

Lesson Sixty-five

**PETER'S TESTIMONY ABOUT JESUS
OF NAZARETH**

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:22-36, 10:34-43.

Scriptures to Memorize: "Ye men of Israel, hear these you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:22-24).

121. Q. Who was Peter?

A. Peter was one of the original group of the Twelve Apostles.

See Matt. 10:2-4, Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:12-16. Perhaps we should add that Peter was more than just *one of the Twelve Apostles*: he was by temperament a *leader* of the entire group. Though not possessing authority above the rest, yet he was always in the forefront of things. Consequently we find him taking a prominent role in the story of the historic origins of Christianity.

122. Q. Of what nationality was Peter?

A. Peter was a Jew.

He was the son of a certain Joanes (called in Matt. 16:17, Jonah; cf. John 1:42, 21:15-17). His original name was Simon, but Jesus Himself conferred upon him the name of Cephas, "which is by interpretation, Peter" (John 1:42; cf. 1 Cor. 1:12), (Peter is, in the original, *Petros*, meaning Rock or Stone). Hence his full name is usually given as Simon Peter.

123. Q. What was Peter's occupation prior to his call to the apostleship?

A. Peter was a fisherman, prior to his call to the apostleship.

Simon Peter, and Andrew his brother, were both fishermen. See Matt. 4:18-20, Mark 1:16-18. According to the account in Luke 5:1-11, Peter and Andrew were in partnership with Zebedee and his two sons, James and John, in the fishing industry on the Lake of Galilee.

124. Q. Where in the apostolic writings do we find the account of Peter's call to the apostleship?

A. We find the account of Peter's call to the apostleship in Matt. 4:18-20, in Mark 1:16-18, and in Luke 5:1-11.

Matt. 4:18-20, "And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, and followed him." It is apparent from the account in John 1:35-42, that Peter and Andrew, and James and John, were all four originally John the Baptizer's converts; and that they all became *disciples* of Jesus immediately after His baptism by John in the Jordan River (cf. Acts 1:21-22). It was probably not long afterward that Jesus encountered the four men plying their trade on the Lake of Galilee and called them to the apostleship. Cf. Mark 1:16-17, and Luke 5:1-11.

125. Q. What do we learn from the Gospel Narratives about Peter's temperament and character?

A. We learn that Peter was at first a very impulsive and weak man, but one who grew throughout the three years of his personal association with Jesus, into a veritable "rock."

There is a human and appealing touch about this man Simon from the start. He is pictured in the *Gospels* as a man of volatile temperament, hasty in speech, impulsive in action; yet withal very human, very lovable, and intensely loyal at heart. It is apparent from the accounts given, that Jesus was attracted to Simon Peter from the

moment of their first meeting. The Master of men saw the possibilities in this man, and predicted that he would become a "rock" (John 1:42); and from that moment His confidence in Peter's ultimate attainments never wavered. Nor did it turn out that this confidence was misplaced. Jesus no doubt found it trying at times, this task of making a "rock of Peter, who was more like shifting sand by nature; but sand, we should remember, is the stuff of which granite is made. And, though Peter often acted foolishly, on the impulse of the moment, and thus made it necessary for Jesus to rebuke him, at times scathingly, yet he invariably profited from the chastening; and over the three years of personal association with the Master, this peasant fisherman grew in grace and knowledge and strength, into the veritable 'rock' that his name suggests." For sidelights on Peter's character, see the following scriptures: Matt. 14:27-32, 16:21-24, 18:21-22, 26:31-35, 26:36-41; Luke 9:28-36, 22:54-62; John 13:1-17, 13:36-38, 18:10-12; Acts 5:26-32, 10:9-16, 10:34-38; Acts 11:1-18, 15:6-11; Gal. 2:11-16, 2 Pet. 3:14-18, etc.

126. Q. What are the most important facts related in the New Testament writings about the Apostle Peter?

A. The most important facts related in the New Testament writings about the Apostle Peter are as follows:

1. That he was the first to voice the Christian Confession of Faith (Matt. 16:15-16); in consequence of which, Jesus then and there bestowed upon him His personal blessing, and also the special *privilege* of stating the terms of pardon under the new covenant and opening the door of the church to receive the first converts to the Christian faith (Matt. 16:17-19).
2. That he was one of the "inner circle" of Apostles, and consequently was privileged to be an eyewitness of Christ's Transfiguration and of His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 17:1-9, Mark 14:32-42).
3. That, when Jesus was on trial before Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest, Peter lingered outside

the council-chamber; and on being accused by those present of having been with Jesus, he denied the Master three times in succession (John 18:15-27); and that afterward he repented bitterly and was forgiven (Luke 22:54-62). 4. That he and John were among the first, on the Resurrection morning, to hear about and to investigate the empty tomb (Luke 24:12, John 20:1-10). 5. That Christ appeared to Peter personally, after His resurrection from the dead (Luke 24:34, 1 Cor. 15:5). 6. That he shared with the Apostles, as their leader in most instances, the stirring scenes of the fifty days that followed (Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:13-53; John 20:19-29, 21:1-23; Acts 1:1-26, 2:1-4). 7. That on the day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem, he served as the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit (the other Apostles were also preaching) in presenting the first Gospel sermon ever heard on earth, and opened the door of the church to receive the first Jewish converts to the Christian faith (Acts 2:14-40). 8. That some ten years later, at Caesarea, he again acted as the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit in preaching the first Gospel sermon ever addressed to Gentiles, and opened the door of the church to receive the first Gentile converts to Christianity (Acts 10:1-48, 11:1-18, 15:1-11). 9. That he figured prominently in the history of the origins of Christianity, in Jerusalem, and throughout all Judea and Samaria, as related in the opening chapters of the book of Acts (chs. 1-12). It has been rightly said, in fact, that *Acts of Apostles* might have been as appropriately named "Acts of Peter and Paul." 10. That he labored long and diligently in the Gospel, traveling extensively throughout the then known world, visiting the churches and confirming them in the most holy faith (cf. 1 Cor. 1:12). Peter was the outstanding leader among the Jewish Christians of his day, as Paul was among the Gentile Christians. Unconfirmed tradition has it that he finally suffered martyrdom in Rome, in the reign of Nero (cf. 1 Pet. 4:12, 5:13).

- 127. Q. What two books of the New Testament Canon were written by Peter?**
- A. The two Epistles which bear his name: 1 Peter, and 2 Peter.**

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON
SIXTY-FIVE

121. Who was Peter?
122. Of what nationality was Peter?
123. What was Peter's occupation prior to his call to the apostleship?
124. Where in the apostolic writings do we find the account of Peter's call to the apostleship?
125. What do we learn from the Gospel Narratives about Peter's temperament and character?
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