Continued: Misunderstanding One, Part 3: St. John Chrysostom:

What was Chrysostom’s view of Peter and his interpretation of the rock of Matthew 16?

Oh boy, here we go. I know Bill has warned us that he is quoting lengthy passages from his book, but let me ask if Bill is really trying to interact with my book and the information I have provided or is he just preaching? I ask this because if you will turn to page 76 in Bill’s book The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock what you will find is that the follow pages of his “rebuttal” are not really interacting with my book at all, which is the impression he gives, but that everything following here about St. John Chrysostom are the exact pages from his book which he cut ‘n’ pasted into this “rebuttal”. Is he really interacting with my book Upon this Rock? Don’t kid yourself. His book was published in 1996, three years before mine. He is just re-cycling. At least I gave Bill the courtesy of reading his books and interacting with the text, as is proven here. And, here as well, I am not just cutting ‘n’ pasting quotes from my book, but trying to deal fairly with the issues. But even so, let’s deal with the material at hand!

Does it coincide with the teaching of papal primacy espoused by the Church of Rome? The answer is no. Chrysostom’s views are very similar to those of Augustine. As we have seen Augustine held a very high view of Peter. He called him the chief and first of the apostles and yet stated that the rock was not Peter but Christ. A very similar picture presents itself in the writings of Chrysostom. In his book Studies in the Early Papacy, the Roman Catholic apologist, Dom Chapman, has referenced approximately ninety citations from Chrysostom’s writings which he claims as proof of a clear and unambiguous affirmation of a Petrine and thereby a papal primacy. But Dom Chapman has committed a primary error of historiography—that of reading back into the writings of a previous age the presuppositions and conclusions of a later age.

First, I would suggest that the reader acquire Chapman’s excellent book and ignore Bill’s brush off. Someone seriously concerned with these issues will read Dom Chapman for themselves.

So, do I repeat all my comments again here which I used to explain Bill’s misinterpretation of St. Augustine? My publisher would cover his head and say “NO, that would be repetitive! Cross reference it! Refer them back to the original statements.” I am afraid we are going to hear the same faulty assumptions all over again, this time about St. John Chrysostom - kind of like a broken record. About “historiography” and who is really guilty of violating its principles, see the extended argument above. I will expect the reader to refer back to my the previous responses concerning St. Augustine, though we will tackle any new issues with vigor. I would suggest the reader of this response read the section on St. John
Chrysostom in my book *Upon this Rock*. I don’t think it wise to reproduce it all here. I will try to limit my words here to responding to Bill and elaborating a bit.

He assumes that because a particular father makes certain statements about Peter that he must have a primacy of jurisdiction in mind and that this applies in his thinking to the bishop of Rome in an exclusive sense as well.

This again is one of Bill’s statements that makes me sit back, scratch my head (where my hair used to be), and say, “Gee, I wonder if he read my book or if he only read the footnotes where the name, William Webster, appears.” I don’t always make that assumption, but I do take into account the whole experience of each Father and not just what they said about Matthew 16. Many Fathers may have said one thing and done another. Sometimes their actions speak louder than their words. Cyprian is an example and we’ll discuss him later. There are many places in *Upon the Rock* where I stipulate that the Fathers may not be affirming a Vatican I understanding when they mention Peter and his special place among the Apostles. Do the Fathers refer to a jurisdictional authority when they speak of Peter and the primacy? Sometimes they do, sometimes they don’t. To say they always do is foolish; to say they never do is equally foolish. I’m not sure why this keeps coming up, but in Bill’s “rebuttal” you will read it again, and again, and again, and again . . .

But as we have seen with Augustine this is not the case. A close examination of the comments of Chrysostom demonstrates this to be true in his case as well.

Bill’s admitted argument from silence sounded somewhat of a sour note and was very unconvincing. The same is true with his analysis of St. John Chrysostom. My daughter plays several musical instruments and I have learned to spot a flat or sour note. I have found many flat notes, and a few sharp notes in this work of Bill’s as well.

Like Augustine, Chrysostom makes some very exalted statements about Peter:

Peter, that chief of the apostles, first in the Church, the friend of Christ who did not receive revelation from man but from the Father, as the Lord bore witness to him saying: ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar - Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven’: this same Peter (when I say ‘Peter,’ I name an unbreakable rock, an immovable ridge, a great apostle, the first of the disciples, the first called and the first obeying), this same Peter, I say, did not perpetrate a minor misdeed but a very great one. He denied the Lord. I say this, not accusing a just man, but offering to you the opportunity of repentance. Peter denied the Lord and governor of the world himself, the savior of all... *(De Eleemos III.4, M.P.G., Vol. 49, Col. 298).*
Peter, the coryphaeus of the choir of apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the foundation of the faith, the base of the confession, the fisherman of the world, who brought back our race from the depth of error to heaven, he who is everywhere fervent and full of boldness, or rather of love than boldness (Hom. de decem mille talentis 3, PG III, 20. Cited by Dom Chapman, Studies in the Early Papacy (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 74).

We have heard repeatedly from Bill that the Fathers do not refer the Rock of Matthew 16 to Peter and yet it seems clear that St. John Chrysostom is referring to Matthew 16 when he says that Peter, not Christ, is the “foundation of the faith”. And who is the “mouth” or spokesman for the Apostles? What St. Augustine is telling us is even deeper! He says that Peter is not only the confessor, but the foundation of the confession. This is very profound and Catholic!

These are exalted titles but in using them Chrysostom does not mean that Peter possesses a primacy of jurisdiction in the Church or that he is the rock upon which the Church is built.

How do we know this Bill? Are you making a shut-and-closed statement here? What is your criterion? Is it silence, the same as with St. Augustine?

Again, we have already seen this in Augustine. He uses similar language in describing Peter but without its having a Roman Catholic meaning. We know this is also true for Chrysostom because he applies similar titles to the other apostles and did not interpret the rock of Matthew 16 to be Peter.

We just read above “Peter, the coryphaeus of the choir of apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the foundation of the faith, the base of the confession.” What is the foundation of the faith? Peter’s faith? No, Peter is the foundation of the faith. What is the base of the confession? Peter’s confession? No, Peter himself is the base of the confession and the foundation of the faith. This is very profound - this is acknowledging Peter as the foundation not only of the Church but also of the confession and the faith! Now, we will take a look at the titles of the other apostles, as mentioned by Bill, now.

The term coryphaeus, for example, was a general title applied by Chrysostom to several of the apostles, not to Peter exclusively. It carries the idea of leadership but implies no jurisdiction. Chrysostom uses this term to describe Peter, James, John, Andrew and Paul.

Bill is “jousting with windmills” here because what he says about the term coryphaeus is already discussed in my book, actually through the words of an Eastern Orthodox writer. Why does Bill grandstand on this issue on which there is no contention? Is he trying to make the reader think that I attempt to “prove” the primacy of Peter based on the word coryphaeus and that I’m unaware of the broader usage of the term? Well it just ‘taint’ so. I keep getting this sneaking
suspicion that Bill never read my book, but only zoomed in on his own name. I’m also starting to suspect this is the way he reads history, especially the Fathers, using the “hunt-and-peck method” looking for passages that support his Fundamentalist tradition. Here is what my book *Upon this Rock* says about the term *coryphaeus*, to show that Bill is building a straw man to pummel with his fists:

Bill utilizes the word *coryphaeus* for two purposes: to deny and to affirm. First, to deny in that the word *coryphaeus* does not mean “primacy”. On this we basically agree. The word itself does not demand “primacy”. Second, he uses it to deny. If the word *coryphaeus* is used of many different “leaders” it must mean they are all equal and anyone called *coryphaeus* cannot be supreme over others. Let’s look at the word more closely.

“The word *coryphaeus*, ‘Latin, leader, from Greek *koryphaios*, from *koryphe* summit’ (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.) on the Logos Library System 2. 1 CD-ROM [Oak Harbor, Wash.: Logos Research Systems, 1997]), means, first, the leader of a party or school of thought and, second, the leader of a chorus. According to Orthodox theologian John Meyendorff, it was evident to Byzantine theologians that ‘Peter is the “coryphaeus” of the apostolic choir; he is the first disciple of Christ and speaks always on behalf of all. It is true that other apostles, John, James and Paul, are also called “coryphaei” and “primates,” but Peter alone is the “rock of the Church.” His primacy has, therefore, not only a personal character, but bears an ecclesiological significance’ (“St. Peter in Byzantine Theology”, in Meyendorff, *Primacy of Peter*, 74). It is only fair to point out that Meyendorff also makes it clear that he does not believe the title *coryphaeus* or the teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Churches supports the Roman ecclesiology or Vatican I understanding of papal infallibility” (*Upon this Rock*, pg. 220).

Bill is certainly not telling us anything we don’t already know; in fact, Meyendorff, the Eastern Orthodox theologian recommended by Bill in his personal e-mail to me knows it too, but is willing to give it more weight than Bill.

So who is misrepresenting whom, Bill? You make it appear as though I use the word *coryphaeus* to “prove” that Vatican I was taught by St. John Chrysostom. I don’t. But since you bring up the word *coryphaeus*, let’s discuss it a little further! Here is the question? Since *coryphaeus* is not used exclusively for Peter, in St. John Chrysostom’s writings and in the Fathers in general, does that prove that St. John Chrysostom could not have seen in Peter a higher authority of honor or jurisdiction? In other words, Peter is called the *coryphaeus*, and other apostles are
called *coryphaei*, therefore Peter must be equal to them and no primacy can be attributed to him.

Let me provide two other patristic passages in which the word *coryphaeus* is used. For example, St. Basil uses the word *coryphaeus* when describing the Holy Spirit teaching the angels how to sing and praise God: “[Is it possible that] an army should maintain its discipline in the absence of its commander, or a chorus its harmony without the guidance of the *coryphaeus*. How could the Seraphim cry “Holy, Holy, Holy,” were they not taught by the Spirit how often true religion requires them to lift their voice in this ascription of glory? (Book of St. Basil on the Spirit, 16 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series: Volume VIII*, [Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.] 1997).

We also find *coryphaeus* being used to describe the leader of Arians, the heretical group denying the deity of Christ. “Originally they were followers of Arius; then they went over to Hermogenes, who was diametrically opposed to the errors of Arius, as is evinced by the Creed originally recited by him at Nicaea. Hermogenes, fell asleep, and then they went over to Eusebius, the *coryphaeus*, as we know on personal evidence, of the Arian ring” (The Hexeameron, Letter 244 by St. Basil, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series: Volume VIII*, [Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.] 1997).

In the Fathers we have at least the following called *coryphaeus*: 1) Peter, 1) Peter, James, and John, 3) the Holy Spirit, and 4) an Arian heretic leader. If *coryphaeus* is a term of leveling, according to Bill’s hermeneutic, and no one can claim an exalted position over others if they are both called *coryphaeus*, then we have a sticky situation because all of the above would then be considered equal in leadership. The word *coryphaeus*, simply means “leader” but does not tell what degree of authority that particular leader has. Therefore, the Holy Spirit as leader of the choirs of heaven certainly has a higher authority than Peter as leader of the Apostolic band; and John the Apostle certainly has a different authority (quantitatively and qualitatively) than Eusebius the heretic leader. Bill Webster can be the “leader” of his local Bible study and Bill Clinton the leader of the United States. Since Bill Webster is called “leader” as well as Bill Clinton, does it therefore follow that Bill Clinton cannot have a higher position or authority than Bill Webster?

Demonstrating that various men are called *coryphaeus* is a red herring. All he is proving by bringing up this issue is that he probably didn’t read my book before writing forty pages about it, and second that he uses the patristic writings poorly, using the same selective and flawed hermeneutical method he uses for interpreting Scripture.
But how can Bill say that “leadership” implies no “jurisdiction”? Leadership in the sense used by the Fathers (leader of the band, choir director, captain of the troops, etc.) always implies jurisdiction of those under their care or in their choir. Does not the leader, rightly appointed and recognized, have the authority to reprimand, chastise, correct, and even exclude? To deny that leadership implies no jurisdiction is foolish. I could live with something like “doesn’t necessarily imply a universal jurisdiction” but Bill’s statement is far too simplistic. Each of the apostles had “leadership” or authority within his sphere.

All the Apostles were given authority (jurisdiction) to bind and loose in Matthew 18. What does “bind and loose” mean? It means the authority, right and jurisdiction to exclude people from the community, include them, doctrinal authority to declare things forbidden or permitted, authority to absolve or condemn. (For more read pages 37 - 38 in Upon this Rock). This sure seems to imply jurisdiction to me. But Peter always had greater prerogatives and Peter is the only one of the Twelve that speaks in the book of Acts. John is by his side a few times but never speaks. James was killed in Acts 12 but never speaks. Of the Twelve, only Peter’s words are recorded in the first history of the early Church. Peter had a very special position and a special authority.

Cyprian, whom we will discuss later, acknowledged as we do a “like authority” between Peter and the other Apostles. Both were given the authority to bind and loose as is correctly stated by Bill. But Peter had a significant position: “On [Peter] He builds the Church, and to him He gives the command to feed the sheep; and although He assigns a like power to all the Apostles, yet He founded a single chair, and He established by His own authority a source and an intrinsic reason for that unity. Indeed, the others were that also which Peter was; but a primacy is given to Peter, whereby it is made clear that there is but one Church and one chair” The Unity of the Catholic Church 4 in Jurgens, The Faith of the Early Fathers, 1:220).

Remember as we read the quotes below that I have not said anywhere that the one word coryphaeus alone proves a primacy for Peter and the Popes. Bill’s argument is taking on a hollow, tinny ring now, as we read the following passages.

He states that just as Peter received the charge of the world, so did the apostles Paul and John. Just as Peter was appointed teacher of the world, so was Paul. Just as Peter was a holder of the keys of heaven, so was the apostle John. He places the apostles on an equal footing relative to authority:

He took the coryphaei and led them up into a high mountain apart...Why does He take these three alone? Because they excelled the others. Peter showed his excellence by his great love of Him, John by being greatly loved, James by the answer...‘We are able to drink the chalice.’ (Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene

The coryphaei, Peter the foundation of the Church, Paul the vessel of election (Contra ludos et theatra 1, PG VI, 265. Cited by Chapman, Studies on the Early Papacy (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 76).

Here is a clear statement of St. John Chrysostom that Peter is the foundation of the Church [Mt 16], but Bill blows by it without comment. I wonder why?

And if any should say ‘How then did James receive the chair at Jerusalem?’ I would make this reply, that He appointed Peter teacher not of the chair, but of the world...And this He did to withdraw them (Peter and John) from their unseasonable sympathy for each other; for since they were about to receive the charge of the world, it was necessary that they should no longer be closely associated together (Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332).

Notice this carefully: Bill has an ellipsis set in the middle of the above paragraph, and rightfully so as there is a good bit of information he’s excised from the text. The important thing is that Peter was not removed from the chair of Jerusalem to separate Peter and John. In the context, Peter and John were distinguished by the distinction Jesus made between them in John 21. They were to “split up” so to speak to cover more of the world with the preaching of the Gospel. Both were to be teachers to the world as were all the apostles in obedience to Jesus’ direct command (Mt 28:18 - 20; Acts 1:8). This proves absolutely nothing about the authority structure between them. The implication though is very significant in that Peter was “promoted” so to speak from the chair of Jerusalem to the world, which would be Rome and the ultimate chair of Peter in the see of Rome.

The chair assumed by James was the chair of the bishop in Jerusalem. Peter had “been promoted” up from the chair of Jerusalem. The chair Peter was assuming was that of the world, and the center of the world was in Rome. That is why the Church has always referred to Rome as the see of Peter, the place where Peter’s chair resides. The writings of the Fathers are replete with this fact.
For the Son of thunder, the beloved of Christ, the pillar of the Churches throughout the world, who holds the keys of heaven, who drank the cup of Christ, and was baptized with His baptism, who lay upon his Master’s bosom, with much confidence, this man now comes forward to us now (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 1.1, p. 1).

The merciful God is wont to give this honor to his servants, that by their grace others may acquire salvation; as was agreed by the blessed Paul, that teacher of the world who emitted the rays of his teaching everywhere (*Homily* 24, On Genesis. Cited by E. Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority* (London: SPCK, 1952), p. 165).

It is clear from these statements that Chrysostom, while certainly granting a large leadership role to Peter, does not consider him to have been made the supreme ruler of the Church. These passages demonstrate that the exalted titles applied to Peter were not exclusively applied to him. There is one passage in which Chrysostom does state that Peter received authority over the Church:

For he who then did not dare to question Jesus, but committed the office to another, was even entrusted with the chief authority over the brethren (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332).

This would seem to indicate that Chrysostom taught that Peter was the supreme ruler of the Church. However in the passage cited above Chrysostom speaks of the apostle John as also receiving the charge of the whole world and the keys equally with Peter:

Notice that Bill doesn’t like what St. John Chrysostom “seems to indicate” so he quickly looks for a way to stomp out the fire (like the rhinoceros in the movie *The Gods Must Be Crazy*). This is typical of Fundamentalists who find passages in the Fathers or verses in the Bible that don’t fit their recent and novel Fundamentalist tradition. When these “proof-texters” come to 1 Peter 3:21 they stop short and say, “What do we do with this?” What does ‘baptism now saves you’ mean?” They end up dancing around, and admitting, as James McCarthy does in “*The Gospel according to Rome*”, that “admittedly, this is one of the most difficult passages of the Bible to interpret” or something very close to that. Why is it difficult to explain? Because it doesn’t fit their tradition! Bill doesn’t like what St. John Chrysostom says here either so he quickly scrambles to find some way to help St. John Chrysostom reword the passage. I like asking Fundamentalists, when they come to such difficult biblical passages, “How would you advise Peter, Paul, or Jesus to reword that passage so it fits your Protestant tradition?” I would ask Bill the same, “How would you advise St. John Chrysostom, one of the greatest preachers of all time (in fact, Chrysostom means “golden-mouth”), to re-word this
passage to fit your newly-invented Protestant tradition?” At a point like this we have to ask: “Who really violates the rules of historiography? Who is the real “anachronist”? Let’s move on.

And this He did to withdraw them (Peter and John) from their unseasonable sympathy for each other; for since they were about to receive the charge of the world, it was necessary that they should no longer be closely associated together (Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332).

This is one of those statements that should cause the reader to yell, “Hit the brakes!”. Bill tells us that St. John Chrysostom never gives us reason to believe Peter held a jurisdictional primacy over anyone (and thus concludes as above: “He places the apostles on an equal footing relative to authority”) and then makes the statement above: “There is one passage in which Chrysostom does state that Peter received authority over the Church”. Is this double talk or what? Deny that John Chrysostom says it and then admit he says it? This admission is followed by a shabby attempt to erase the words of John Chrysostom and to eliminate the obvious meaning of the statement. Bill has to do this because his Fundamentalist tradition and his anachronistic view of history force him to play games with the Fathers.

“No authority over the Church” vs. “jurisdictional primacy”. Is Bill attempting to make a distinction here? If so, I would claim it is double talk.

How does John’s “charge of the world with Peter” eliminate John Chrysostom’s statement that Peter was “entrusted with the chief authority over the brethren”? Look carefully here:

Does “charge of the world” = “chief authority over the brethren”?

They are qualitatively and quantitatively different. Is Bill hoping the reader will just slip past this sophist argument and not catch it? The Apostles were all given authority over the world when Jesus commissioned them in Matthew 28:18 – 19. However, what does that have to do with Peter’s “chief authority over the brethren”?

If Bill is trying to say that St. John Chrysostom views Peter and Paul as equals because both are referred to as coryphaeus, then again we have reason to believe he didn’t read my book before criticizing it. Here is what St. John Chrysostom says about Peter and Paul. He never mentions this passage in his book (I couldn’t find it anyway; if it is actually there Bill, let me know where). Bill must have somehow overlooked this passage when he was “reading” my book.
“What can be more lowly than such a soul [Paul]? After such successes, wanting nothing of Peter, not even his assent, but being of equal dignity with him, (for at present I will say no more,) he comes to [Peter] as his elder and superior. And the only object of this journey was to visit Peter; thus he pays due respect to the Apostles, and esteems himself not only not their better but not their equal. . . . He says, ‘to visit Peter’; he does not say to see (ἰδεῖν) but to visit and survey, (ἰστορῆσαι) a word which those, who seek to become acquainted with great and splendid cities, apply to themselves. Worthy of such trouble did he consider the very sight of Peter; and this appears from the Acts of the Apostles also” (for more on the study of the words “to see”, read Jesus, Peter & the Keys, pgs. 111ff.) (Commentary on Galatians 1, 18 in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st series, 13:12 - 13, as quoted in Upon this Rock, pg. 224).


My footnote to Tertullian reads, “Tertullian acknowledges here that Paul, sometime after his conversion went up to see Peter “because of his office, no doubt.” What office? The office mentioned by Paul a few paragraphs earlier. Paul refers to Peter as “Cephas” indicating by Jesus as the “Rock”. Peter holds the office of steward (Is 22; Mt 16), the shepherd or pastor of the Church. Paul later visits the apostles in Jerusalem and records it this way: “I laid before them (but privately before those who were of repute) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain” (Gal 2:2). Paul, though called by revelation from God, did not function independently of Peter and the Eleven, rather he met with Peter in private, submitted his gospel to the leaders in Jerusalem, and then accepted their decrees at the Jerusalem Council. He had a call from God but recognized the office of Cephas.”

It appears that Bill missed these quotes somehow. Oh well. Let’s look at them a little more closely, for as Mark Bonocore points out, there are some interesting points germane to our discussion.

In Galatians 2, Paul is not only calling Peter “Kephas” in order to illustrate his office as “the Rock.” Rather, Paul is actually employing a pun in Greek. Notice, for example, how Paul switches between the name “Peter” (Gal 2:7-8) and the name “Kephas” (Gal 1:18, 2:9, 2:11, & 2:14). His is no accident. For, while
the name “Kephas” is the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic “Kepha” (“Rock”), it is ALSO the Greek word for “HEAD.” Thus, in Gal 2:14, when Paul boasts how “I said to Kephas, in front of all,” what he’s REALLY saying is that ‘I even stood up to the Head for the sake of the Gospel.’ This play on words would not be lost on Paul’s original, Greek-speaking audience. Indeed, there would be no way for them to miss it!

Notice, for example, how Paul only calls Simon Bar-Jonah “Peter” in Gal 2:7-8. Indeed, this is the ONLY TIME Paul ever uses the name “Peter” in his writings. In all of Paul’s other references to Peter, he is always “Kephas” (1 Corinth 1:12, 3:22, 9:5, 15:5, Gal 1:18, 2:9, 2:11, & 2:14). So, why the change? Because, if we notice, in Gal 2:7-8, Paul is not referring to Peter’s office of headship, but rather to Peter’s PERSONAL apostolate to evangelize the Jews - an apostolate which was EQUAL with Paul’s apostolate to the Gentiles. Yet, when Paul wishes to show Peter as an authority, he is no longer “Peter” but “Kephas” (BOTH “Rock” and “HEAD”):

Gal 1:18: “After three years, I went up to Jerusalem to confer with Kephas (“the Head”), and remained with him for fifteen days.” Here, Peter is the authority: the Head.

Gal 2:9 - 10: “...and when they recognized the grace bestowed on me, James and Kephas (“the Head”), and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas their right hands in partnership, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcision. Only we were to be mindful to the poor (i.e., continue to take up the collection: Acts 11:29-30, 12:25, 1 Cor 16:1-4), which is the very thing I was eager to do.” Once again, Peter is cited in authority (the “Head”) - being the “central pillar” of the Church.

Gal 2:11: “And when Kephas (“the Head”) came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly wrong.” Again, Peter is held up as an authority. Why boast of opposing him “to his face” unless he was someone of higher standing than Paul?

Gal 2:14: “...I said to Kephas (“the Head”), in front of all.” Once again, Peter is the authority. And we see the same thing in 1 Corinthians, where Paul employs the same pun to depict Peter as the leader, the “Head.”

In 1 Corinthians 1:12, 3:22, and 9:5, “Kephas” is listed last in ascending order of prominence (allowing for Paul’s personal modesty). Indeed, in 1:12, Kephas is placed just “below” Christ Himself in the ascending order. Similarly, in 15:5, it is “to Kephas, then to the Twelve.” Once again, Peter is not only “the Rock” but also “the Head” of the Apostolic choir.
Approaching this matter from a Greek reader’s point of view, one cannot avoid being struck by the pun. And, as we well know, Paul is very fond of puns and (like any good, Jewish rabbi), uses them throughout his epistles. Bob Sungenis and Scott Butler both agree that the pun is inescapable in the Greek.

Mark Bonocore said that the funny thing was that a Greek Orthodox he was debating didn’t even know that “Kephas” was actually the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic word ‘Kepha’! They just assumed that Paul was calling Peter “the Head,” because that’s what it means in Greek. They had completely overlooked John 1:42. Which, funny enough, seems to be employing the same Greek pun. Otherwise, why give the translation?

Mark says, think about it. If Simon Bar-Jonah was called “Kephas” by the Greeks and “Kepha” by the Aramaic-speakers, how did he end up as “Peter” in the Gospel narratives? Why isn’t he “Kephas” throughout the Gospels? Why change it to “Petros,” unless the Gospel writers are trying to avoid equating Simon Bar-Jonah with the name “Head” so as to make it clear that his name is “Rock.”

Now back to Bill’s arguments. He admits, with a hiss of rejection, and a collection of supposedly contradicting passages, that there is one place where St. John Chrysostom grants a place of authority to Peter over the other Apostles. We read it a moment ago: “There is one passage in which John Chrysostom does state that Peter received authority over the Church: ‘For he who then did not dare to question Jesus, but committed the office to another, was even entrusted with the chief authority over the brethren’ (Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332).”

What he fails to tell us is that St. John Chrysostom doesn’t just mention this in passing, but pounds it home with a sledgehammer by saying it three times! The subsequent mention of John being a partner in “charge of the world” is contained in this same passage. Peter governing the Apostles and John being a co-worker in charge of the world are, as we have seen, two completely different things which Bill should be clever enough to notice if he had a desire to treat the text and history with respect. Does he know this passage and how powerfully St. John Chrysostom pounds home the point? Yes he does because he has the whole passage cited in his book The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock. I provide the follow passage directly from his book (thank God and HP for scanners!):

“He saith unto him [Peter], ‘Feed my sheep’, And why, having passed over the others, doth He speak with Peter on these matters? He was the chosen one of the Apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the leader of the band; on this account also
Paul went up upon a time to enquire of him rather than the others. And at the same time to show him that he must now be of good cheer, since the denial was done away, Jesus putteh into his hands the chief authority among the brethren; and He bringeth not forward the denial, nor reproacheth him with what had taken place, but saith: ‘If thou lovest Me, preside over thy brethren, and the warm love which thou didst ever manifest, and in which thou didst rejoice, show thou now; and the life which thou saidst thou wouldest lay down for Me, now give for My sheep’... And if any should say ‘How then did James receive the chair at Jerusalem?’ I would make this reply, that He appointed Peter teacher not of the chair, but of the world... ‘Then Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned on His breast at supper; and saith, ‘Lord, and what shall this man do?’ Wherefore hath he reminded us of that reclining? Not without cause or in a chance way, but to show us what boldness Peter had after the denial. For he who then did not dare to question Jesus, but committed the office to another, was even entrusted with the chief authority over the brethren, and not only doth not commit to another what relates to himself, but himself now puts another question to his Master concerning another. John is silent but Peter speaks. He showeth also here the love which he bare towards him; for Peter greatly loved John as is clear from what followed, and their close union is shown through the whole Gospel, and in the Acts. When therefore Christ had foretold great things to him, and committed the world to him, and spake beforehand of his martyrdom, and testified that his love was greater than that of the others, desiring to have John also to share with him, he said, ‘And what shall this man do?’ ‘Shall he not come the same way with us?’ And as at that other time not being able himself to ask, he puts John forward, so now desiring to make him a return, and supposing that he would desire to ask about the matters pertaining to himself, but had not courage, he himself undertook the questioning. What then saith Christ? ‘If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?’ Since he spake from strong affection, and wishing not to be torn away from him, Christ, to show that however much he might love, he could not go beyond his love, saith, ‘If I will that he tarry-what is that to thee?’...And this He did to withdraw them (Peter and John) from their unseasonable sympathy for each other; for since they were about to receive the charge of the world [Mt 28:18 - 19], it was necessary that they should no longer be closely associated together, for assuredly this would have been a great loss to the world. Wherefore He saith unto him, ‘Thou hast a work entrusted unto thee, look to it, accomplish it, labor and struggle. What if I will that he tarry here? Look thou to and care for thine own matters” (Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332, on pgs. 31 - 311 of The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock.

So, we see contrary to Bill’s comments earlier, and from a quote from his own book, that St. John Chrysostom hammers home the fact that Jesus placed Peter in a place of preeminence over the other Apostles. So, in his writings St. John Chrysostom never “taught that Peter was the supreme ruler of the Church”, especially over the other apostles, eh Bill? I don’t know how St. John Chrysostom could have made it any plainer. I also don’t understand why Bill wants to sweep it under the rug unless he really doesn’t care what St. John Chrysostom actually says and really just wants to maintain his anti-Catholic stance so he can rest easy in his
novel and innovative new tradition opposed completely to the traditions and ecclesiology of the Fathers of the Church!


**He goes on to speak of Paul as being on an equal footing with Peter:**

Where the Cherubim sing the glory, where the Seraphim are flying, there shall we see Paul, with Peter, and as chief and leader of the choir of the saints, and shall enjoy his generous love...I love Rome even for this, although indeed one has other grounds for praising it...Not so bright is the heaven, when the sun sends forth his rays, as is the city of Rome, sending out these two lights into all parts of the world. From thence will Paul be caught up, thence Peter. Just bethink you, and shudder, at the thought of what a sight Rome will see, when Paul ariseth suddenly from that deposit, together with Peter, and is lifted up to meet the Lord. What a rose will Rome send up to Christ!...what two crowns will the city have about it! what golden chains will she be girded with! what fountains possess! Therefore I admire the city, not for the much gold, nor for the columns, not for the other display there, but for these pillars of the Church (1 Cor. 15:38) (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XI, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Romans*, Homily 32, Ver. 24, pp. 561-562).

Webster quotes the above to speak of Paul as being on an equal footing with Peter. *Equal in heavenly stature, not in earthly jurisdiction*. Good grief! Can’t he tell the difference? Both he and President Clinton are equally citizens of the United States, yet that doesn’t preclude the fact that President Clinton, as unworthy as he may be, has an office of superiority over Bill. Come on Bill, let’s read the context and try to be honest with the passage!

We have already dealt with St. John Chrysostom’s view on Peter and Paul earlier and I don’t feel it is necessary to restate it here.

Bill would have us believe that the other Apostles had the same “chief authority” as Peter. I quote from a letter of my good friend Dave Palm to an Orthodox lady, “On your counter-citations from St. John Chrysostom, you would have a case if you could cite an instance in which he says that any of the other Apostles had “chief authority” (Greek: prostasia) or “presidency” (Greek: epistasia). The Liddell and Scott *Greek-English Lexicon* (abridged) defines prostasia as “a being the head of, presidency, chieftainship, leadership” and epistateo (from which we get the noun epistasia) as “I. to have charge of a thing, to be set over, preside over. II. to be chief President in the assembly” (page 261).
Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961) has this for *prostasia*, “1. support, protection, patronage . . . 2. charge, government, leadership” and for *epistasia*, “1. control, authority.” These words seem to have an intrinsically “jurisdictional” force and they are (as far as I can determine) applied only to St. Peter by St. John Chrysostom.

“Guettee, in his *The Papacy* (reprint Blanco, TX: New Sarov Press, n.d., p. 157) claims that St. John Chrysostom used *prostasia* of St. Paul in his Homily on Romans 32 but the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series has *koruphaios* here (see Series 1, vol. 11, p. 561). I need to verify this in Migne but I suspect that Guettee got a little overzealous and that NPNF is correct, since *koruphaios* fits the context of this passage better (in my investigations, *koruphaios* seems to have the notion of “chief” but does not necessarily carry with it any actual controlling authority, though it can).”

The following words from Bill Webster are not a critique of my book, but again multiple pages that he “cut ‘n’ pasted” from his book. Should I waste my time answering him? I’ve already dealt with all this in my book, the text of which he has not read or is just blatantly ignoring in his “rebuttal”. Why is Bill going on and on about something I have already stipulated and agreed in MY book, even providing the footnote.

Further, Chrysostom speaks of James, and not Peter, as possessing the chief rule and authority in Jerusalem and over the Jerusalem Council:

If Bill had read my book he would have known that I already mention this passage and explain it.

This (James) was bishop, as they say, and therefore he speaks last...There was no arrogance in the Church. After Peter Paul speaks, and none silences him: James waits patiently; not starts up (for the next word). No word speaks John here, no word the other Apostles, but held their peace, for James was invested with the chief rule, and think it no hardship. So clean was their soul from love of glory. Peter indeed spoke more strongly, but James here more mildly: for thus it behooves one in high authority, to leave what is unpleasant for others to say, while he himself appears in the milder part (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XI, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*, Homily 33, pp. 205, 207).

Dom Chapman interprets these statements in a limited sense this way:

Obviously, it is James who has the ‘rule’ and the ‘great power’ as bishop of those believing Pharisees who had initiated the discussion. But the idea that he had (rule) over Peter is, of course, ludicrous, and the notion that he could possibly be the president of the council certainly never occurred to Chrysostom’s mind (Dom
The problem with what Chapman says is that this is not what Chrysostom says. Chrysostom says nothing about the chief rule of James being limited to that of the believing Pharisees. There is not one word said about Pharisees. His reference to the chief rule is of the overall Council over which James presided. When all of his statements about Peter, Paul, James and John are taken together, it becomes clear that in the mind of Chrysostom, all the apostles together held the care of the world and headship of the Church universally. Peter did not hold a primacy of jurisdiction but of teaching, which he says is equally true of John and Paul:

Did James have the chief rule in the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15? I will not go into the great detail I provide in my book, which I would encourage the reader to study. But, a key to understanding the “judgement” of James in Acts 15:19 may be seen by looking at what James is actually saying: “It is my judgement, therefore, that we ought to stop troubling the Gentiles ...” Well, who is this “WE”? Who was “troubling the Gentiles”? Certainly not Peter. He was the one who first Baptized Gentiles into the Church (Acts 10:44-49), and he made no demands that they be circumcised (Acts 11:1-18). Similarly, Peter defended the Gentiles as equal members in the Church just before James’ statement (Acts 15:7-10).

So, Peter was not part of this “we.” And, for that matter, neither were Paul and Barnabas; nor were the Jewish Christians from Cyprus and Cyrenica who preached to the Gentiles in Antioch for the first time (Acts 11:20-21). So, who is this “we” that James is referring to?

Acts 15:2 tells us: “Some who had come down from Judea were instructing the brothers, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to Mosaic practice, you cannot be saved.” Therefore, it was the Jewish Christians under James in Judea who were “troubling the gentiles” - the same Jewish Christians who, in Acts 15:5, are identified as belonging to the party of the Pharisees.

Thus, when James “renders judgement” in Acts 15:19, he is not speaking for the entire Council, or for the other Apostles, but for the Jewish (i.e., Pharisaic) faction - his faction. And, indeed, this is the reason that the author of Acts records James’ words - to show the Judaizers, who Paul will encounter later during his travels throughout the Mediterranean, that the leader of the Jewish (Pharisaic) faction absolved Gentiles from circumcision. Indeed, the author of Acts even goes out of his way to have James and his Jerusalem presbyters repeat this position in Acts 21:25.
Thus, when John Chrysostom presents James as possessing the “throne of Jerusalem,” his primacy over the believing Jerusalem Pharisees would be understood. He spoke for the Judean Jewish Christians. He did not speak for the Apostles, nor did he speak in a universal sense.


We have dealt with the issue of “charge of the world” earlier and I am not going to deal with it again. All that we are now reading from Bill is just pages and pages from his book. At the end of this selective proof-texting, I will continue to comment on this so-called “rebuttal”.

[Here we continue on page 81 of Bill’s book]:

Chrysostom interprets the keys given to Peter as a declarative authority to teach and preach the gospel and to extend the kingdom of God, not a primacy of jurisdiction over the other apostles:

For the Father gave to Peter the revelation of the Son; but the Son gave him to sow that of the Father and that of Himself in every part of the world; and to mortal man He entrusted the authority over all things in Heaven, giving him the keys; who extended the Church to every part of the world, and declared it to be stronger than heaven (*A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford, Parker, 1844), *Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 54.3).

This authority was shared equally by all the apostles. Chrysostom states, for example, that John also held the authority of the keys and, like Peter, he held a universal teaching authority over the Churches throughout the world:


It is also evident from Chrysostom's exegesis of Matthew 16 that he did not teach that Peter was made supreme ruler of the Church. He did not interpret the rock of Matthew 16 to be the person of Peter, but his confession of faith, pointing to Christ himself as the rock and only foundation of the Church:

‘And I say unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church’; that is, on the faith of his confession. Hereby He signifies that many were on the
point of believing, and raises his spirit, and makes him a shepherd...For the Father gave to Peter the revelation of the Son; but the Son gave him to sow that of the Father and that of Himself in every part of the world; and to mortal man He entrusted the authority over all things in Heaven, giving him the keys; who extended the church to every part of the world, and declared it to be stronger than heaven (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume X, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, Homily 54.2-3; pp. 332-334).

[Now we’re on page 82 of Bill’s book. Honest rebuttal and critique, eh?]

He speaks from this time lowly things, on his way to His passion, that He might show His humanity. For He that hath built His church upon Peter’s confession, and has so fortified it, that ten thousand dangers and deaths are not to prevail over it...(Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume X, Chrysostom, *On Matthew*, Homily 82.3, p. 494).

‘For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.’ I say, no man can lay it so long as he is a master-builder; but if he lay it...he ceases to be a master-builder. See how even from men’s common notions he proves the whole of his proposition. His meaning is this: ‘I have preached Christ, I have delivered unto you the foundation. Take heed how you build thereon, lest haply it be in vainglory, lest haply so as to draw away the disciples unto men.’ Let us not then give heed unto the heresies. ‘For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid.’ Upon this then let us build, and as a foundation let us cleave to it, as a branch to a vine; and let there be no interval between us and Christ...For the branch by its adherence draws in the fatness, and the building stands because it is cemented together. Since, if it stand apart it perishes, having nothing whereon to support itself. Let us not then merely keep hold of Christ, but let us be cemented to Him, for if we stand apart, we perish...And accordingly, there are many images whereby He brings us into union. Thus, if you mark it, He is the ‘Head’, we are ‘the body’: can there be any empty interval between the head and the body? He is a ‘Foundation’, we are a ‘building’: He a ‘Vine’, we ‘branches’: He the ‘Bridegroom’, we the ‘bride’: He is the ‘Shepherd’, we the ‘sheep’: He is the ‘Way’, we ‘they who walk therein.’ Again, we are a ‘temple,’ He the ‘Indweller’: He the ‘First - Begotten,’ we the ‘brethren’: He the ‘Heir,’ we the ‘heirs together with Him’: He the ‘Life,’ we the ‘living’: He the ‘Resurrection,’ we ‘those who rise again’: He the ‘Light,’ we the ‘enlightened.’ All these things indicate unity; and they allow no void interval, not even the smallest (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XII, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, Homily VIII.7, p. 47).

[Now we’re on page 83 of Bill’s book! “Earth to space, earth to space. Bill are you out there? I’ve already read your book, Bill. I thought you were analyzing Upon this Rock? Is this an honest attempt to interact with my material?]
Chrysostom argues that the rock is not Peter but Peter’s confession of faith in Christ as the Son of God. Even Dom Chapman is forced to admit that Chrysostom consistently interpreted the rock to be Peter’s confession of faith: ‘The rock on which the Church is to be built is regularly taken by St. Chrysostom to be the confession of Peter, or the faith which prompted this confession.’ (Dom John Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 77).

I comment repeatedly, here and in my book, that the Fathers interpreted Matthew 16 in many and various way, for many and various reasons. I have stated already that even the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the Pope in his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* and refer to the rock as various things depending on the way the passage is being utilized. So, what is the big deal Bill?

It is Peter’s confession that is the foundation of the Church. Peter is not the foundation. According to Chrysostom that position belongs to Christ alone. Dom Chapman objects to this claiming that in Chrysostom’s mind, the rock is not only Peter’s faith but also Peter’s person. He cites a quote where Chrysostom speaks of Peter as being strengthened by Christ to stand as a rock against a hostile world:

> For those things which are peculiar to God alone, (both to absolve from sins, and to make the church incapable of overthrow in such assailing waves, and to exhibit a man that is a fisher more solid than any rock, while all the world is at war with him), these He promises Himself to give; as the Father, speaking to Jeremiah, said, He would make him as ‘a brazen pillar, and as a wall;’ but him to one nation only, this man in every part of the world (*A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford, Parker, 1844), Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St. Matthew, Homily 54.3).

In light of these statements Chapman says:

> I think this statement alone would have made it clear that the Rock is Peter, in St. Chrysostom’s view, as well as, and because of, the firmness of his confession. He has no idea of the two notions, ‘Peter is the Rock’ and ‘his faith is the Rock’ being mutually exclusive, as, in fact, they are not (Dom John Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 79).

But this statement is a complete misrepresentation. In exegeting the rock of Matthew 16, just prior to the above statements, Chrysostom states that Peter is not the rock. In the quotes given by Chapman, what Chrysostom is saying is that just as the Lord strengthened Jeremiah for his calling so he would strengthen Peter. [Now folks, turn the page. We are now on page 84 of Bill’s book.] He says he will be like a rock, not that he is the rock of Matthew 16. This is very similar to Augustine’s position on Peter:

> So is it the case that Peter is now true, or that Christ is true in Peter? When the Lord Jesus Christ wished, he left Peter to himself, and Peter was found to be a
man; and when it so pleased the Lord Jesus Christ, he filled Peter, and Peter was found to be true. The Rock had made Rocky Peter true, for the Rock was Christ (John Rotelle, *The Works of Saint Augustine* (Brooklyn: New City, 1992), Sermons, *Sermon* 147.3, p. 449).

According to Augustine, the rock is Christ and Christ made Peter a rock of strength in his faith. But Peter is not the rock of Matthew 16. He simply derives strength to be a rock from the rock, Christ Jesus himself. And what is true for Peter becomes true for all Christians because Peter is a figurative representative of the Church. In contradistinction to Chapman’s assertions the fathers do in fact separate Peter’s faith from Peter’s confession, making them mutually exclusive, as we have seen with Augustine and Ambrose. While it is true that it is the person of Peter who makes the confession, the focus of Chrysostom is not on Peter’s person but on Peter’s faith. Chrysostom holds a similar view to that of Ambrose which we referenced earlier. Ambrose says that where Peter is (his confession), there is the Church. Chrysostom affirms the same point when he says: ‘For though we do not retain the body of Peter, we do retain the faith of Peter, and retaining the faith of Peter we have Peter.’ (*On the Inscription of the Acts*, II. Cited by E. Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority* (London: SPCK, 1952), p. 168. Cf. Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy*, p. 96).

While holding a very high view of the status of the apostle Peter, Chrysostom, like Augustine, did not transfer this status to the bishops of Rome. In his thinking, along with Cyprian, Augustine, Jerome and Ambrose, all bishops are successors of Peter. There is no supreme authority of one bishop over another. In all his remarks about Peter, where does Chrysostom apply them to the bishops of Rome in an exclusive sense? He never does that. He never personally makes that application in his statements and it is historically dishonest to assert that that is what he meant when he personally never said it.

Bill is pretending to be asking me these questions but again we are just reading verbatim from page 84 of his book. But, let’s take the accusation seriously. First, I never claimed in my book (see, that’s what is so irritating about this “rebuttal”. He didn’t read my book but is giving the impression of not only having read it, but even honestly critiquing it.) Never in my book do I claim that St. John Chrysostom attributes exclusively to Rome a Petrine privilege!! So why does Bill keep implying I do? Because he didn’t read my book and because he’s rattling away without LISTENING! Oh well, let’s carry on.

In similar fashion to Cyprian, Chrysostom refers to the chair of Peter, stating that the bishop of Antioch possesses that chair, demonstrating that in his mind all legitimate bishops are successors of Peter and not just the bishop of Rome:

In speaking of S. Peter, the recollection of another Peter has come to me, the common father and teacher, who has inherited his prowess, and also obtained his chair. For this is the one great privilege of our city, Antioch, that it received the leader of the apostles as its teacher in the beginning. For it was right that she who was first adorned with the name of Christians, before the whole world, should
receive the first of the apostles as her pastor. But though we received him as
teacher, we did not retain him to the end, but gave him up to royal Rome. Or
rather we did retain him to the end, for though we do not retain the body of Peter,
we do retain the faith of Peter, and retaining the faith of Peter we have Peter (On
the Inscription of the Acts, II. Cited by E. Giles, Documents Illustrating Papal
Papacy, p. 96).

In his book, The Eastern Churches and the Papacy, Herbert Scott makes the
assertion that John Chrysostom held to the view of papal primacy because he
expressed exalted views about the apostle Peter. He makes the assumption that
because Chrysostom speaks of Peter in exalted terms that such statements apply to
the bishops of Rome in an exclusive sense. But when pressed by the question as to
whether Chrysostom actually makes this application himself, Scott is forced to this
significant admission:

Granted that Chrysostom reiterates that Peter is the coryphaeus, ‘the universal
shepherd,’ etc., what evidence is there, it is asked, that he recognized these claims
in the Bishop of Rome? Is there anything in his writings to that effect?...If it be
held that all this laboring by Chrysostom of the honour and powers of Peter does
not of itself demand the exalted position of his successors as its explanation, it
must be conceded that there is little or nothing in his writings which explicitly and
incontestably affirms that the Bishop of Rome is the successor of S. Peter in his
primacy (S. Herbert Scott, The Eastern Churches and the Papacy (London: Sheed

In other words, there is no evidence in any of the writings of Chrysostom that he
applied his statements about Peter to the bishops of Rome. [we’re now on page 86
of Bill’s book of selective proof-texts, and anachronistic theology. Notice
again, that silence is his “strongest” argument!] Nevertheless, Scott goes on to
suggest that Chrysostom’s statements imply a papal interpretation to his words. As
Scott puts it:

Surely, however, if Peter is the foundation of the Church as Chrysostom
constantly affirms, and if the Church is eternal as the Founder made it, he must
last as long as the building, the Church, which is erected upon him (S. Herbert
133).

The logic employed here by Scott is flawed. Chrysostom never makes such a
statement. He has in fact explained what he means when he says that Peter is the
foundation. There is no reason to suppose that Chrysostom envisioned a papal office
when he speaks of Peter as the foundation of the Church. We have seen quite clearly
from Chrysostom’s statements that he taught that the Church was built on Peter’s
confession of faith. It can be said to be built on Peter only in the sense that it is built
on his confession. Chrysostom’s comments given above on Antioch demonstrate that
he teaches that the Church’s foundation is preserved throughout history as Peter’s
confession of faith is preserved. It is not preserved by being built upon the bishops of Rome as supposed exclusive successors of Peter, but upon Peter’s confession. As Chrysostom put it, ‘Where you have Peter’s confession there you have Peter: ‘for though we do not retain the body of Peter, we do retain the faith of Peter, and retaining the faith of Peter we have Peter.’ (On the Inscription of the Acts, II. Cited by E. Giles, Documents Illustrating Papal Authority (London: SPCK, 1952), p. 168. Cf. Chapman, Studies on the Early Papacy, p. 96).

Nevertheless, Scott goes on to offer what he considers incontrovertible proof of the expression of papal primacy from Chrysostom’s writings:

There is indeed one passage which may be a categorical affirmation of the primacy of the pope: De Sacerdotio 53: ‘Why did Christ shed His Blood? To purchase the sheep which He confided to Peter and those who came after him.’ It may be urged that S. Chrysostom means no more by this than all those who have the care of souls. On the other hand, there may be a reference to Peter only and to his personal commission: ‘Feed my sheep’; and Chrysostom soon afterwards actually quotes these words. And when one recalls his comments on them given above, as meaning Peter’s ‘government’ and ‘ruling the brethren,’ it is at least likely that here is a reference to Peter’s successors in the see of Rome (S. Herbert Scott, The Eastern Churches and the Papacy (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 133).

Let’s stop here for a minute, because we need to set the record straight. Because Bill didn’t read my book (at least he certainly isn’t interacting with it, though he is giving the appearance of doing so), he is implying throughout that I have specifically stated that St. John Chrysostom supports, with specific wording, the later teaching on the infallibility of the Pope as defined in Vatican I. If he had read my book he would have noticed on pages 221 - 222 that I already commented at length on this very matter:

“Similar words by St. John Chrysostom, “Peter, the leader (coryphæus) of the choir, that mouth of the rest of the Apostles, that head of that brotherhood, that one set over the entire universe, that foundation of the Church, that ardent lover of Christ” (In Illud, hoc scitote, 4 in The Faith of Catholics 2:32 - 33). One could not construct a more appropriate set of phrases to describe Peter, nor to describe the office of the papacy, especially when one looks at our current Pope John Paul II. However, one must be honest about the overall situation in the East. There was no clear consensus in the East about Peter and the jurisdictional primacy of Rome, just as there was little consensus during these centuries about the full deity of Christ. As Miller writes, “From Peter’s prominence among the apostles, Easterners drew different conclusions than Westerners did. Some Orientals held that all believers were successors of
Peter. Others limited Petrine succession only to bishops. Very few conceded that the bishop of Rome was the successor of Peter in a unique way” (*The Shepherd and the Rock*, 116).

“The East was in constant theological and political flux, yet when trials, heresies, and expulsions afflicted the faithful and orthodox Christian, it was to Rome that they made their appeals; they flew to Rome for letters of reinstatement and “certification” of their orthodoxy. There are innumerable instances, as we have seen, in which a Father may never laud the “infallible” see of Rome, or proclaim her jurisdictional primacy in writing, but runs to her for protection, doctrinal clarification, reinstatement, or to solicit from her a final and authoritative doctrinal or judicial decree. Again, the old maxim holds true that “actions speak louder than words”, and even in the East we are not short of teaching that proclaims the unique authority of Peter and the unique primacy of the bishop of Rome. Why should one be surprised that the East would be less enthusiastic about subscribing to Roman jurisdiction than the Western Church. For the Orientals, Rome was “way over there across land and sea” and it is never much comfort to be subject to a “distant land”, especially if that distant see was not a Byzantine Greek one: if the Byzantines were anything, they were Greek chauvinists who looked down on non-Greeks as “barbarians”. Nor had the development of Church polity developed fully yet. The Church was growing and so was the internal structure—the framework and governance. One can see the development of Church polity and structure throughout the New Testament (institution the deaconate, appointment of bishops, etc.) and the progress continued throughout the first centuries of the Church. As the edifice grows so does the structure and the foundation becomes ever more important. As a corporation develops, or a tree grows, or as a family expands, so does the need for unity, leadership and a court of final appeal.

But at the same time, we must realize that in the early days of the Church, Rome was seen primarily as a “court of appeal”. Just like Jerusalem was for the Jews. Did first century Jerusalem have authority? It certainly did. If it did not, then how could Paul have received letters from the high priest so as to arrest “Jewish heretics” living in far-off Damascus (in Syria)? Yet, that’s what Acts 9:1-2 describes to us. However, over all, the view of Jerusalem among the Jews of the world was not authoritarian but nostalgic, and patriotic, and cultural - the very things which anti-Catholics attribute to Rome’s early primacy. However, one does not negate the other.

Thus, while a “nostalgic” view of Roman primacy may have prevailed in the East (if, for no other reason than its remoteness), there was never a time when the East did not recognize Rome as a jurisdictional court of appeal. Without the See of Peter, there was no Church. One may oppose Rome’s position or dismiss the “opinions” of its present bishop, but as with the Jewish high priest in
Jerusalem one could not cut themselves off from the “womb and root” of the Catholic Church.

Dr. Stanley Jaki comments on the development of the doctrine of the Papacy and why one does not expect to find the Papal Primacy in the See of Rome clearly delineated in St. John Chrysostom. It would do well for Bill to stop preaching here for a moment and listen. Because Fr. Jaki summarizes St. John Chrysostom with such clarity and force, and because his books are largely unknown and need to be brought out for a wider audience, I am quoting his book The Keys of the Kingdom (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1986) at length. I am quoting from pages 86 - 89. Fr. Jaki writes:

“The East’s most eloquent and sustained witness on behalf of Peter’s and of his successors’ primacy was, of course, St. John Chrysostom. For him, Peter was the “mouth of the apostles,” the “conductor of the apostolic choir,” the “fisherman of the world who fished for the whole world,” nay, the “ruler of the entire world.” The contrast John Chrysostom drew between Jeremiah and Peter is just as telling about the universality of Peter’s office. Jeremiah was made into a column of brass so that he might prove stronger than an entire nation, but Peter was made into a firm foundation so that it may extend all over the world and be stronger than all the worldly powers. Peter, according to John Chrysostom, was appointed by Christ “to the see of the world because he entrusted him with the care of the whole world.” To the question, why James was made the bishop of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom had no hesitation in replying: “Christ made Peter not the teacher of that see but of the world.” As to Christ’s questioning Peter whether he loved him, John Chrysostom’s reply is no less to the point: “The master asked those questions so that he might teach us how much at heart he has the headship over these sheep.”

“Unlike some latter-day Catholic theologians and exegetes taken aback by Peter’s denial of Christ, John Chrysostom is far from being troubled. According to him, Christ allowed Peter to fall so that He might have an even more dramatic background to strengthen the other apostles’ confidence in the one who was given the keys, by promising His prayers so that Peter would in fact strengthen the twelve and their successors. Such was the answer John Chrysostom offered to his powerfully phrased question:

“He who built the Church upon his [Peter’s] confession and so fortified it that ten thousand dangers and deaths should not prevail against it; he who gave him the keys of heaven and made him lord (possessor) of so much authority, and who needed no prayer for this (for he said not ‘I have prayed’ but with authority ‘I will build’ and ‘I will give’), how did he need prayer that he might save the soul of one man [Peter]? The answer is to give confidence to the disciples, whose faith was weak.’
“And just as learning humility and drawing confidence were the divinely intended lessons of Peter’s fall for the apostles, much the same was the gist of divine pedagogy in respect to Peter, according to John Chrysostom. In commenting on the post-Resurrection scene where Christ rebuked Peter who did not want John to join them, John Chrysostom wrote: “He [Christ] moderates him [Peter] that he might not in the future have the same fault, when he should receive the government of the world, but that remembering his fault he might know himself.” Concerning the outbreak of jealousy among the twelve as to which of them was the greatest, John Chrysostom traced that incident to their realization of the prominence given by Christ to Peter. While the twelve could tolerate the pre-eminence of three-Peter, James, and John-they could not bear the even greater prominence given to Peter. And, according to John Chrysostom, part of Jesus’ answer to their indignation was his choosing Peter for the miraculous catch of the fish with the tax coin in its mouth, and that the tax was to be paid only on behalf of himself and Peter.

“Chrysostom certainly did not notice anything derogatory to Peter’s prominence in his handling the election of Matthias, the replacement of Judas. On the contrary, he saw in it the humility of a leader truly assured in his prominence. In order to cut off the possible charge of favoritism, Peter entrusted the outcome to lottery, although he had the power of constituting an apostle. On reflecting on Chrysostom’s interpretation Erasmus noted that in Chrysostom’s view Peter “habet jus constituendi par omnibus [apostolis],” that is, Peter had a constitutional power equal to that of all the twelve taken together. Thus, according to Chrysostom, Peter did not have to call the council of Jerusalem; he alone could have settled all its business. Unlike many modern exegetes, Chrysostom did not overlook that Peter spoke last at the council as the one who had the last word. In commenting on Paul’s assertion of his right to take along a sisterwoman, Chrysostom called attention to the order in which Paul referred to the similar procedures of the apostles, the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas. “He [Paul] puts the leader last, for in that position he places his most powerful point. For it was not so wonderful to list the others ... as it was to name the primate entrusted with the keys of heaven.’

“Had Chrysostom been severed from communion with Rome for seventeen or perhaps twenty-six years as some claim, one would expect Chrysostom to sing the praises of Antioch, the first see of Peter and the see also of St. Meletius and St. Flavian who for a while were the bone of contention between East and Rome. Chrysostom certainly praised Antioch, but all his praises were only a prelude for even greater praise for the see of Rome, the ultimate see of Peter:

“‘God has had great account of this city of Antioch, as he has shown in deed, especially in that he ordered Peter, the ruler of the whole world, to whom he entrusted the keys of heaven, to whom he committed the office of bringing all in to pass a long time here ... But though we received him as teacher, we did
not retain him to the end, but we gave him up to Royal Rome. Nay, but we did retain him till the end, for we do not retain the body of Peter but we retain the faith of Peter as though it were Peter himself; and while we retain the faith of Peter, we have Peter himself.’

‘Of course, that faith, the faith of Peter, had to include all the things that Peter had to believe in, among them the power of keys entrusted to him. Had Chrysostom not had that faith he would not have written a grateful letter to Pope Innocent for the efforts made on his behalf in those terrible years that saw the greatest doctor of the Eastern church and the greatest ever to occupy the see of Constantinople, the second Rome for some, run for dear life, threatened as he was by the evil that befell the Eastern churches: caesaropapism. Its threat to the church in the West was foiled largely because of the papacy’s proximity there.’ [The end of Fr. Jaki’s quote]

Unfortunately, the following pages from Bill’s book which follow (pages 87 - 89) have a hollow tone, like a piano long in need of tuning or of a hound yowling to the sound of beautiful music.

These assertions are refuted by Dom Chrysostom Baur, the Roman Catholic biographer on the life of John Chrysostom. He points out that Chrysostom’s writings contain no allusion to a papal primacy and that the supposed evidence as that appealed to by Scott twists his writings to say what one wants them to say. It is to read a preconceived theology into his writings that Chrysostom himself never expressed. Baur comments:

A more important question is whether Chrysostom considered the primacy of Peter as only personal, or as an official primacy, hence a permanent arrangement of the Church, and whether he correspondingly attributed the primacy of jurisdiction in the Church also to the Bishops of Rome... Chrysostom never made in his works any questionable deductions, never passed sentence with clear words on the jurisdiction of the Pope. Even P. Jugie admits this frankly. N. Marini, who later became a Cardinal, published a book on this question. In this he seeks, with the help...of a number of quotations from Chrysostom, to prove that this must pass for unqualified evidence of the jurisdictional primacy of the successors of Peter in Rome. His first argument is borrowed from the Treatise on the Priesthood. In Book 2.1 Chrysostom asks: ‘Why did Christ shed His blood? In order to ransom His sheep, which He entrusted to Peter and to those after him.’ Marioni translates here ‘Peter and his successors,’ which naturally facilitates his proof. But Chrysostom actually expressed himself in a more general way, and means by ‘those after him’ all the pastors generally, to whom the sheep of Christ had been entrusted after Peter. So it is not practicable to interpret this passage so narrowly as Marini has done. Still less convincing is Marini’s second piece of evidence. In a letter which Chrysostom addressed to Pope Innocent from his exile, he says that he would gladly assist in putting an end to the great evil, ‘for the strife has spread over almost the entire world.’ So then, one concludes, Chrysostom ascribes to the Pope authority over the whole world. Then Chrysostom writes once more, to the Bishop of Thessalomki: ‘Do not grow weary of doing that which contributes to the general improvement of the
Church,’ and he praises Bishop Aurelius of Carthage, because he put forth so much effort and struggle for the churches of the whole world. It would not occur to anyone to wish to construe from this a possible proof of the primacy of the bishops of Saloniki or of Carthage (Dom Chrysostumus Baur, O.S.B., John Chrysostom and His Time (Westminster: Newman, 1959), Vol. I, pp. 348-349).

Clearly, Chrysostom cannot be cited as a proponent of a Petrine or papal primacy in the Roman Catholic sense any more than Augustine.

Come on Bill, we just heard from your own lips that St. Chrysostom admits that Peter was to govern over the Apostles. You even admitted to an authority of jurisdiction! But at best, again Bill only argues from silence!

Michael Winter candidly admits that Chrysostom’s views, especially his interpretation of the rock of Matthew 16, were antithetical to those of Rome and greatly influenced the Eastern fathers who followed him. He states that such Eastern fathers as Theodore of Mopsuestia, Palladius of Helenopolis, Theodore of Ancyra, Basil of Seleucia and Nilus of Ancyra held to an opinion that was unfavourable to the superiority of Peter, an opinion that was widespread in the East in the first half of the fifth century:

Before we read Winter’s quote, let’s remember that Bill has not brought forth one shred of evidence that St. John Chrysostom opposed papal primacy, only that he did not overtly and specifically comment on it. But St. John Chrysostom has confirmed the primacy of Peter as governor over the other apostles and has conducted himself and his affairs with a knowledge of the supremacy of Rome. Bill argues from silence even though earlier in this “rebuttal” he ridiculed and taunted such “arguments from silence”. We must remember that there is more in St. John Chrysostom’s life than just his comments on Matthew 16. Read my book for the fuller story.

And as Dave Palm commented: “Isn’t it interesting too that Webster cites Michael Winter approvingly here, and yet Winter is stating that the antipathy toward the Roman primacy was based primarily on political and not theological considerations? The Protestants hate it when the Church is over-influenced by the State, unless of course it just happens to skewer the ‘Roman’ position.” OK, let’s read on:

The antipathy to Rome which finds its echo even in the works of St. John Chrysostom became more pronounced as the Eastern Church came more and more under the control of the emperor and effected eventually their estimate of St. Peter. Although they were not influenced by the Eusebian idea that the ‘rock’ of the church was Christ, the lesser Antiocheans betray an unwillingness to admit that Peter was the rock. Theodore of Mopsuestia, who died a quarter of a century after Chrysostom, declared that the rock on which the church was built was Peter’s confession of faith. The same opinion is repeated by Palladius of
Helenopolis in his Dialogues on the life of St. John Chrysostom. Without any elaboration he states that the rock in Matthew 16 is Peter’s confession. The complete absence of reasons or arguments in support of the contention is an indication of how widely the view was accepted at that date. Such an opinion was, in fact, held also by Theodore of Ancyra, Basil of Seleucia, and Nilus of Ancyra, in the first half of the fifth century...The opinion unfavourable to the superiority of St. Peter gained a considerable following in the East under the influence of the school of Antioch (Michael Winter, *St. Peter and the Popes* (Baltimore: Helikon, 1960), p. 73).

Don’t forget that St. John Chrysostom appealed to Rome of relief. My book deals with this and anyone can read about it there. But I would ask Bill a question posed by my friend Dave Palm: “We know of many instances in which Eastern priests, bishops, and even patriarchs appealed to the Roman bishop after receiving unjust treatment at the hands of their fellow Eastern bishops. Can you cite even one example of a Western priest or bishop appealing to an Eastern patriarch after losing his case before the Roman bishop?” Webster may, of course, bring up Cyprian writing to Firmilian, but not with the intent of overturning Pope Stephen’s ruling but merely to commiserate with him. And isn’t it interesting the only place Cyprian could get support was from the remote bishopric of Caesarea in Cappadocia?

Also, in regard to an “unfavorable opinion” of Roman jurisdiction as stated above, I deal with that extensively in my book and I don’t feel inclined to cut ‘n’ paste whole sections of my book into this response, as Bill was inclined to do from his book in his “rebuttal”. How and why there was resistance to Roman jurisdiction is clearly discussed over and over in *upon this Rock* for any who want to read it. Also, I agree with Michael Winter on many things, and quoted him freely in many places. But, just because I quote him on various topics does not mean or imply that I agree with him on everything, which I don’t. If Bill wants to make that some kind of contradiction, let’s remind him that he quotes Meyendorff and many others who he may agree with on certain points, but he certainly is opposed to on the vast majority of issues. Right Bill?

Stephen Ray gives a further criticism of my comments in these statements: [Now, after reciting untold pages from his book, it appears that Bill has now decided to come back and join us.]

[From *Upon this Rock*] Webster continues, “On the one hand the Eastern Fathers and theologians held very high views of the status of the apostle Peter but they did not transfer that status to the bishops of Rome” (ibid.). We will provide plenty of evidence to disprove Webster’s assertion later in our study; but here is a single reference to put the lie to Webster’s claim. Methodius (c. 815-885), the famous Eastern Father and “apostle to the Slavs”, or one of his disciples, wrote, “It is not true, as this Canon states, that the holy Fathers gave the primacy to old Rome.
because it was the capital of the Empire; it is from on high, from divine grace, that this primacy drew its origin. Because of the intensity of his faith Peter, the first of the Apostles, was addressed in these words by our Lord Jesus Christ himself ‘Peter, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep’. That is why in hierarchical order Rome holds the pre-eminent place and is the first See. That is why the leges of old Rome are eternally immovable, and that is the view of all the Churches” (N. Brian-Chaninov, The Russian Church (1931), 46; cited by Butler, Church and Infallibility, 210) (Upon This Rock (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), p. 177).

Please note the defense Mr. Ray employs for his position that the Fathers of the church apply the prerogatives of Peter to the bishops of Rome in an exclusive sense as a refutation of my statements. He gives a questionable quotation from a ninth century Eastern theologian. Notice how he introduces the quotation: ‘Methodius, or one of his disciples, wrote.’ In other words we do not know for sure who wrote this. There is no reference given to the writing itself as to its genuineness and the citation comes from a source, that is taken from another source, which simply lists it as a quotation. This is very sloppy scholarship if we can call it that at all. In addition, the ninth century is hardly what we would call the patristic age. Historically, the patristic age is considered to have ended with John of Damascus in the mid eighth century.

If you look above Bill, you will see that you yourself specifically said “Eastern Fathers and theologians” which is a wider category than you are trying to impose on me here! Right, Bill? (Church of Rome at the Bar of History, 51 and Upon this Rock, 177). Did you miss that? Also, the fact that the quote is from the ninth century is all the more impressive since the East was drawing near to a break with Rome. In fact, Sts. Cyril and Methodius began their conversion of the Slavs in Moravia at the very time of the Schism of Photius, when Rome and Constantinople were in schism with each other, and, as I said, in an age that saw the politico-ecclesiastical struggle between Rome and Constantinople over the Balkans, an originally Roman territory. Such a statement from the East in the ninth century is strong evidence. You can ridicule the quote, but you haven’t disproved it and it remains an excellent quotation. I will acquire a copy of “The Russian Church” and then revise my book to cite it directly (it will be here in ten days). How’s that? I think the bottom line is that you just don’t like quote. But if you don’t like that quote, let’s try a few others. I’ll give three more than you asked for, and then others to supplement. Also, as Appendix B, I will supply a slew of additional quotations from the Eastern Patriarchs to demonstrate that your position just won’t hold up.

And, while we’re at it, is this quotation by St. Methodius antithetical to his attitude towards Rome, even in these later years preceding the schism between East and West? J. Michael Miller writes, “Precisely in these critical years of conflict, however, witnesses emerged in the East who worked strenuously to preserve the Church’s unity. The apostles to the Slavs, Sts. Cyril (died 869) and Methodius (died 885), were evangelizing while controversy raged between the patriarch and the pope. Belonging to the ecclesiastical tradition of the Christian
East, the two brothers were subject to the patriarch of Constantinople under whose aegis they had begun their mission. Even so, they considered it their duty to give an account of their missionary labor to the pope, asking him to confirm their work. The two brothers submitted to the pope’s judgment “in order to obtain his approval for the doctrine which they professed and taught, the liturgical books which they had written in the Slavonic language and the methods which they were using in evangelizing those peoples.” (John Paul II, Slavorum Apostoli I [1985], #13). Their witness is yet another example of the complex relations between East and West in the first millennium” (The Shepherd and the Rock, 128).

First, how do you like this one from St. Maximus the Confessor, the Byzantine theologian? St. Maximus (c. 580 - 622 AD) was an Eastern Greek Father who was a monk and later an abbot of the monastery of Chrysopolis. It is pretty clear here he is referring to Peter and the words Jesus spoke to him and now applies it to the Most Holy Roman Church. St. Maximus the Confessor wrote:

“The extremities of the earth, and everyone in every part of it who purely and rightly confess the Lord, look directly towards the Most Holy Roman Church and her confession and faith, as to a sun of unfailing light, awaiting from her the brilliant radiance of the sacred dogmas of our Fathers, according to that which the inspired and holy Councils have stainlessly and piously decreed. For, from the descent of the Incarnate Word among us, all the churches in every part of the world have held that greatest Church alone to be their base and foundation, seeing that, according to the promise of Christ Our Savior, the gates of hell never prevail against her, that she has the keys of orthodox confession and right faith in Him, that she opens the true and exclusive religion to such men as approach with piety, and she shuts up and locks every heretical mouth which speaks against the Most High.” (Opuscula theologica et polemica, Migne PG 90, emphasis mine.)

Second, the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD, was an ecumenical council with over six hundred Eastern bishops, with only two African bishops and two legates from Rome. They stood up and cheered when Pope Leo’s Tome was read. They cheered “Peter has spoken through Leo!” (Upon this Rock, 235 - 238). Even stronger and harder to refute are the portions of the Council Fathers in portions of their letter to Pope Leo in which they call him their “head”, their “father”, the “golden mouthpiece for the blessed Peter”, etc. I hope Bill considers their letter and their titles for the Pope as the successor of Peter as “Eastern” enough.

Third, Theodoret of Cyr, (died 466) appealed to Pope Leo, if Paul, the herald of truth, the trumpet of the Holy Spirit, had recourse to the great Peter in order to obtain a decision from him concerning those at Antioch (Acts 15:1-
35), much more do we, small, humble folk, run to the apostolic throne to get healing from you for the woes of the churches” (Translation in Thomas Halton, The Church, Message of the Fathers of the Church, vol. 4 [Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1985], 109).

Fourth, Jerome who left the West when he was twenty-nine years old, lived the remainder of his life in Palestine - the East - except for a three year stint in Rome. I’m not going to argue whether he is a Western or Eastern Father because a case could be made either way, but as an ancient who lived the great majority of his life in Palestine and Antioch, ordained a priest in Antioch, and spent time in Constantinople, I think we can use his quote with some impact. At least one of his letters was addressed “To the Westerners”. In their book, The See of Peter (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), pages 634ff., non-Catholics Shotwell and Loomis list St. Jerome as an “Eastern Father” living from 345 - 420 AD). St. Jerome is quite explicit in granting the prerogatives of Peter to Rome in an exclusive sense. Bill would have known this if he had read my book. Here is what St. Jerome wrote to Pope Damasus and said, “Because the East is shattered by the ancient, fierce antagonisms of its peoples and is rending into tiny fragments the undivided and woven tunic of the Lord and the wolves are destroying Christ’s vineyard, so that amid these dry pools that hold no water it is difficult to know where is the fountain sealed and the garden enclosed, therefore I have thought best to turn to the See of Peter and to the faith that was praised by the apostle’s lips, to ask now food for my soul from the source where once I received the raiment of Christ. Nor can the vast stretches of the watery element nor the breadth of lands that lie between us prevent my search for the precious pearl. Where the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together. An evil posterity has squandered its patrimony. You alone preserve unspoiled the heritage of the Fathers. Yonder the good soil of your earth is bringing forth the pure seed of the Lord a hundred fold; here the grain is buried in the furrows and degenerating into tares and wild oats. In the West, the sun of justice is now rising; in the East, Lucifer, he who fell from heaven, has set his throne above the stars. You are the light of the world, you are the salt of the earth, you are the vessels of gold and of silver; here are the vessels of earth and of wood, the iron rod and the eternal fire.

“For this reason your greatness terrifies me, yet mercy invites me to you. A victim I implore the priest for salvation, a sheep the shepherd for protection. Away with jealousy of the Roman preeminence, away with ambition! I speak to the successor of the fisherman and to the disciple of the cross. I follow no one as chief save Christ but I am joined in communion with your blessedness, that is, with the See of Peter. Upon that rock I know the Church is built. Whoever eats the lamb outside that house is profane. He who is not in Noah’s ark will perish when the flood overwhelms all. And I, who for

my sins have journeyed to this solitude which lies between Syria and the bounds of barbarism, and cannot look to receive the Lord’s holy thing from your holiness over the wide spaces that separate us, am for this reason adhering to your colleagues here, the confessors of Egypt, and am hiding my little barque behind their great ships. I do not know Vitalis, I repudiate Meletius, I am ignorant of Paulinus. He who gathers not with you scatters; that is, he who is not of Christ is of Antichrist” (Jerome, Epistolae, XV, To Damasus. Text. C. T. G. Schoenemann, Pontificum Romanorum Epistolae Genuinae, 374-378 as quoted in Shotwell and Loomis, pg. 658 - 659).

Fifth, St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (c. 638): “Teaching us all orthodoxy and destroying all heresy and driving it away from the God-protected halls of our holy Catholic Church. And together with these inspired syllables and characters, I accept all his (the pope’s) letters and teachings as proceeding from the mouth of Peter the Coryphaeus, and I kiss them and salute them and embrace them with all my soul ... I recognize the latter as definitions of Peter and the former as those of Mark, and besides, all the heaven-taught teachings of all the chosen mystagogues of our Catholic Church. (Sophronius, Mansi, xi. 461)

There are five quotations. I would also, for effect I guess, like to supplement with the following quotes collected by David Palm in an extended dialog with an Orthodox woman as they contended over the power of Rome and her bishop relating to Ecumenical Councils. I have added an Appendix with additional quotes from Eastern patriarchs. I think these quotations are germane to our discussion here. If you’re not interested, just drop down to the point where our discussion continues. I have not personally verified every quote in the list below, but they come from a reliable source.

Socrates Scholasticus: “Neither was Julius, bishop of the great Rome, there, nor had he sent a substitute, although an ecclesiastical canon commands that the churches shall not make any ordinances against the opinion of the bishop of Rome” (Eccl. Hist. 8). (“Socrates is not quoting any other writer, but stating a fact as he knew it to be. This makes it entirely indubitable that his own view coincides with the opinion he attributes to St. Julius in ii.15 and ii.17, quoted above” [Chapman, Studies, 60 n. 1]).

Sozomen: “He wrote blaming them for making stealthy innovations in the Nicene dogma, and for not inviting him to the synod, contrary to the laws of the Church, saying that it was a sacerdotal law that what was done against the will of the Roman bishop was null and void. “ (Eccl. Hist. 3:10). (“The statement that Julius complained of not being invited to their Council is a mistake. The famous assertions that the ecclesiastical law invalidated any
canons disapproved by the bishops of Rome is doubtless implied in his letter, but it is not stated. It is remarkable that the two Greek historians of the following century read into the letter of the Pope the claim which they thought it natural he should make” [Chapman, *Studies*, 59]).

**St. Peter Chrysologus:** “We exhort you, honourable brother, that you obediently listen to what has been written by the blessed Pope of the city of Rome, since Blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his own see, offers the truth of faith to those who seek. For we, in our zeal for peace and faith, cannot decide questions of faith apart from the consent of the Bishop of Rome” (*Ad. Eutychem.*, Sermon 25:2).

**Pope Innocent I:** “In making inquiry with respect to those things that should be treated with all solicitude by bishops, and especially by a true and just and Catholic Council, by preserving, as you have done, the example of ancient tradition, and by being mindful of ecclesiastical discipline, you have truly strengthened the vigour of our religion, no less now in consulting us than before in passing sentence. For you decided that it was proper to refer to our judgement, knowing what is due to the Apostolic See, since all we who are set in this place, desire to follow the Apostle from whom the very episcopate and whole authority of this name is derived. Following in his steps, we know how to condemn the evil and to approve the good. So also, you have by your sacerdotal office preserved the customs of the Fathers, and have not spurned that which they decreed by a divine and not human sentence, that whatsoever is done, even though it be in distant provinces, should not be ended without being brought to the knowledge of this See.” (Ep. 181; cited in Chapman, *Studies*, 146).

“(Innocent is referring to inveterate custom up to his own time. As to “apocryphal history,” St. Innocent knew more than Dr. Bright about the frequency of appeals to Rome, and the principle involved in them. It was not only at Rome such statements were made. A dozen years afterwards Socrates (H.E. ii, 8 and 17), a Greek, and twenty years after him Sozomen (iii, 10, cf. Theodoret. H.E. ii, 4), another Greek, made just the same statement. Dr. Bright (p.84), says that these two Greeks have “gravely misapprehended” the letter of St. Julius, to which alone he supposes them to refer. What if he (following Coustant) is right? It remains to explain why they so “gravely misapprehended” a (to Dr. Bright) perfectly plain passage, unless they themselves were accustomed to the doctrine which they state, that ecclesiastical law forbids any canons to be made without the consent of the Bishop of Rome (see p.59 above). What Innocent, Zosimus, Boniface, Celestine, and their successors throughout this century all repeated and acted upon in East and West was at least not looked upon as apocryphal history in
their time, for they were disobeyed frequently, but they were never contradicted. Dr. Bright is at liberty to disbelieve them. He is not at liberty to imply that the Church of the fifth century disbelieved them.” [Chapman, Studies, 146 n. 1]).

**The Fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council** to Pope Celestine:
“The zeal of your holiness for piety, and your care for the right faith, so grateful and highly pleasing to God the Saviour of us all, are worthy of all admiration. For it is your custom in such great matters to make trial of all things, and the confirmation of the Churches you have made your own care. But since it is right that all things which have taken place should be brought to the knowledge of your holiness, we are writing of necessity [to inform you] that, by the will of Christ the Saviour of us all, and in accordance with the orders of the most pious and Christ-loving Emperors, we assembled together in the Metropolis of the Ephesians from many and far scattered regions, being in all over two hundred bishops.”

**St. Flavian, a saint and confessor of the Orthodox Church:**
On the heresy of Eutyches [Flavian] writes thus to the Pope: ‘The whole question needs only your single decision and all will be settled in peace and quietness. Your sacred letter will with God’s help completely suppress the heresy which has arisen and the disturbance which it has caused; [Mansi, Concil., v, 1356] and so’, he continues, ‘the convening of a council which is in any case difficult will be rendered superfluous’ (Vladimir Soloviev in Russia and the Universal Church).

**Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus** to Pope Leo the Great:
Next to the saintly patriarch of Constantinople should be quoted the learned bishop of Cyrus, Theodoret, who has been beatified by the Greek Church. ‘If Paul the herald of truth and the trumpet of the Holy Spirit,’ he writes to Pope Leo, ‘had recourse to the great Peter . . . we, simple and humble as we are, ought all the more to hasten to your apostolic throne to receive at your hands healing for wounds which afflict the Churches. For the primacy belongs to you for every reason. Your see is adorned with every sort of privilege and above all with that of faith; to which the divine Apostle bears sufficient witness when in addressing the Church of Rome he exclaims: ‘Your faith is spoken of in the whole world’. . . . It is your see which possesses the tombs of the fathers and doctors of the truth, Peter and Paul, enlightening the souls of the faithful. That divine and thrice blessed pair appeared in the East and shed their rays abroad; but it was in the West that they chose to be delivered from this life and it is from thence that they now illumine the whole world. They have shed manifest lustre upon your throne and that is the crown of your blessings.’ [Mansi, Concil., vi, 36, 37] ‘As for me I have only to await
the sentence of your apostolic see. And I beg and beseech your Holiness to
give me, who am unjustly accused, access to your lawful and just tribunal; give
but the word and I hasten to receive from you my doctrine in which I have only
desired to follow in the Apostles’ footsteps’. [Mansi, Concil., vi. 40] (Vladimir
Soloviev in Russian and the Universal Church)

The Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council to Pope Leo the Great:

“And we further inform you that we have decided on other things also
for the good management and stability of church matters, being persuaded that
your holiness will accept and ratify them, when you are told. . . . Accordingly
vouchsafe most holy and blessed father to accept as your own wish, and as
conducing to good government the things which we have resolved on for the
removal of all confusion and the confirmation of church order. . . .
Accordingly, we entreat you, honour our decision by your assent, and as we
have yielded to the head our agreement on things honourable, so may the head
also fulfil for the children what is fitting. . . . But that you may know that we
have done nothing for favour or in hatred, but as being guided by the Divine
Will, we have made known to you the whole scope of our proceedings to
strengthen our position and to ratify and establish what we have done (Leo’s
Epistles, Ep. xcviii).

The Fathers at the Council of Chalcedon, to whom Pope Leo sent his Tome
referred to the Pope’s relationship to themselves as, “chief, as the head to the
members, showing your goodwill in the person of those who represented you”
(Ibid.). They portray the Pope as “the head,” compared to their own status as
“children” and speak of him as their “most holy and blessed father.” They also
speak of him as their “guide in all that is good” and as one who specially embodies
the ongoing ministry of St. Peter:

“And this golden chain leading down from the Author of the command
to us, you yourself have stedfastly preserved, being set as the mouthpiece unto
all of the blessed Peter, and imparting the blessedness of his Faith unto all.
Whence we too, wisely taking you as our guide in all that is good, have shown
to the sons of the Church their inheritance of Truth . . . (Ibid.)

Gone is any notion that the Roman bishop’s position in the Church is strictly
honorary or political. As Philip Hughes points out,

“The bishops, in this letter, have dropped the language about the
imperial importance of the new city, and about recognition of the pope’s
primacy as related to the like importance of Rome. It is to him as primate
because Peter’s successor that they address their plea—the one sure concrete
reality beneath their wealth of insinuating compliment (The Church in Crisis:
After a masterful survey of the evidence, Luke Rivington summarizes well this testimony of the council fathers of Chalcedon concerning the position of the Bishop of Rome:

“If insincerely used, they testify to the necessity under which these bishops found themselves, of crouching at the feet of a master in order to gain the object of their desires. If used in sincerity, they are the testimony of witnesses, naturally the most unwilling, to the position of headship which the East recognised in the occupant of the See of Peter. We cannot claim for [the authors of the 28th canon] the authority of the council, for these men were not the council; but we are compelled to see in these terms the strongest possible evidence that the idea of the connection between Rome and St. Peter, and of such a consequent ‘headship’ of Rome over Constantinople that the latter could not arrange its own relations with other sees in the East without the acquiescence of Rome—we are compelled, I say, to acknowledge that this was so deeply rooted in the mind of the Eastern Church that it was simply useless to ignore it, and that the only thing to be done was to admit it plainly and to win the adhesion of Rome to their projected canon” (Primitive Church, 455).

Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople on the 28th canon of Chalcedon:

“All the force and confirmation of what was thus done was reserved for the authority of your Blessedness [Cum et sic gestorum vis omnis et confirmatio auctoritati vestrae beatitudinis fuerit reservata]” (Leo’s Epistles, Ep. cxxxii.c.4).

The Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council to Pope Agatho:

“Serious illnesses call for greater helps, as you know, most blessed [father]; and therefore Christ our true God, who is the creator and governing power of all things, gave a wise physician, namely your God-honoured sanctity, to drive away by force the contagion of heretical pestilence by the remedies of orthodoxy, and to give the strength of health to the members of the church. Therefore to thee, as to the bishop of the first see of the Universal Church, we leave what must be done, since you willingly take for your standing ground the firm rock of the faith, as we know from having read your true confession in the letter sent by your fatherly beatitude to the most pious emperor: and we acknowledge that this letter was divinely written (perscriptas) as by the Chief of the Apostles, and through it we have cast out the heretical sect of many errors which had recently sprung up, having been urged to making a decree by Constantine who divinely reigns, and wields a most clement sceptre. . . . And, as has been said, we rejected and condemned that
most impious and unsubstantial heresy which affirmed but one will and one operation in the incarnate Christ our true God, and by so doing we have pressed sore upon the crowd who confound and who divide, and have extinguished the inflamed storm of other heresies, but we have set forth clearly with you the shining light of the orthodox faith, and we pray your paternal sanctity to confirm our decree by your honourable rescript.” (See The Church in Crisis by Philip Hughes [Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1961], 140ff.).

Gregory the Great: “But, when this my brother with new presumption and pride calls himself universal bishop, having caused himself in the time of our predecessor of holy memory to be designated in synod by this so proud a title, though all the acts of that synod were abrogated, being disallowed by the Apostolic See,--the most serene Lord gives me a somewhat distressing intimation, in that he has not rebuked him who is acting proudly, but endeavours to bend me from my purpose, who in this cause of defending the truth of the Gospels and Canons, of humility and rectitude; whereas my aforesaid brother and fellow-priest is acting against evangelical principles and also against the blessed Apostle Peter, and against all the churches, and against the ordinances of the Canons” (Book V, Epist. XXI).

“Now eight years ago, in the time of my predecessor of holy memory Pelagius, our brother and fellow-bishop John in the city of Constantinople, . . . held a synod in which he attempted to call himself Universal Bishop. Which as soon as my said predecessor knew, he dispatched letters annulling by the authority of the holy apostle Peter the acts of the said synod; of which letters I have taken care to send copies to your Holiness” (Book V, Epist. XLIII).

“I wonder exceedingly at this, since I remember how thou wouldest fain have fled from the episcopal office rather than attain it. And yet, now that thou hast got it, thou desirest so to exercise it as if thou hadst run to it with ambitious intent. For, having confessed thyself unworthy to be called a bishop, thou hast at length been brought to such a pass as, despising thy brethren, to covet to be named the only bishop. And indeed with regard to this matter, weighty letters were addressed to your Holiness by my predecessor Pelagius of holy memory; in which he annulléd the acts of the synod, which had been assembled among you in the case of our once brother and fellow-bishop Gregory, because of that execrable title of pride, and forbade the archdeacon whom he had sent according to custom to the threshold of our lord, to celebrate the solemnities of mass with you” (Book V, Epist. XVIII).

The Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council to Pope Leo II: “The brilliant light of the true Faith we have clearly announced with thee; and we,
therefore, earnestly request thy paternal Holiness to confirm this anew by thy venerable decrees” (Cited by Hergenrother).

**Theodore the Studite:** “Let him [the Patriarch Nicephorus] assemble a synod of those with whom he has been at variance, if it is impossible that representatives of the other Patriarchs should be present, a thing which might certainly be, if the Emperor should wish the Western Patriarch to be present, to whom is given the authority over an ecumenical synod; but let him make peace and union, by sending his synodical letters to the prelate of the first see” (PG 99:1420).

**St. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople:**

“Without whom [the Romans presiding in the seventh Council] a doctrine brought forward in the Church could not, even though confirmed by canonical decrees and by ecclesiastical usage, ever obtain full approval or currency. For it is they [the Roman Pontiffs] who have had assigned to them the rule in sacred things, and who have received into their hands the dignity of headship among the Apostles” (*Niceph. Cpl. pro. s. imag. C 25*).

**St. Methodius:**

“Because of his primacy, the pontiff of Rome is not obliged to go to all the holy ecumenical councils; but without his participation, manifested by sending some subordinates, every ecumenical council is non-existent, for it is he who presides in the council” (cited in *The Russian Church*, N. Brianchaninov, 1931, 46).

David Palm also provided the following: “I followed up on a citation in Butler, et al. *Jesus, Peter, and the Keys*. They cite Hergenrother’s *Anti-Janus* who in turn cites Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople speaking of the relationship of the Pope to an ecumenical Council. In that book there was just a summary of the text but there was a reference to Migne. Here is my own translation of the actual Greek text, in case this will be helpful to anybody out there; I found it quite amazing. Basically the context is that the Emperor Anastasius was trying to allow barbarians (non-Greeks) to be baptized “in the name of the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.” The Council of Chalcedon went opposed to this formula and now the Emperor was trying to get Patriarch Macedonius to reject that synod’s conclusion. Here is what Theophanes, the Greek historian (canonized by both East and West and a signatory to Nicea II) has to say:

“The king compelled Macedonius, patriarch of Constantinople, to anathematize the Chalcedonian synod, just as he had [so compelled] Elias of Jerusalem. But Macedonius said that apart from an ecumenical synod, having as its chief [Greek: *proedron*] the bishop of Rome, it is impossible [Greek:
The word *proedron* has these definitions in Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (pp. 1144-5): “president, leading official, leader; 1. of leading officials in the Church...2. leading person, chief...”.

OK, OK, enough of that. I think I have now more than met Bill’s “requirements” for papal support from the East, and so we move on. At this point, Bill goes back to quoting from his book again, pages 160 - 61 and 238 - 39, if I’m not mistaken. Since I’ve already stipulated most of the following in this response and especially in my book, it is clear that again Bill is not addressing the material in *Upon this Rock* and is building a straw man to bravely tear down while brandishing his sword and denouncing *Upon this Rock*. If I had argued against him on these points then he could disagree with me and state his case, but why pontificate on this matter when my book has not disagreed with him on most of the following material?

Furthermore, Yves Congar, the Roman Catholic theologian and historian, affirms the fact that the Eastern Fathers of the patristic age and afterwards did not hold to the view of an exclusive Petrine primacy at Rome. These are not the comments of a Protestant historian, but of one of the most eminent Roman Catholic theologians and historians of this century:

Many of the Eastern Fathers who are rightly acknowledged to be the greatest and most representative and are, moreover, so considered by the universal Church, do not offer us any more evidence of the primacy. Their writings show that they recognized the primacy of the Apostle Peter, that they regarded the See of Rome as the prima sedes playing a major part in the Catholic communion—we are recalling, for example, the writings of St. John Chrysostom and of St. Basil who addressed himself to Rome in the midst of the difficulties of the schism of Antioch—but they provide us with no theological statement on the universal primacy of Rome by divine right. The same can be said of St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. John Damascene (Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years* (New York: Fordham University, 1959), pp. 61-62).

I have learned to be cautious with Bill’s use of quotations from “Roman Catholic theologians and historians”. What else do they say that he fails to mention? What exceptions do they add to qualify their statements? And remember that “theological statements” are not the sum total of a person’s belief and practice. The fact that I don’t write a treatise on the combustion engine is certainly no proof that I don’t accept its existence and power.

It does sometimes happen that some Fathers understood a passage in a way which does not agree with later Church teaching. One example: the interpretation of Peter’s confession in Matthew 16:16 - 19. Except at Rome, this passage was not applied by the Fathers to the papal primacy; they worked out an exegesis at the level of their own

Again, as we have seen already, one must be careful of such quotes when the whole context is disregarded. In *Appendix D*, I have provided the full context of Yves Congar’s statement. I suggest that the reader study the full text since it has much to say about “unanimous consent” and the Church’s use of the Fathers. Again, the full context of Congar’s statement is certainly no friend to Bill Webster’s propositions; in fact, it cuts the whole ground out from under his position and shows him to be no delicate surgeon with such precise terminology, but rather a man chopping his way through an English garden with a machete.

It must be confessed that the consciousness of the Roman primacy was not expressed in the East at the period when the primacy became classically fixed in tradition, at least not with a clarity that alone could have avoided schism. In the great councils held in the East, there had never been a formula on the universal primacy by divine right...We do not find texts in the East as strong as those in the West; the rescripts of Theodore and of Valentinian II and Valentinian III concern the West. In a number of documents Rome is merely portrayed as an ecclesiastical and canonical court of first instance. In other texts, Rome is recognized as having the right as first See, of intervening to preserve the purity of doctrinal tradition, but not to regulate the life of the churches or to settle questions of discipline in the East. Finally—and to our mind this is the most important point—although the East recognized the primacy of Rome, it did not imply by this exactly what Rome herself did, so that, even within the question on which they were in agreement, there existed the beginning of a very serious estrangement bearing upon the decisive element of the ecclesiastical constitution and the rule of communion (Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years* (New York: Fordham University, 1959), pp. 61-62.)

Again Mark Bonocore is helpful. The first issue raised here is the phenomenon of Roman imperial law vs. the Sacred Tradition of the Church. There is a very clear distinction. In this, we must recognize the Ecumenical Councils for what they really were - exercises of Roman imperial law! Before Nicaea I, the Trinity was always the Sacred Tradition of the Church, as illustrated in the Church’s Liturgy and in its opposition to Sabellianism and other such heresies. Yet, what made Arius different is that he had the imperial court on his disposal. Unlike the earlier challenges to the Church, this one had to be fought within the realm of secular legality. It was not only the orthodox Faith that was at stake, but also the form of the “imperial cult,” which had recently changed from classical paganism and emperor worship to Christianity. Thus, the bishops at Nicaea were not only defending Sacred Tradition, but also presenting and codifying Sacred Tradition in ways that the imperial government could understand and embrace.
And this was true for all of the ancient Ecumenical Councils, which were political exercises even more than doctrinal ones.

And this brings us to the Council of Sardica, which granted the Pope the authority to judge cases involving episcopal sees. Yet, this was nothing new! As we know from Cyprian, Pope Stephen had the authority to depose heretical bishops in Gaul and replace them with orthodox ones -- the same power which anti-Pope Novatian claimed, and even exercised as far away as Asia Minor! So, Sardica was not granting this authority to Rome as a novelty, but rather confirming the Sacred Tradition of the Bishop of Rome’s jurisdictional authority within the sphere of imperial law.

And, even though the Eastern orthodox bishops ascribed to the ruling of Sardica, the presence of a rival Emperor in the East (an emperor who was different than the emperor the Bishop of Rome answered to), subsequently drew a wedge between the Pope’s Traditional office and the functioning of the Eastern Church - which was not only the Eastern branch of Catholicism, but also the “state cult” of the Eastern Roman Empire.

It can be argued that this political dimension is at the heart of our Schism with the Eastern Orthodox. While I fully recognize that the Eastern Orthodox have the true priesthood and true apostolicity, they can also be seen as the “imperial cult” founded by Constantine. They do not approach Sacred Tradition directly, but always through the “funnel” of the Byzantine imperial cult. Thus, for the East, Sacred Tradition and imperial law became indistinguishable. For us, they can still be separated. While the East only recognizes what was fully formulated under the political mechanism of the Byzantine state, we look directly at Sacred Tradition, and thus do not need a “formula on the universal primacy by divine right” presented in the early Ecumenical Councils.

Secondly, as I pointed out, “No Eastern father ever denied Roman primacy” Therefore, I might consider putting the question to Bill: If the West was claiming the jurisdictional authority of Rome (as it clearly was) and if the East knew this to be wrong and a departure from Sacred Tradition, why didn’t any Eastern father speak directly against this abuse?

Thirdly, I think it may be helpful to point out to Bill how the Jewish and Mediterranean mentality is far different than that of Northern Europe when it comes to authority and how it is exercised. It is no great secret that Mediterraneans have a healthy disrespect for authority. They may oppose it, fight with it, complain about it, but still accept it. In essence, they can be stubborn, nasty folks who vent their emotions and frustrations in much more pronounced ways than Northern Europeans do.
Thus, what may look like “rebellion” to a Northern European, is merely natural interaction with authority to a Mediterranean or a Jew.

Look at Moses, for example. Was he the unquestioned authority over the people of Israel? I doubt that Bill would dispute that he was. Yet, if we read Exodus or Numbers, we do not find Moses treated with the awe and respect that Hollywood attributed to Charlton Heston as Moses. Rather, this man who could wave his hands and part the sea is questioned, ridiculed, abused, and told that he’s nothing special - even by his own sister! Yet, all the same, his supreme authority is never seriously challenged by the majority of Israelites. Rather, he is merely dealing with a “stiff-necked people.”

Well, perhaps Bill should come to realize that the early Church Fathers (all of them Mediterraneans) were just as stiff-necked. Indeed, Mr. Webster needs to factor in the issue of Mediterranean obstinacy before he concludes that this father or that father “rejected Roman primacy.” In this, it is no great secret that the Germanic and Celtic approach to authority is very different than that of the Mediterranean/Jewish approach. In the Germanic and Celtic mind, authority is absolute, and quite black and white. Greeks, Italians, and others are simply not that way. Generally speaking, the father in a Germanic or Celtic family is expected to be a largely-unapproachable, “manly” authority figure who is the unaffectionate disciplinarian. In a Jewish or Italian family, fatherhood is not generally so monolithic or strict. A Jewish or an Italian father can be opposed, argued with, appealed to. Yet he is still recognized as the authority.

Thus, it is no accident that the Papacy became more directly authoritarian during medieval times, when Germanic influences entered the Western Church and many of the Popes and Cardinals were of Germanic or Celtic descent. However, Bill does not account for this change in culture and its affect on the Church’s approach to authority.

Having discussed the above, Bill’s words below again fall flat, kind of like an opened soda pop sitting in the sun:

The East never accepted the regular jurisdiction of Rome, nor did it submit to the judgment of Western bishops. Its appeals to Rome for help were not connected with a recognition of the principle of Roman jurisdiction but were based on the view that Rome had the same truth, the same good. The East jealously protected its autonomous way of life. Rome intervened to safeguard the observation of legal rules, to maintain the orthodoxy of faith and to ensure communion between the two parts of the church, the Roman see representing and personifying the West...In according Rome a ‘primacy of honour’, the East avoided basing this primacy on the succession and the still living presence of the apostle Peter. A
modus vivendi was achieved which lasted, albeit with crises, down to the middle of the eleventh century...From the perspective of an ecclesiology which is not only theoretical but is also put into practice, we are confronted by two logics. The East remained oriented on the logic of local or particular churches in communion with one another in the unity of faith, love and eucharist; this unity was realized by means of exchanges and communications and then, when the need made itself felt, by the holding of a council. It was a unity of communion. The West, which Islam had cut off from North Africa, accepted the authority of the Roman see, and over the course of history Rome occupied an increasingly prominent place. It is a fact that the two gravest crises between Byzantium and Rome arose in times when the papal authority was affirmed most strongly: with Photius under Nicholas I and John VIII, and with Cenlularius at the time of the so-called Gregorian Reform (Nicholas II, Leo IX, Humbert, Gregory VII) (Yves Congar, *Diversity and Communion* (Mystic: twenty-third, 1982), pp. 26-27).

Pierre Batiffol likewise affirms the fact that the Eastern Church, historically, has never embraced the ecclesiology of Roman primacy:

I believe that the East had a very poor conception of the Roman primacy. The East did not see in it what Rome herself saw and what the West saw in Rome, that is to say, a continuation of the primacy of St. Peter. The bishop of Rome was more than the successor of Peter on his cathedra, he was Peter perpetuated, invested with Peter’s responsibility and power. The East has never understood this perpetuity. St. Basil ignored it, as did St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. John Chrysostom. In the writings of the great Eastern Fathers, the authority of the Bishop of Rome is an authority of singular grandeur, but in these writings it is not considered so by divine right (Cited by Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years* (New York: Fordham University, 1959), pp. 61-62).

It should be clear from the foregoing documentation that Mr. Ray’s charge is a purposeful misrepresentation. How does what I wrote to him in my email differ from what I have written in *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock?* My statements in the book affirm in every detail and in much greater length what I wrote to him in my email. I have given full documentation from the writings of the Church Fathers and then have backed up my conclusions with the judgments of leading Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant historians.

Unhappily, Bill has proved no such thing. He has been exceedingly selective and has not interacted with my material.

Now for Bill’s hypothetical interview with St. Chrysostom. This is not meant to belittle Bill and I hope it doesn’t come across that way. It is intended to show the vast disparity between the views and methodology of fundamentalist Protestants and that of the great Church Fathers. Please step into the local county courtroom as the “Trial of Misrepresentation” begins:
“Order in the Court! Order in the Court! All rise! The Honorable Judge Smith presiding.” The judge takes his seat. “The trial is hereby commenced. We are here to discover who is guilty of misrepresentation. Bill Webster, please rise.”

“Yes, your honor.” Do you accuse Stephen Ray of stating or implying that St. John Chrysostom spoke of the Primacy of Rome as later Catholic theologians defined it, as defined by Vatican I?”

“Ah, well I guess so your honor. I did by the way spend many pages refuting him on this point.” The judge asks, “Did you read in his book where he stated that St. John Chrysostom did no such thing?” “Ah, I’m not sure your honor, you see I was just assuming Mr. Ray did because others have done so. His book was very painful for me to read, so I really, well, you know, I really didn’t want to read the whole thing. I found my name in the index of his book, and I did read those footnotes.”

“But Mr. Webster,” asks the judge, “if Stephen Ray never made those claims and you say he did, were you not misrepresenting him? And in quoting all those pages verbatim from your book to refute something Stephen Ray never said, aren’t you jousting windmills and doing the truth a great disservice?”

“Well your honor, he misrepresented me first. He said I never said something that I really did say.” “And what was that Mr. Webster?” “Well, Mr. Ray said I never told my readers that not one Father ever denied a Petrine primacy; neither did any deny it was successive.” The judge asks, “Well did you tell your readers that?” “Of course your Honor.” “OK then Mr. Webster, can you please show it to us from any of your books?”

After an hour of thumbing through the pages of his book, Bill looks sheepishly at the judge and says, “Well your Honor, I can’t find it right now but I’ll look again later.” “So,” says the Judge looking at Bill, “was Stephen Ray really guilty of misrepresenting you then?”

“And you, Bill Webster, also said that Chrysostom said . . .”

“. . . Objection your Honor! His name is not Chrysostom as Bill keeps referring to him. His name is John. “Chrysostom” is an appellation or description added many years later which means “golden-mouth” because he was such a marvelous preacher. He is correctly referred to as St. John Chrysostom.”

The judge asks, “Is that true Mr. Webster?” “Ah, yes your honor, I think it is.”
“Well, back to my second question, Mr. Webster, you said St. John Chrysostom never claimed that Peter was given authority, in a jurisdictional sense, over the other apostles. Is that correct? “Yes your honor.” “So then, are you sure you are not misrepresenting the Saint?” “Yes your honor.”

“Bill, tell us then why the great preacher John said three times in one sermon that Peter was entrusted by Jesus “with the chief authority over the brethren”? Who were the “brethren” that St. John Chrysostom referred to?” “Well, I guess they were the other apostles your honor.” “Did you know that he had said that of Peter?” “Ah, well, I guess, let me see. Well, yes your honor, I even stated it in my book without much elaboration or comment, you know how it is your honor.”

After closing arguments the Judge dismisses the jury to make their deliberation. After thirty minutes, they re-enter the courtroom. “Have you reached a verdict?” “Yes your Honor.”

Since you, the readers are the jurors, you certainly know what the verdict was. At least Bill didn’t get convicted of plagiarism or copyright laws since, after all, it was his book from which he copied all the pages!

In my comment on Bill’s e-mail I simply stated that Bill never told his readers that “No Father ever denied the Primacy of Peter and no Father ever denied the Succession of that Primacy” That is not a misrepresentation and I continue to staunchly maintain the same thing. If he did tell his readers, all he has to do is show us where he said it. The fact that many argued with the bishop or Rome, debated, disagreed, refused to obey, etc. yet never did they deny the authority or office of the bishop of Rome.

As stated by J. Michael Miller, “From the beginning of the second century, written documents testify that local churches outside Rome recognized its special role in the koinonia [universal church community]. Although they sometimes argued that the Roman bishop had acted imprudently or ill-advisedly, none, neither in the East to the West, disputed his right to provide pastoral care for churches other than his own (The Shepherd and the Rock [Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1995], 75. See also Aidan Nichols in Rome and the Eastern Churches, pg. 277).

There is another important passage from St. John Chrysostom that Bill fails to mention, here or in his book (if I’m wrong Bill, let me know). I am not implying a nefarious intent. I know Bill couldn’t quote every passage of St. John Chrysostom in his book (again, I hope he will extend the same courtesy with me).
This is one of the most significant passages and I close with it even though it is in my book. I also include the footnote by Fr. Stanley Jaki, a marvelous scholar.

“Again, consider the moderation of James. He it was who received the Bishopric of Jerusalem, and here he says nothing. Mark also the great moderation of the other Apostles, how they concede the throne to him [Peter], and no longer dispute with each other. . . . [Peter says, ‘Men and brethren’—Acts 1:15 - 16, etc.] Here is forethought for providing a teacher; here was the first who ordained a teacher. He did not say, ‘We are sufficient.’ So far was he beyond all vainglory, and he looked to one thing alone. And yet [Peter] had the same power to ordain as they all collectively. But well might these things be done in this fashion, through the noble spirit of the man, and because prelacy then was not an affair of dignity, but of provident care for the governed. . . . For observe, they were an hundred and twenty, and he asks for one out of the whole body with good right, as having been put in charge of them: for to him had Christ said, ‘And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren’” (Homily 3 in Acts in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st series, 11:20, quoted in Upon this Rock, pgs. 222 - 223; emphasis mine. For a very thorough analysis of Chrysostom’s thoughts and teachings on Peter and the primacy of Rome, see S. Herbert Scott’s The Eastern Churches and the Papacy (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928) and John Chapman’s Studies on the Early Papacy [Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1928], 89).

What power is given to a man that is greater than the power and authority to appoint an apostle. St. John Chrysostom states, or grants to Peter the extraordinary power to appoint an apostle. He didn’t need the group, for as St. John Chrysostom says, “[Peter] had the same power to ordain as they all collectively.” What an amazing statement!

Fr. Jaki’s comments are included in my footnote of which I provide the full text (and though I provided Fr. Jaki’s comments earlier, I will cite them again as part of the larger footnote): “Chrysostom’s understanding of the replacement of Judas by Matthias is interesting. Stanley Jaki writes, ‘While the twelve could tolerate the pre-eminence of three—Peter, James, and John—they could not bear the even greater prominence given to Peter. And, according to John Chrysostom, part of Jesus’ answer to their indignation was his choosing Peter for the miraculous catch of the fish with the tax coin in its mouth, and that the tax was to be paid only on behalf of himself and Peter. John Chrysostom certainly did not notice anything derogatory to Peter’s prominence in his handling the election of Matthias, the replacement of Judas. On the contrary, he saw in it the humility of a leader truly assured in his prominence. In order to cut off the possible charge of favoritism, Peter entrusted the outcome to lottery, although he had the power of constituting an apostle. On reflecting on John Chrysostom’s interpretation Erasmus noted that
in John Chrysostom’s view Peter ‘habet jus constituendi par omnibus [apostolic],’ that is, *Peter had a constitutional power equal to that of all the twelve taken together.* Thus, according to John Chrysostom, Peter did not have to call the council of Jerusalem; he alone could have settled all its business. Unlike many modern exegetes, John Chrysostom did not overlook the fact that Peter spoke last at the council as the one who had the last word. In commenting on Paul’s assertion of his right to take along a sister-woman, John Chrysostom called attention to the order in which Paul referred to the similar procedures of the apostles, the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas. ‘He [Paul] puts the leader [Peter] last, for in that position he places his most powerful point. For it was not so wonderful to list the others . . . as it was to name the primate entrusted with the keys of heaven” (*The Keys of the Kingdom* [Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1986], 88, emphasis mine).

“Chapman comments, ‘I know no more emphatic testimony to the supreme jurisdiction of St. Peter in any writer, ancient or modern, than the view taken in this homily of the election of St. Matthias, for I know of no jurisdiction in the Church more tremendous than the appointment of an apostle. . . . And, I ask, will anyone venture, after considering the last sentence of the passage quoted, to maintain that the apostles were excluded from the ‘brethren’ over whom Peter was told to rule’” (John Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy* [Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1928], 89).