

**Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Papacy
(21th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)**

Isaiah 22:19-23—The ‘Prime Minister’ of David’s Kingdom

1. Shebna: is the “over the household” (Hebrew *al bayith*)
 - a. He has an “office”
 - b. However, Shebna is going to die
2. Eliakim is going to *replace* Shebna in the “office”
3. What are the Characteristics of the Office? (Isa 22:21-22)
 - a. Father: He is a “father” to the kingdom (after the king himself)
 - b. Keys of the Kingdom: He has the “key” of the house of David”
 - b. Authority: to “Shut” and “Open” (make binding decisions)

Psalm 138—Lord, Your Love is Eternal

1. Context: worship of the Lord in his “holy temple” (v. 2)

Romans 11:33-36—The Depths of the Riches and Wisdom of God

1. God’s Ways: “inscrutable” and “unsearchable” (11:34)

Matthew 16:13-20—Peter, the Rock, and the “Keys of the Kingdom”

1. Confusion: “Who do men say the Son of man is?”
2. Simon’s Response: “You are the Christ (Greek *Christos*), the Son of the living God”
3. Divinity of Christ: “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you”
4. Foundation of Church: “You are Peter (Greek *Petros*) and on this Rock (Greek *Petra*)
5. Victory of the Church: “the Gates of Hell (Greek *Hades*) shall not prevail...”
6. Peter’s Royal Authority: only he receives the “keys of the kingdom” (cf. Isa 22:
7. Peters’ Teaching Authority: “Whatever you *bind* on earth shall be *bound* in heaven...”

St Irenaeus: The Primacy of Peter and the Church of Rome

[T]he very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also the faith preached to men... comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. *For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre-eminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere...* The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate... To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement ... To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telephorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him, Pius; then after him, Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate. In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down

to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.2-3; trans. ANF 1.415-16).

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (21st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

1. Reread Isaiah 22 and the description of the “over the house.” What parallels do you see between the office of “prime minister” of David’s kingdom and the Papacy?

2. What is the significance of Jesus changing Simon’s name to “Rock” or “Peter”? Can you think of other times in the Bible when God changes someone’s name? In those cases, what does it mean?

3. How does understanding the Jewish roots of Peter’s office help you to understand the office of the Papacy? What practical relevance does this have for the lives of Christians living today?

For Further Study

1. CCC 880-892: the official teaching of the *Catechism* on Peter and the Papacy. Very helpful and concise. Includes the teaching on Papal infallibility.
2. Scott Hahn, ed., *Catholic Bible Dictionary* (New York: Image, 2009), See the article on “Peter” (pp. 697-99) for helpful background to this week’s Gospel episode.
2. Tim Gray, *Peter: Keys to Following Jesus* (Ignatius Press, 2016). An excellent, readable introduction to the life, mission, and message of Peter in the New Testament.