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## The People God Uses

### 16: 1-27

The capital city of **Rome** was a magnet that drew people from all over the empire. In addition to **Paul's** travels to many of the major population centers - Jerusalem, Syrian Antioch, Philippi, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus - it brought **him** into contact with many believers within Roman society. This helps to explain the presence of **Paul's** many friends in **Rome**, but **his** knowledge of **their** whereabouts remains a tribute to **his** deep concern for the people **God** uses.<sup>396</sup> While **Paul** mentions 27 people in the church at **Rome**, there is obviously one person missing: **Peter**. This begs the question, "Was **Peter** ever in **Rome**?"



According to Roman Catholic tradition, **Peter** was the first bishop of **Rome**. **His** pontificate supposedly lasted for twenty-five years until **he** was martyred in **Rome** in 67 AD. The remarkable thing, however, about **Peter's** alleged reign as pope in **Rome**, is that the B'rit Chadashah does not say one single word about it. The word **Rome** appears only nine times in the Bible, and never is **Kefa** mentioned in connection with it. There is no mention to **Rome** in either of **Peter's** letters. But **Paul's** journey to **Rome** is recorded in great detail in **Acts 27** and **28**. **In fact, there is no evidence in the B'rit Chadashah, nor any historical proof of any kind, that Peter was ever in Rome.**

The most compelling reason for believing that **Peter** was never in **Rome** is found in **Paul's** letter to the **Romans**. According to Roman Catholic tradition, **Kefa** reigned as pope in **Rome** from 42 to 67 AD. It is generally agreed that **Paul's** letter to the church in **Rome** was written in the year 58 AD, at the very height of **Peter's** alleged reign there. **He** did not address **his** letter to **Peter**, as he should have if **he** was pope, but to the believers in **Rome**. How strange for a missionary to write to a church and not mention its pastor! That would have been an inexcusable insult. What would we think of a missionary today who would dare to write a congregation in a distant city and without mentioning their pastor, tell them that he was anxious to go there so that he might bare some fruit among them even as he had seen in his own community (**Romans 1:13**), that he was anxious to instruct and strengthen them, and that he was anxious to preach the gospel there where it had not been preached before? How would the pastor feel if he knew that such greetings had been sent to 27 of his most prominent members, but not him? Would he stand for such unethical actions? Even more so the pope! If **Peter** had been ministering in the church at **Rome** for 16 years, why did **Paul** write to the people of the church in these words: **I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong (Romans 1:11)**. Would that not be an insult to **Kefa**? Would it not be presumptuous for **Paul** to go over the head of the pope? And if **Peter** had been there for 16 years, why was it necessary for **Paul** to go there at all, especially since in **his** letter **he** says that **he** does not build on another's foundation: **it has always been my ambition to preach the Gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation (Romans 15:20)**.

And again, had **Peter** been pope in **Rome** prior to, or at the time **Paul** arrived there as a prisoner in 61 AD, **Paul** could not have failed to mention **him**, for in the letters written in **Rome** during **his** imprisonment - **Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians** and **Philemon** - **he** gives quite a list of **his** fellow-workers in **Rome** and **Peter's** name is not among them. **He** spent two whole years there as a prisoner **and welcomed all who came to see him (Acts 28:30)**. Nor does he mention **Peter** in **his** second letter to **Timothy**, which was written from **Rome** during **his** second imprisonment, in 67 AD, the year that **Peter** is alleged to have suffered martyrdom in **Rome**, and shortly before **his** own death (**Second Timothy 4:6-8**). **He** says that all his friends had abandoned **him**, and that only **Luke** was with **him (Second Timothy 4:10-11)**. Where was **Peter**? If **he** was the pope in **Rome** when **Paul** was a prisoner, why did **Peter** not call on **Paul** and offer aid? What kind of spiritual leader would that be?

All of this makes it quite clear that **Peter** was never in **Rome** at all, even though the Vatican has publicly unveiled a handful of bone fragments purportedly belonging to **him**. Not one of the early church fathers gives *any* support to the belief that **Peter** was bishop in **Rome** until Jerome in the fifth century. Du Pin, a Roman Catholic historian, acknowledges “the primacy of **Peter** is not recorded by the early church writers, Justin Martyr (139 AD), Irenaeus (178 AD), Clement of Alexandria (190 AD), or others of the most ancient fathers.” Catholicism builds her foundation neither on biblical teaching, nor upon the facts of history, but like **the Oral Law** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Ei - The Oral Law**), only on **the unfounded traditions of men (Mark 7:8)**.<sup>397</sup>