

**ST. PAUL CENTER
FOR BIBLICAL THEOLOGY**
Reading the Bible from the Heart of the Church



Summer Bible Study Series

Keys of the Kingdom: Saint Peter and the Papacy



God had promised David an eternal Kingdom, but in Jesus' day the Kingdom lay in ruins, and a counterfeit Kingdom stood in its place.

- God promised David an everlasting Kingdom. [1 Chronicles 17:7-14](#)
- But the Kingdom divided in two under the foolish reign of David's grandson Rehoboam. [1 Kings 12:16-20](#)
- The Northern Kingdom then was conquered by Assyria and disappeared from history. [2 Kings 17:1-6](#)
- Later, the Southern Kingdom of Judah was conquered by Babylon and the Davidic Kingdom came to an end. [2 Kings 25:1-7](#)
- The Davidic Kingdom was never restored after that; instead the Hasmoneans established a counterfeit kingdom. The most famous of the Hasmonean kings was Herod the Great. [Matthew 2:1-9; 16-18](#)
- By the first century, the Jewish people were longing for the restoration of the true Kingdom of David.



Matthew's Gospel introduces Jesus as the one who will restore the Davidic Kingdom and fulfill God's promises to David.

- Matthew begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus structured around three sets of 14 generations. [Matthew 1:17](#)
 - The numerical value of David's name in Hebrew is 14
 - David is the 14th name in the list
 - Only David and Jesus are given titles in the genealogy
 - “David the King” [Matthew 1:6](#)
 - “Jesus, who is called Christ” [Matthew 1:16](#)
 - “Christ” means “Anointed”
 - Anointing designated a person to be king. [1 Samuel 16:11-14](#)
 - Matthew is telling us that Jesus Christ is the Davidic King that Israel has been waiting for!
- When Jesus is baptized, God declares him to be his Beloved Son, echoing God's promise to David. [Mark 1:11](#), [Psalm 2:7-9](#)



As Jesus began his public ministry, he proclaimed the Kingdom and began to re-establish its essential elements.

- In his preaching, Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God. [Matthew 4:23](#); [Matthew 13:24-33](#)
- Jesus announced that he is the Good Shepherd, a title reserved for the Davidic King. [John 10:11](#); [Ezekiel 34:23](#); [37:24](#)
- John shows us Jesus' mother fulfilling the role of Queen Mother in the Davidic Kingdom. [1 Kings 2:13-21](#); [John 2:1-5](#); [Revelation 12:11-5](#)
- As Solomon appointed 12 officers to administer his kingdom, Jesus appoints His 12 Apostles to positions of leadership in his kingdom. [1 Kings 4:7](#); [Matthew 19:28](#).
- Jesus gives Peter the Keys of the Kingdom just as Isaiah gave the Keys of David's Kingdom to Eliakim. [Matthew 16:18-19](#); [Isaiah 22:20-22](#)



Saint Peter and his successors fill the role of Prime Minister in the Kingdom of God on earth, which is the Church.

- In the Davidic Kingdom, the Prime Minister (literally, “Master of the Household”, the one who has the keys of the Kingdom) is:
 - God's servant. [Isaiah 22:20](#)
 - He is a father to God’s people. [Isaiah 22:21](#)
 - Whatever he opens, no one can close; whatever he closes, no one can open. [Isaiah 22:22](#)
- Jesus put Peter in charge of the Church just as God made Eliakim the King's prime minister in charge of the Kingdom of Judah.
 - People in Jesus' day would have understood "binding" and "loosing" in terms of a rabbi's teaching authority. [Matthew 16:19](#)
 - The rabbi could declare what was permitted under the Law.
 - As Prime Minister of the Kingdom, Peter (and his successors) is the chief rabbi of the Church, with ultimate teaching authority.



In the same way, the Davidic Kingdom is the basis for our understanding of Mary as the Queen of Heaven and our Mother.

- In the Davidic Kingdom, the Queen was the King's mother.
 - King Solomon established his mother, Bathsheba, as Queen by giving her own throne at his right hand. [1 Kings 2:19](#)
 - The Queen Mother interceded for the people with her son, as Bathsheba interceded with Solomon for Adonijah. [1 Kings 2:13-21](#)
 - The Queen Mother was second only to the King. [Jeremiah 13:18](#)
- The New Testament writers build their case that Jesus is the Davidic King by showing that his mother is the Queen Mother
 - When the Magi visit the new born King, they find him with Mary at his side as Bathsheba was at Solomon's side. [Matthew 2:11](#)
 - Mary exercised her role as Queen Mother when she interceded for the bridegroom at the Wedding in Cana. [John 2:1-3](#)



We can see Saint Peter filling his role as leader of the Church in the Gospel of John, the Book of Acts, and Saint Paul's Letter to the Galatians.

- In the Gospel of John, Jesus says three times that he wants Peter to feed his sheep, thereby appointing Peter the shepherd of Christ's flock. [John 21:15-17](#)
- In the Book of Acts, Peter with the support of James led the Council of Jerusalem to accept non-Jewish Christians without requiring circumcision. [Acts 15:1-22](#)
- In Galatians
 - Paul explains how he went up to Jerusalem to validate his teaching with Peter and James. [Galatians 2:1-10](#)
 - Paul also shows that Peter, although leader of the Church, was human and could make mistakes. [Galatians 2:11-14](#)
 - Paul addresses Peter's error to him directly, recognizing the authority of his position as the Apostle to the Jews.