

Chapter 9

The Qāhāl and the Roman Catholic Church

The *qāhāl* and the Roman Catholic Church

Introductory Observations

The Roman Catholic Church claims to be the church built by Jesus on Peter the Rock. In evaluating this claim, consider the following points.

- The *qāhāl* or ἐκκλησία of Matthew 16:18, built by Jesus the Messiah of Israel, is organically linked to the *qāhāl* of Israel in the Old Testament and is *the Messianic community within national Israel* in the New Testament. This was the meaning of "my church" when Jesus spoke the words of Matthew 16:18, it was the meaning when Paul wrote Romans 11, and it is the meaning today.
- This Messianic community originally consisted of the "remnant according to *God's* gracious choice," a small part of national Israel.
- In the metaphor of the olive tree, Gentiles have been grafted into Israel,¹ and salvation has flowed to them as a result. The Messianic community now consists of the "remnant according to *God's* gracious choice" and believing Gentiles.
- Gentile salvation is through Israel and only through Israel.

How many Gentile Christian denominations are aware that

1 Gentiles have been grafted into Israel only in the limited sense stated briefly in chapter 7 and fully developed, defined, and delimited in Appendix 3.

this is their standing relative to Israel? Few, if any. Many denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church, have theological systems that explicitly deny it, and their members in the pews are not even aware of the issues.

Paul's Warning Against Gentile Conceit

In light of these facts, perhaps the most important warning that Paul could give to the church today is also found in Romans 11. The Gentile members of the *qāhāl*, those "wild branches" that have been grafted into the olive tree, are strictly warned against holding three specific attitudes against Israel.

(1) "Do not be arrogant toward the [broken-off] branches" (μη κατακαυχω των κλαδων)

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.*²

In what way might believing Gentiles be arrogant with regard to Israel? By arrogantly assuming that with the breaking off of the natural branches, they are saved apart from Israel. By contrast, the salvation of the Gentiles comes to them from the olive tree root, which represents the patriarchs of Israel. The spiritual blessings of salvation, for both Israel and the Gentiles, are based on the Abrahamic covenant made with these patriarchs and belonging to Israel.³

(2) "Do not be conceited" (μη υψηλα φρονει)

You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were

2 Rom. 11:17-18.

3 Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, II:87: "The boasting condemned is the arrogance and presumptuous confidence to which believing Gentiles are liable when they consider the place of privilege and honour they occupy in the kingdom of God by the displacement of Israel [the broken-off branches]."

broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.⁴

In what way might believing Gentiles be conceited with regard to Israel? By noting that the bulk of Israel was broken off the olive tree so that Gentiles could be grafted in. However, such conceit implies that their resulting salvation is based on merit not faith. Rather than being conceited, Gentile believers should tremble or fear. If God did not spare the natural branches for unbelief, he certainly will not spare the wild branches!⁵

(3) "[Do not be] wise in your own estimation" (εν εαυτοις φρονιμοι)

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery--so that you will not be wise in your own estimation--that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.⁶

The expression "wise in your own estimation" (NASB) could be translated "wise in your own conceits."⁷ In what way might believing Gentiles be wise in their own conceits with regard to Israel? First, Paul is here concerned that if these Gentiles are "ignorant" or "uninformed" about the "mystery" Paul is going to state, this conceit might result. Second, what is this mystery of which they must not be ignorant? *That the hardening of Israel is partial and that it will have a terminus.*⁸ When the unbelief and

4 Rom. 11:19-21.

5 Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, II:87: "The observation that 'by their unbelief they were broken off' is made in this instance...to emphasize that by which Gentiles have come to stand and occupy a place in the olive tree, namely, by faith...If those grafted in have come to stand by faith, then all thought of merit is excluded (cf. 9:32; 11:6)." In footnote 36, he adds, "That against which Paul is warning is that for which Israel fell and the same judgment will overtake the Gentiles if they fall into the same kind of self-righteous confidence (cf. 9:32, 33, 10:3, 21)."

6 Rom. 11:25.

7 It is translated this way in the KJV, ASV (1901), and the RSV (1952); the NIV (1984) simply has "conceited." Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, IV:398, gives the literal translation, "wise in yourselves" but then goes on to say, "Negative purpose here (*hina mē ēta*), to prevent self-conceit on the part of the Gentiles who have believed."

8 Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, II:92-93: "Both elements are

hardening are removed, the broken-off natural branches will be grafted back into their own olive tree, and national Israel as a whole will be saved (verses 23-24, 26, 28-29). For believing Gentiles to think that God is through with the nation of Israel, "his people whom he foreknew" (verses 1-2), is the ultimate conceit. The restoration, salvation, and blessing of national Israel is the goal and centerpiece of God's redemptive program, not the salvation of the Gentiles. Therefore, such conceit on the part of believing Gentiles is completely unjustified and is sin.

The Result of Gentile Conceit: Replacement Theology and the "New Israel"

It is quite easy at our point in history for believing Gentiles to fall prey to the temptation against which Paul warns. Numerically speaking, we are now the vast majority within the *qāhāl* or Messianic community. More specifically, institutional and denominational Christianity today is Gentile-dominated in its leadership, constituency, and style of worship--and has been throughout most of Christian history. How easy, then, for the believing Gentile community to identify itself as "the church" and consider the whole of God's redemptive program to reach its goal and climax in them, this institutional, Gentile church. But this is precisely what Paul warns against in Romans 11. The central thesis of that great chapter is that Israel, even in unbelief, was, is, and always will be the center of God's love and redemptive program. The Gentiles are "*wild* branches," supported by "the rich root of the olive tree"--Israel's patriarchs and Israel's covenants of promise.

The conceit of which Paul speaks reached its climax in Augustine, specifically in two aspects of his theology, which are today called replacement⁹ theology and amillennialism. The view resulting from the combination of these two concepts sees no future for ethnic, national

clearly expressed: the hardening of Israel is partial not total, temporary not final, 'in part' indicating the former, 'until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in' the latter....The partial hardening of Israel will have a terminus." In a lengthy footnote (45, II:92), Murray begins, "'In part' does not refer to the degree of hardening but to the fact that not all were hardened (cf. vss. 7, 17)."

9 Replacement theology is also called *supercessionism*.

Israel in general, especially a national destiny in the land of Canaan promised to the nation in the Abrahamic covenant as an everlasting possession, and also denies any significance for Jewish people in particular, apart from individual incorporation into "the church"--the imagined centerpiece of God's activity as he brings redemptive history to a close. This view sees "the church" as the "new Israel" or "spiritual Israel." Moreover, it teaches that "the church" inherits all of Israel's Old Testament promises and fulfills them "spiritually."¹⁰

This theology can be successfully refuted on both hermeneutical and exegetical grounds. One of the most telling arguments against it is built on an exegesis of Romans chapter 11.¹¹ However, the point to observe at this juncture is Paul's comment in verse 25. The great statement he makes is that *the hardening of Israel is partial and that it will have a terminus*. With the hardening removed, Israel will be restored (verses 23-24), and "all Israel will be saved" (verse 26), based on the irrevocability of the gifts and calling of God (verses 28-29). Without the knowledge of this truth, believing Gentiles would be in grave danger of becoming wise in their own conceits.

In commenting on Romans 11:25, Hodge has this to say:

This [phrase, *lest ye should be wise in your own conceits*] is given as the reason why the apostle wished the Gentiles to know and consider the event which he was about to announce. The clause may mean either, 'Lest ye proudly imagine your own ideas of the destiny of the Jews are correct;' or, 'Lest ye be proud and elated, as though you were better and more highly favored than the Jews.' The former is perhaps most in accordance with the literal meaning of the words; see Proverbs 3:7.¹²

Godet offers this comment on the same verse:

The converted Gentiles composing the church of Rome

10 In a curious combination of hermeneutical principles, proponents of this view have no problem seeing the predicted judgments on Israel fulfilled quite literally.

11 See the study of Rom. 11 in chapter 5 of this book. See also the thorough and meticulous exegetical analysis of Rom. 11 in Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, II:65-103.

12 Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 277-78.

might form strange systems regarding Israel's rejection and future history. Paul is concerned to fix their ideas on this important point, and leave no place in their minds for vain and presumptuous speculations."¹³

"Strange systems regarding Israel's rejection and future": I can think of no more appropriate characterization of replacement theology.

Tracing the full history of the development of this view is beyond the scope of this book. However, it reached its full systemization with Augustine and became the official view of the Roman Catholic Church.

In *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine (A.D. 354-430) summarizes and adopts the rules of interpretation developed somewhat earlier by Tichonius (ca. 370-390). In applying the fourth rule, Augustine writes,

And thus the spiritual Israel is made up, not of one nation, but of all the nations which were promised to the fathers in their seed, that is, in Christ. This spiritual Israel, therefore, is distinguished from the carnal Israel which is of one nation, by newness of grace, not by nobility of descent, in feeling, not in race; but the prophet, in his depth of meaning, while speaking of the carnal Israel, passes on, without indicating the transition, to speak of the spiritual, and although now speaking of the latter, seems to be still speaking of the former...And therefore we ought to take this saying, "And I will bring you into your own land," and what he says shortly afterwards, as if repeating himself, "And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers," not literally, as if they referred to Israel after the flesh, but spiritually, as referring to the spiritual Israel. For the Church, without spot or wrinkle, gathered out of all nations, and destined to reign forever with Christ, is itself the land of the blessed, the land of the living.¹⁴

13 Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 409-10.

14 Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Book III, Chapter 34, paragraphs 48-49, trans. Marcus Dods, in vol. II, *St. Augustine's City of God and Christian Doctrine*, p. 571, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 14 vols., ed. Philip

In the first document of Vatican II, "The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church," Chapter 1, it is stated:

Christ, the one Mediator, established and ceaselessly sustains here on earth His holy Church, the community of faith, hope, and charity, as a visible structure...This Church, constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in union with that successor...¹⁵

In chapter 2 of this same document it is also stated,

Israel according to the flesh, which wandered as an exile in the desert, was already called the Church of God (2 Esd. 13:1; cf. Num. 20:4; Dt. 23:1 ff). Likewise the new Israel which, while going forward in this present world, goes in search of a future and abiding city (cf. Heb. 13:14) is also called the Church of Christ (cf. Mt. 16:18).¹⁶

The same concept of the "Church" as the "new Israel" is presented in the official *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

From the beginning of his ministry, the Lord Jesus instituted the Twelve as "the seeds of the new Israel and the beginning of the sacred hierarchy."¹⁷

Thus the Roman Catholic Church has not had a biblical view of Israel since the days of Augustine. Moreover, it cannot be the *qāhāl* or ἐκκλησία or "church" of Matthew 16:18 and of the New Testament. The *qāhāl* is the Messianic community within the nation of Israel--that nation through which, based on the Abrahamic covenant, God will bless the entire world. In distinction from the Roman Catholic Church,

- the *qāhāl* is not some Gentile institution claiming to be the vehicle of salvation to the world.
- the *qāhāl* is not a centralized, monolithic

Schaff (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979).

15 *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 22.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

17 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 877, p. 232.

organization headquartered in Rome that claims to be the "new Israel" replacing "carnal Israel," that assumes jurisdiction over all Christendom, and whose chief theologian, Augustine, denies any future significance for national Israel.

Therefore, to the extent that the Roman Catholic Church sees itself in these two roles and its own establishment as the goal and purpose of Jesus' mission, to that extent it exhibits the Gentile arrogance and boasting against which Paul so strictly warns. Moreover, since eschatology was not a major issue in the Protestant Reformation, many of the Reformers carried similar "replacement" views with them to become entrenched in the Protestant churches.¹⁸

18 Here are a few examples of such arrogant views in Protestant circles. Charles Augustus Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), p. 51: "These predictions [in the Old Testament of Israel's future] are not only impossible now, but in form many of them always were impossible. Israel in predictive prophecy is not Israel after the flesh but Israel after the spirit, as the Apostle Paul explains [Rom. ix. seq.]. The true children of Abraham are the faithful [Rom. iv.]. The Christian Church is the legitimate successor of the Israel of old and the heir of its promises [1 Pet. ii. 4 seq.]. The essential contents of these predictions when eliminated from their formal elements are spiritual and not carnal." Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979): "Paul clearly identifies the church as the true Israel. This would imply that promises which had been made to Israel during Old Testament times are fulfilled in the New Testament church" (p. 197). "The words *Zion* and *Jerusalem* are commonly used in the Old Testament to stand for one of the hills on which Jerusalem stood, the capital city of the Israelites, or the people of Israel as a whole. Once again we find that the New Testament widens the understanding of these terms....The term *Jerusalem*, therefore, used in the Old Testament of the people of Israel, is used in the New Testament of the entire church of Jesus Christ" (p. 199). "The Bible does not teach a millennial restoration of the Jews to their land" (p. 206). "Here, then, we find the New Testament itself interpreting an Old Testament prophecy about the restoration of Israel in a nonliteral way" (p. 210, referring to Amos 9:11-12 quoted in Acts 15:14-18). James E. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches about the Promised Messiah* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), pp. 29-30: "If one takes the New Testament statements regarding the kingdom and church literally, he is forced to interpret the Old Testament predictions spiritually. For example, if the church is literally the Israel of God, then one must always reckon with the possibility that prophecies pertaining to Israel are fulfilled in the church. If Christians have literally come to Mt. Zion (Heb. 12:22) then one must reckon with the possibility that prophecies pertaining to Mt. Zion are fulfilled in the New Testament age. If this be allegorizing, so be it. The spiritual realities of the present glorious dispensation compel the Christian interpreter to view the Messianic predictions regarding Judah, Israel, Jerusalem, Mt. Zion, the land of Canaan, etc. as

The Peter of Fiction

This chapter closes with an excerpt from Philip Schaff's definitive eight-volume work, *History of the Christian Church*. Schaff himself entitled this section in volume one, "The Peter of Fiction."¹⁹

* * * * *

No character of the Bible, we may say, no personage in all history, has been so much magnified, misrepresented and misused for doctrinal and hierarchical ends as the plain fisherman of Galilee who stands at the head of the apostolic college. Among the women of the Bible the Virgin Mary has undergone a similar transformation for purposes of devotion, and raised to the dignity of the queen of heaven. Peter as the Vicar of Christ, and Mary as the mother of Christ, have in this idealized shape become and are still the ruling powers in the polity and worship of the largest branch of Christendom.

In both cases the work of fiction began among the Judaizing heretical sects of the second and third centuries, but was modified and carried forward by the Catholic, especially the Roman church, in the third and fourth centuries.

1. *The Peter of the Ebionite fiction.* The historical basis is Peter's encounter with Simon Magus in Samaria, Paul's rebuke of Peter at Antioch, and the intense distrust and dislike of the Judaizing party to Paul. These three undoubted facts, together with a singular confusion of *Simon Magus with an old Sabine deity, Semo Sancus*, in Rome, furnished the material and prompted the motive to religious tendency-novels written about and after the middle of the second century by ingenious semi-Gnostic Ebionites, either anonymously or under the fictitious name of Clement of Rome, the reputed successor of Peter. In these productions Simon Peter appears as the great apostle of truth in conflict with Simon Magus, the pseudo-apostle

fulfilled in the church of Christ." This is the quintessence of the arrogance against which Paul earnestly warns believing Gentiles.

19 Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 8 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950; original publication date, 1910), I:256-263; Schaff's footnotes are not included.

of falsehood, the father of all heresies, the Samaritan possessed by a demon; and Peter follows him step by step from Caesarea Stratonis to Tyre, Sidon, Berytus, Antioch, and Rome, and before the tribunal of Nero, disputing with him, and refuting his errors, until at last the impostor, in the daring act of mocking Christ's ascension to heaven, meets a miserable end.

In the pseudo-Clementine Homilies the name of Simon represents among other heresies also the free gospel of Paul, who is assailed as a false apostle and hated rebel against the authority of the Mosaic law. The same charges which the Judaizers brought against Paul, are here brought by Peter against Simon Magus, especially the assertion that one may be saved by grace alone. His boasted vision of Christ by which he professed to have been converted, is traced to a deceptive vision of the devil. The very words of Paul against Peter at Antioch, that he was "self-condemned" (Gal. 2:11), are quoted as an accusation against God. In one word, Simon Magus is, in part at least, a malignant Judaizing caricature of the apostle of the Gentiles.

2. *The Peter of the Papacy.* The orthodox version of the Peter-legend, as we find it partly in patristic notices of Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian, and Eusebius, partly in apocryphal productions, retains the general story of a conflict of Peter with Simon Magus in Antioch and Rome, but extracts from it its anti-Pauline poison, associates Paul at the end of his life with Peter as the joint, though secondary, founder of the Roman church, and honors both with the martyr's crown in the Neronian persecution on the same day (the 29th of June), and in the same year or a year apart, but in different localities and in a different manner. Peter was crucified like his Master (though head-downwards), either on the hill of Janiculum (where the church S. Pietro in Montorio stands), or more probably on the Vatican hill (the scene of the Neronian circus and persecution); Paul, being a Roman citizen, was beheaded on the Ostian way at the Three Fountains (Tre Fontane), outside of the city. They even walked together a part of the Appian way to the place of execution. Caius (or Gaius), a Roman presbyter at the close of the second century, pointed to their monuments or trophies on the Vatican, and in the via Ostia. The solemn burial of the remains of Peter in the catacombs of San Sebastiano, and of Paul on the Via Ostia, took place June 29, 258, according to the Kalendarium of the Roman church from the

time of Liberius. A hundred years later the remains of Peter were permanently transferred to the Basilica of St. Peter on the Vatican, those of St. Paul to the Basilica of St. Paul (San Paolo fuori le mura) outside of the Porta Ostiensis (now Porta San Paolo).

The tradition of a twenty-five years' episcopate in Rome (preceded by a seven years' episcopate in Antioch) cannot be traced beyond the fourth century (Jerome), and arose, as already remarked, from chronological miscalculations in connection with the questionable statement of Justin Martyr concerning the arrival of Simon Magus in Rome under the reign of Claudius (41-54). The "Catalogus Liberianus," the oldest list of popes (supposed to have been written before 366), extends the pontificate of Peter to 25 years, 1 month, 9 days, and puts his death on June 29, 65 (during the consulate of Nerva and Vestinus), which would date his arrival in Rome back to a.d. 40. Eusebius, in his Greek Chronicle as far as it is preserved, does not fix the number of years, but says, in his Church History, that Peter came to Rome in the reign of Claudius to preach against the pestilential errors of Simon Magus. The Armenian translation of his Chronicle mentions "twenty" years; Jerome, in his translation or paraphrase rather, "twenty-five" years, assuming, without warrant, that Peter left Jerusalem for Antioch and Rome in the second year of Claudius (42; but Acts 12:17 would rather point to the year 44), and died in the fourteenth or last year of Nero (68). Among modern Roman Catholic historians there is no agreement as to the year of Peter's martyrdom: Baronius puts it in 69; Pagi and Alban Butler in 65; Möhler, Gams, and Alzog indefinitely between 66 and 68. In all these cases it must be assumed that the Neronian persecution was continued or renewed after 64, of which we have no historical evidence. It must also be assumed that Peter was conspicuously absent from his flock during most of the time, to superintend the churches in Asia Minor and in Syria, to preside at the Council of Jerusalem, to meet with Paul in Antioch, to travel about with his wife, and that he made very little impression there till 58, and even till 63, when Paul, writing to and from Rome, still entirely ignores him. Thus a chronological error is made to overrule stubborn facts. The famous saying that "no pope shall see the (twenty-five) years of Peter," which had hitherto almost the force of law, has been falsified by the thirty-two years' reign of the first infallible pope) Pius IX., who ruled from 1846 to 1878.

NOTE.--ON THE CLAIMS OF THE PAPACY.

On this tradition and on the indisputable preëminence of Peter in the Gospels and the Acts, especially the words of Christ to him after the great confession (Matt. 16:18), is built the colossal fabric of the papacy with all its amazing pretensions to be the legitimate succession of a permanent primacy of honor and supremacy of jurisdiction in the church of Christ, and—since 1870—with the additional claim of papal infallibility in all official utterances, doctrinal or moral. The validity of this claim requires three premises:

1. The presence of Peter in Rome. This may be admitted as an historical fact, and I for my part cannot believe it possible that such a rock-firm and world-wide structure as the papacy could rest on the sand of mere fraud and error. It is the underlying fact which gives to fiction its vitality, and error is dangerous in proportion to the amount of truth which it embodies. But the fact of Peter's presence in Rome, whether of one year or twenty-five, cannot be of such fundamental importance as the papacy assumes it to be: otherwise we would certainly have some allusion to it in the New Testament. Moreover, if Peter was in Rome, so was Paul, and shared with him on equal terms the apostolic supervision of the Roman congregation, as is very evident from his Epistle to the Romans.

2. The transferability of Peter's preëminence on a successor. This is derived by inference from the words of Christ: "Thou art Rock, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." This passage, recorded only by Matthew, is the exegetical rock of Romanism, and more frequently quoted by popes and papists than any other passage of the Scriptures. But admitting the obvious reference of *petra* to *Peter*, the significance of this prophetic name evidently refers to the peculiar mission of Peter in laying the foundation of the church once and for all time to come. He fulfilled it on the day of Pentecost and in the conversion of Cornelius; and in this pioneer work Peter can have no successor any more than St. Paul in the conversion of the Gentiles, and John in the consolidation of the two branches of the apostolic church.

3. The actual transfer of this prerogative of Peter—not upon the bishops of Jerusalem, or Antioch, where he undoubtedly resided—but upon the bishop of Rome, where he

cannot be proven to have been from the New Testament. Of such a transfer history knows absolutely nothing. Clement, bishop of Rome, who first, about a.d. 95, makes mention of Peter's martyrdom, and Ignatius of Antioch, who a few years later alludes to Peter and Paul as exhorting the Romans, have not a word to say about the transfer. The very chronology and succession of the first popes is uncertain.

If the claims of the papacy cannot be proven from what we know of the historical Peter, there are, on the other hand, several undoubted facts in the real history of Peter which bear heavily upon those claims, namely:

1. That Peter was married, Matt. 8:14, took his wife with him on his missionary tours, 1 Cor. 9:5, and, according to a possible interpretation of the "coëlect" (sister), mentions her in his first Epistle (5:13). Patristic tradition ascribes to him children, or at least a daughter (Petronilla). His wife is said to have suffered martyrdom in Rome before him. What right have the popes, in view of this example, to forbid clerical marriage? We pass by the equally striking contrast between the poverty of Peter, who had no silver nor gold (Acts 3:6) and the gorgeous display of the triple-crowned papacy in the middle ages and down to the recent collapse of the temporal power.

2. That in the Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-11), Peter appears simply as the first speaker and debater, not as president and judge (James presided), and assumes no special prerogative, least of all an infallibility of judgment. According to the Vatican theory the whole question of circumcision ought to have been submitted to Peter rather than to a Council, and the decision ought to have gone out from him rather than from "the apostles and elders, brethren" (or "the elder brethren," ver. 23).

3. That Peter was openly rebuked for inconsistency by a younger apostle at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14). Peter's conduct on that occasion is irreconcilable with his infallibility as to discipline; Paul's conduct is irreconcilable with Peter's alleged supremacy; and the whole scene, though perfectly plain, is so inconvenient to Roman and Romanizing views, that it has been variously distorted by patristic and Jesuit commentators, even into a theatrical farce gotten up by the apostles for the more effectual refutation of the Judaizers!

4. That, while the greatest of popes, from Leo I. down to Leo XIII. never cease to speak of their authority over all the bishops and all the churches, Peter, in his speeches in the Acts, never does so. And his Epistles, far from assuming any superiority over his "fellow-elders" and over "the clergy" (by which he means the Christian people), breathe the spirit of the sincerest humility and contain a prophetic warning against the besetting sins of the papacy, filthy avarice and lordly ambition (1 Pet. 5:1-3). Love of money and love of power are twin-sisters, and either of them is "a root of all evil."

It is certainly very significant that the weaknesses even more than the virtues of the natural Peter—his boldness and presumption, his dread of the cross, his love for secular glory, his carnal zeal, his use of the sword, his sleepiness in Gethsemane—are faithfully reproduced in the history of the papacy; while the addresses and epistles of the converted and inspired Peter contain the most emphatic protest against the hierarchical pretensions and worldly vices of the papacy, and enjoin truly evangelical principles—the general priesthood and royalty of believers, apostolic poverty before the rich temple, obedience to God rather than man, yet with proper regard for the civil authorities, honorable marriage, condemnation of mental reservation in Ananias and Sapphira, and of simony in Simon Magus, liberal appreciation of heathen piety in Cornelius, opposition to the yoke of legal bondage, salvation in no other name but that of Jesus Christ.

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Chapter 9 Appendix

The Gates of Hades

The interpretation given the clause, "the gates of Hades will not overpower it [the *qāhāl* or ἐκκλησία]," does not materially impact the conclusions drawn concerning the role of Peter or the identity of the *qāhāl*. Nevertheless, a word should be said about this statement in Matthew 16:18.

Determining the precise intent of Jesus is difficult, for as Robertson says, "Each word here creates difficulty."²⁰ However, as with everything else in Matthew 16:13-20, the correct interpretation is to be sought in its Old Testament background. A relevant verse is found in Isaiah 38:10 with Hezekiah speaking:

I said, "In the middle of my life
I am to enter the gates of Sheol;
I am to be deprived of the rest of my years."²¹

The expression translated "to enter the gates of Sheol" in the *NASB* is בְּשַׁעַרֵי שְׂאוֹל, "into the gates of Sheol."²² The *LXX* translates שְׂאוֹל (anglicized "Sheol") in this phrase with ᾠδης (anglicized "Hades"), the Greek word used in Matthew 16:18.²³ Thus the phrase is quite parallel. The hotly debated question concerns the meaning of the Hebrew word "Sheol" in the Old Testament. R. Laird Harris makes an excellent case for "grave."²⁴

However, the phrase in Isaiah 38:10, "gates of Sheol" and the phrase in Matthew 16:18, "gates of Hades," are both metaphorical. Sheol, or Hades, does not have physical

20 A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, I:132.

21 See also *Wisd.* 16:3; 3 *Macc.* 5:51.

22 Similar phrases are also used in the Old Testament: "bars of Sheol" in *Job* 17:16 and "gates of death" in *Job* 38:17; *Ps.* 9:13; 107:18.

23 Another well-known example is *Psalm* 16:10 (*LXX*, 15:10). The Hebrew has Sheol, and both the *LXX* and *Acts* 2:27 have Hades.

24 R. Laird Harris, "שְׂאוֹל," *TWOT*, II:892-893. It could therefore be a poetic synonym of קֶבֶר (*qeber*), *grave* or *sepulchre*. Both Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, II:516, and Alexander, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, II:80, translate the phrase in *Isa.* 38:10 "gates of the grave."

gates. According to Gary Lee, "gates" suggest the symbolism of a city.²⁵ Putting the two suggestions together, the phrase, "the gates of Hades," pictures the grave as a city with gates: *the city of the grave* or possibly *the city of death*.²⁶

The next clause is also difficult: ου καταχουσουσιν αυτης, "will not overpower it," as translated in the NASB. καταχουσουσιν is the 3rd person plural future active indicative form of καταχωω. Arndt and Gingrich give the basic definition of καταχωω to be *gain the ascendancy* but suggest *win a victory over* for its use in Matthew 16:18.²⁷ But a finer point needs to be addressed: is this city of the grave the attacker of the *qāhāl* or is it attacked by the *qāhāl*?

Probably neither view represents the precise meaning. The imagery is certainly not that of the church attacking the gates of Hades. But the other alternative is equally deficient. As Robertson argues, "it is not the picture of Hades attacking Christ's church."²⁸ He goes on to explain that instead of Hades being the aggressor, the gates of Hades will not prevail over the church because they will not be able to hold Jesus within. He will break out of those gates in his resurrection. Perhaps, however, Jesus' statement should not be restricted to himself. According to Paul, the resurrection of Jesus is just the "first fruits of those who are asleep."²⁹ Paul goes on to write,

For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.³⁰

25 Gary A. Lee, "Hades," *ISBE*, II:592.

26 Carson, *Matthew*, p. 370, suggests "the powers of death."

27 AG, p. 425.

28 Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, I:133. Ladd takes just the opposite view and sees Hades attacking the church (*A Theology of the New Testament*, p. 116).

29 1 Cor. 15:20.

30 1 Cor. 15:53-57. Some MSS have αδης (Hades) in the second question of v. 55, others have θανατος (death). However, the Hebrew in the

Earlier Paul connected the Messianic reign of Jesus, who is the Messiah of Israel and head of the *qāhāl*, the Messianic community, with the destruction of death:

For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death.³¹

No, death is not the aggressor. The gates of Hades will not be able to hold those who have died in Christ, and neither will those gates protect Hades and death from ultimate destruction. The *qāhāl* will be victorious, and in the new earth "there will no longer be any death"³²

quoted verse, Hos. 13:14, is שְׁאוֹל (Sheol) which the LXX translates with αἸης (Hades).

31 1 Cor. 15:25-26.

32 Rev. 21:4.