

ECCLESIOLOGY
THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH
 Lesson 4

The Foundation of the Church

I. THE ROCK: WHO IS THE ROCK OF MATT. 16:13-18?

A. Roman Catholic view: Peter is the rock. Thus the church is founded on Peter, the first Pope, and his Apostolic authority has been transmitted down to the present day.

Objections:

1. If Peter is the rock, why didn't Jesus say, "Upon you I will build my church?"
2. This view cannot account for the change in form of the words Peter (*petros*) and rock (*petra*).
3. Even if one grants that Peter is the Rock, how can his authority be transmitted historically?

B. Protestant view: The Rock is Christ Himself, as revealed in the confession of Peter.

Support:

1. A literal translation might be, "Thou art rock (*petros*—masculine) and upon this rock (*petra*—feminine) I will build my church." *Petros* is a pebble or a loose small rock; *petra* is used of a ledge of rocks or a massive rock. Peter was a little rock and upon this massive rock, Christ, the church would be built.
2. This appears to be the view of the Apostles (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-8). Peter did not understand that he was the Rock, but that he was a rock.
3. This is the view of many of the great Catholic Fathers: Chrysostom, Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome.

II. THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE (EPH. 2:19-20).

A. Jesus Christ is referred to as the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4-8); the foundation stone (1 Cor. 3:9-11) and the Head of the corner (Acts 4:5-12). But He is specifically called the chief cornerstone of the church in Eph. 2:19-20.

POINT: The chief cornerstone was a "blueprint" for the entire building. Upon it all the major weight rested and it determined the angles of the building, what type of building it would be, etc.

