later Rufus was ordained Bishop of Thebes in Egypt; he was eventually martyred in 107 AD along with Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch.

Alexander chose a different path for himself, however. He was associated with the craftsmen such as Demetrius the silversmith in Ephesus (Acts 19:24) who built small idols; he opposed Paul in about 54 AD (Acts 19:33). Later Paul referred to Alexander as a coppersmith (2 Timothy 4:14). Yet he rejected the faith. Along with Hymenaeus, Paul felt it necessary to deliver them to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme (1 Timothy 1:19-20). They were part of a Gnostic heresy that claimed that the resurrection was already past (2 Timothy 2:16-18); this overthrew the faith of some people. Finally, it was Alexander that was primarily responsible for Paul’s martyrdom in about 67 AD (2 Timothy 4:14). Paul warned Timothy to beware of Alexander because he greatly resisted Paul’s words (2 Timothy 4:15). The implication is that Alexander went out of his way to have Paul hunted down, arrested and accused before the Roman authorities.

Whether the “thorn in the flesh” was Alexander or some physical weakness, Paul asked the Lord three times to remove it (2 Corinthians 12:8). But each time, the Lord said, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in (your) weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Paul’s example is a good lesson for us today. Whether we have had visions of the Lord in glory or not, the Lord will put limits on us so that we don’t get too exalted above measure (2 Corinthians 12:7). That way the Lord gets the glory for the achievements and His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). From Paul’s point of view, he took pleasure in infirmities, reproaches, needs, persecutions and distresses for Christ’s sake (2 Corinthians 12:10). For being weak, then he was strong.

Paul’s Missionary Journeys - Overview

Paul has sometimes been characterized as fiercely independent. He (and seemingly, he alone) is portrayed as taking the message of the Gospel to the Gentiles while the other Apostles are often portrayed as content to preach only to the Jews in Judea. To underscore his independence, Galatians 2:11-15 is quoted as evidence of Paul’s independence from Peter and

the other Apostles. [This passage speaks of Paul confronting Peter in Antioch over eating kosher food with the Jews.]

Yet Longinus (the Centurian at the Cross) and the Apostles Peter, Philip and Andrew began evangelizing Asia and Greece before Paul; Peter, John and Mary Magdalene helped out during Paul's lifetime; and John and Mary Magdalene continued after Paul's death. And in the tables that follow, we see how more than 60 of the original Seventy (Luke 10:1-20) worked with Paul at some point during his missionary journeys.

Starting with Table I is a list of 18 of the Seventy who were in Rome in 55 AD. At this time Paul was in Corinth and Peter had just left Rome heading for Spain. Together they had sent most of these members of the Seventy ahead to get the Church in Rome started. Peter was to return to Rome only once (briefly) before his martyrdom, while Paul was delayed in getting to Rome until 62 AD

Table II is a list of 52 others of the Seventy including 10 of the 18, who worked with Paul on his missionary journeys. A few others of the Seventy joined the project also: Deacon Prochrous came with the Apostle John to Ephesus in the late 50's. In Acts 19:8-10, when Paul spent two years in Ephesus, churches in the whole region were raised up. John and Prochrous were probably involved shortly after Paul left. For a more detailed summary of the extent of Paul's Missionary Journeys and his relationship with the Seventy, see Appendix A pp. 71-94.

From this, we can see that Peter, Paul and the other Apostles worked together to a far greater extent than is commonly taught in the West. When Paul wrote about "one Lord, one Faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5), this was not just wishful thinking; it was real. When he wrote about the Lord giving some as apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, etc. (Ephesians 4:11), all these people had names and they were part of Paul's experience.

TABLE I
The Seventy in Rome in 55 AD (From Romans 16)

Member of 70	Native To	With Paul on Missionary Journey	Later Bishop of	Comments
Rufus*	Cyrene	1, 2	Thebes	Martyred with Ignatius
Aristobulus	Cyprus	1	Britain	Barnabas' brother, Peter's father-in-law
Andronicus	Tarsus(?)	2	Pannonia	Paul's relative
Herodion	Tarsus(?)	2	NeoParthia & Patras	Paul's relative, traveled with Peter
Urbanus	?	2	Macedonia & Tarsus	Traveled with Andrew
Aquila & Priscilla	Pontus	2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus	
Epaenetus	Achaia	2	Carthage & Spain	Traveled with Peter
Amplias	?	2	Lydda	Traveled with Andrew
Apelles	?	2	Heraklion in Bithynia	
Stachys	?	2	Byzantium	Traveled with Andrew
Hermas	Greece		Dalmatia	Wrote "The Shepherd"; in Rome late 1 st Century
Asyncritus	?		Hyrcania	
Hermes	?		Philippopolis	
Narcissus	?		Athens	Ordained by Philip
Olympas	?	2	Philippi	Martyred with Peter
Patrobas	?		Neapolis	
Philologus & Julia	?		Synope	
Phlegon	?		Marathon	

* Probably came to Antioch with his father Simon of Cyrene, who helped start the Church in Antioch

TABLE II
The Seventy with Paul in Asia and Greece

Member of 70	Native To	With Paul on Missionary Journey	Later Bishop of	Comments
Barnabas	Cyprus	1	Cyprus	
Cephas	Iconium	1, 2, 3	Iconium	
John Mark	Cyprus	1, 4, 5	Apollonia (Samaria)	
Luke	Antioch	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Roving Apostle	
Titus	Crete	1, 3, 5	Crete	
Timothy	Lystra	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus	
Rufus	Cyrene	1, 2	Thebes	
Aristobulus	Cyprus	1	Britain	Went to Britain with Peter 55 AD
Onesiphorus	?	1, 2, 3, 5	Colophon in Lydia	
Gaius or Caius	Derbe	2, 3	Ephesus	
Aquila & Priscilla	Pontus	2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus	
Crispus	Corinth(?)	2	?	Former Synagogue ruler
Dionysius	Athens	2	Athens	
Jason	Tarsus	2, 3	Tarsus, Thessalonica & Corfu	
Justus	Nazareth	2, 4	Eleutheropolis	Jesus' step brother
Silas	?	2	Corinth	
Sosthenes	Corinth	2, 3	Caesarea	
Aristarchus	Thessalonica	2, 3, 4, 5	Apamea	
Andronicus	Tarsus	2	Pannonia (N. of Dalmatia)	
Herodion	Tarsus	2	Neoparthia, Patras	
Urbanus	?	2	Tarsus, Macedonia	
Epaenetus	?	2	Carthage, Spain	
Amplias	?	2	Lydda	
Stachys	?	2	Byzantium	
Apelles	?	2	Heraclea in Thrace	
James, the Lord's Brother	Bethlehem	2, 4	Jerusalem	

TABLE II (Continued)
The Seventy with Paul in Asia and Greece

Member of 70	Native To	With Paul on Missionary Journey	Later Bishop of	Comments
Olympas	?	2	Philippi	
Achaicus	?	3	?	
Apollos	Alexandria	3, 5	Smyrna	
Erastus	?	3, 5	Paneas	
Euodius (Evodus)			Antioch	
Fortunatus	?	3	?	
Lucius	Tarsus(?)	3	Laodicea	Romans 16:21
Philemon & Apphia	Colossae	3, 4	Colossae	During 2 years at Ephesus
Quartus	?	3	Beirut	
Sosipater	Achaea	3	Iconium, Corfu	Synagogue ruler after Crispus
Tertius	?	3	Iconium	
Trophimus	Ephesus	3, 5		Martyred with Paul
Tychicus	Asia	3, 4, 5	Caesarea	Paul's courier
Archippus	Colossae	3, 4		Helped Philemon
Epaphras	Colossae	3, 4		
Epaphroditus	?	3, 4	Philippi	
Philip the Deacon		3	Caesarea	
Agabus	Judea	3		
Caesar	?	4	Peloponnese	
Clement	Rome	4, 5	Rome	
Onesimus	Colossae	4	Ephesus	
Linus	?	4, 5	Rome	
Artemas	?	5	Lystra	
Carpus	?	5	Varna	
Cresens	?	5	Carthage, Galatia & Gaul	
Pudens	Rome	5		Roman Senator
Zenas	?	5	Lydda	
Others				
Deacon Prochorus	?		Nicomedia	Came to Ephesus with John
Silvanus	?		Thessalonica	Sent by Peter
Thecla, Equal to the Apostles	Iconium	1, 3		Ascetic in Selencia

APPENDIX A

THE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS OF PETER

FIRST JOURNEY - Acts 12:2-19 - After the death of James Zebedee in 44 AD, Peter became persona-non-grata in Jerusalem and went to Caesarea. From there, he worked his way Northward stopping at Sidon, Beirut, Byblus, Tripolis, etc., until he came to Antioch. He spent some time in Antioch and sent Marcian and Pancratius as missionaries to Syracuse and Taormina of Sicily.

From there, he traveled North to Tyana of Cappadocia, Ancyra of Galatia and Sinope of Pontus where he joined his brother, Andrew who had been there for a while. Leaving Andrew there, Peter traveled to Amastris and other parts of Pontus, Paphlagonia, Bithynia, Nicomedia, and Nicea confirming churches that Andrew had started over the last 10 years or so. After pausing in Nicea for a while, he went back through Pessinus of Galatia, Cappadocia, Antioch and on to Jerusalem for Passover.

SECOND JOURNEY - After Paul left Antioch on his first missionary journey with Barnabas and John Mark (about 46 AD), Peter arrived in Antioch from Jerusalem. Peter ordained Euodius (or Evodius), one of the Seventy, as bishop (or overseer) before leaving for Phrygia and then Nicomedia. In Nicomedia, Peter ordained Cornelius, the centurion from Acts 10, as bishop and then returned to Jerusalem.

While in Jerusalem, Peter had a vision instructing him to head West. Leaving Jerusalem, he stopped in Antioch where Paul had returned from his first missionary journey and was about to depart with Silas on his second journey. Together they ordained several bishops (or overseers) for Tarsus, Illyricum, Smyrna and Ephesus.

THIRD JOURNEY - After Paul left on his second journey (about 49 AD), Peter left also and met up with Paul in Macedonia. While in Macedonia, they ordained Olympas, Jason and Silas (as bishops) for Philippi, Thessalonica and Corinth respectively. We see a hint of this in Acts 18 where Silas was with Paul in v.5 on the way to Corinth, but does not accompany Paul after that. They also ordained Herodion as bishop for Patras in S.W. Greece. Herodion and Jason were Paul's countrymen (Romans 16:11, 21) and Herodion and Olympas were sent to Rome sometime in the next few years such that when Paul wrote Romans from Corinth on his third missionary journey, they were already in Rome while Jason was with Paul in Corinth (Romans 16:11-21).

Leaving Macedonia, Peter sailed for Sicily and spent some time there with Pancratius in Taormina. From there he went to Rome, arriving in about 53 AD and began to preach the Gospel both in private homes and in public places. In doing so, he began a running battle with Simon Magus whom he had rebuked in Acts 8:20 for trying to purchase the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Simon Magus was a master of illusion and was proclaiming himself to be the Christ, supported by his magic. Peter, on the other hand, supported by the power of prayer, debunked Simon's illusions time and time again. At one time, (according to Hegesippus and Marcellus the Roman) Peter challenged Simon Magus as the funeral procession of a young boy passed by, saying, "Whichever of us will raise up this dead child, his teaching must be acknowledged as true."

Simon replied to the crowd, “If I raise up the dead child, will you slay Peter?” The crowd responded with an enthusiastic yes!

Through his illusions, Simon made it appear that the child was moving his head. And the crowd turned on Peter to burn him at the stake. Peter calmly held up his hand and asked the crowd to wait for the child to get up and walk and speak to be sure it was not a trick. Simon paced about the bier invoking all his spells to no avail, then tried to sneak away, but the crowd restrained him.

Then Peter prayed to the Lord and raised the boy from the dead. The boy immediately got up and, walking over to Peter said, “I saw the Lord Jesus and He commanded His angels to return me to my widowed mother”. At this, the crowd shouted, “Peter’s God is the True God” and they seized Simon Magus to burn him at the stake. But Peter restrained them saying that the Lord commanded us not to return evil for evil. So Peter let Simon go; Peter then left Rome for about a year.

Shortly thereafter, Nero came to power and became good friends with Simon Magus. Peter had two more encounters with Simon, however, and the second proved fatal for Simon. In the first encounter, Simon ordered himself beheaded promising to rise on the third day. Peter exposed this illusion by showing that it was a sheep that was actually beheaded and not Simon.

Simon vowed then to ascend back to heaven like the Lord had done, and started to rise as he was borne by his demons. Peter prayed that Simon’s demons be restrained and the demons dropped Simon from a great height. Simon was fatally injured from his fall, and Peter left Rome before Nero could arrest him for the death of his friend Simon Magus. Before he left he ordained Linus as bishop (or overseer) to care for the Church in his absence.

Paul’s letter to the Romans must have arrived just after Peter left Rome since Paul does not address Peter in the letter.

Leaving Rome, Peter left for Spain, visiting Tarraco and Sermium, where Peter left Epaenetus (of the Seventy) as bishop in Sermium. In Romans 16:5, Paul addressed Epaenetus as one of the people that was in Rome then. Epaenetus must have left shortly thereafter to join Peter in Spain. Epaenetus had also been Bishop of the church in Carthage.

From Spain, Peter went to Carthage in North Africa where he left Crescens (of the Seventy) behind as bishop. Then he went to Egypt accompanied by the Evangelist Mark and went all the way up the Nile to Thebes in Upper Egypt to the place where Jesus, Joseph, Mary and James stayed when Jesus was a toddler. While there, Peter ordained Rufus (of the Seventy) as bishop of Thebes. Rufus was the son of Simon of Cyrene, the man who carried Jesus’ cross to Golgotha. Of the four evangelists, only Mark mentioned Rufus’ relation to Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21). Rufus also was in Rome as Paul wrote Romans (Romans 16:13) and must have joined Peter in Egypt or traveled with him.

FOURTH JOURNEY - After visiting Thebes, Peter left on short notice for Jerusalem for the funeral of the Virgin Mary but then returned with Mark to Egypt. Leaving Mark in Alexandria, Peter visited other parts of Egypt and also went through other parts of Africa -- perhaps visiting Matthew in Central Africa -- before returning to Rome.

He didn't stay in Rome long, however, since Nero wanted to kill him. So he went on to Milan (N. Italy), to Photice (Sardinia?), and then to Britain where he spent a long time out of Nero's easy reach. In about 66 AD, Peter had a vision where the Lord told him to return to Rome where he would suffer and be martyred. Peter refers to this in 2 Peter 1:12-15 which was written from prison just prior to his death. Peter gave thanks to the Lord, put his affairs in order in Britain and left for Rome.

Upon his arrival, Linus had recently died, so Peter ordained Clement (also of the Seventy) in Linus' place. Clement was a distant relative of Nero and Peter's association with Clement brought Peter in contact with others in the Emperor's household. As a result of this, two of Nero's favorite concubines became Christians and resolved to live a life of chastity. Nero was furious and started a manhunt for Peter.

The Christians in Rome begged Peter to hide outside the city. Peter didn't feel right about this but consented because of their tears and pleading. That night, Peter remembered the words the Lord spoke to him after the resurrection in John 21:18-19, where the Lord signified by what death Peter would glorify God.

Peter returned to the faithful the next day and was immediately arrested along with a number of other Christians including Clement, Olympas and Herodian (all of the Seventy). Clement was set free because he was related to the emperor but Olympas and Herodion were beheaded (since they were Roman citizens and merited a quick death). Peter was crucified (since he was not a Roman citizen) upside down at his own request since he did not feel worthy to be crucified as his Lord was.

BISHOPS OF ROME, 1ST CENTURY

Peter: Summarized in Table III are the bishops of Rome and Antioch. Note that Peter is regarded as the first bishop of both, beginning at different times. [Today, both the Roman Catholic Church and the Antiochian Orthodox Church have lists of their bishops (or patriarchs) going back to the Apostle Peter.] Some modern Catholic scholars have claimed that Peter was resident in Rome for 25 years. However, Butler, the Catholic historian, downplays this. Peter didn't arrive until the early to mid 50's AD. From Peter's missionary journeys, Peter didn't spend a lot of time in Rome either.

Linus: One of the original Seventy, Linus was ordained by Peter before Peter left Rome following the demise of Simon Magus in about 54 AD. Linus was still in Rome when Paul wrote 2 Timothy (about 66 AD or just before Paul's death, see 2 Timothy 4:21). Linus must have been martyred or died of old age right after Paul wrote 2 Timothy.

Clement: One of the original Seventy, Clement worked with the Apostle Paul for a while (Philippians 4:3). During his time as bishop, Clement commissioned seven scribes to record summaries of the lives of all the saints being martyred so that future generations wouldn't forget. (The modern collection of Clement's work is Butler's, Lives of the Saints.) These summaries began to appear in some of the Church services very early, arranged according to calendar date. This tradition still exists today and different heroes of the Faith are remembered in the prayers of the Church every day of the calendar year. A great deal of literature is also connected to Clement.

As an old man, Clement was banished from Rome under Trajan and sent to work in the quarries near Sardis (east of Ephesus) along with other Christians. Clement performed many miracles in Sardis, raised up 75 Churches and was proclaimed Bishop of Sardis. He was martyred by having an anchor tied around his neck and being thrown into the Black Sea.

TABLE III
Bishops of Rome and Antioch

ANTIOCH	ROME
Peter c.46	Peter c.53-54
Euodius c.46-64	Linus c.54-66
Ignatius 64-107	Clement c.66-99