

Character Study: Peter
Part 2 – A Devoted and Determined Leader
Various Bible Passages

What's happening?

- Following Christ's crucifixion, Peter and John examined the empty tomb of Jesus (John 20:1-8). The truth of Jesus' resurrection was confirmed as He appeared to the Apostles on multiple occasions (note Jesus' conversation with Peter in John 21:15-19). These encounters gave Peter an incredible boldness that would characterize his ministry.
- Jesus had first mentioned the concept of the "church" to Peter (Matt. 16:18), which began on the Day of Pentecost following Jesus' ascension to heaven. On that day, Peter preached to a crowd, resulting in the conversion of about 3,000 people (Acts 2:14-41)!
- Peter had an active ministry. He was empowered to perform many miracles (Acts 3:6-9; 9:36-43; etc.). He was placed in prison twice, being miraculously delivered by God each time (Acts 5:17-24; 12:1-18). He played a key role in settling the debate at the Jerusalem Counsel (Acts 15:1-21). He traveled and ministered at various churches (Acts 9:32), and also wrote two epistles (I and II Peter), which offer hope to those suffering and give a warning against false teachers.
- Church history tells us that Peter died a martyr for the faith (as Jesus had indicated would be the case, John 21:18-19). Records say that he was crucified. Feeling unworthy to die as his Savior died, it is said that Peter requested to be crucified upside-down.

What's God doing?

> Jesus gave Peter the "keys of the Kingdom" (Matt. 16:19), indicating the authority by which he would be used by God to "open the door" of the gospel to Gentiles. Though a concept referred to in the OT (Gen. 12:3), the idea of Gentiles being saved through the Messiah was difficult for Jews to accept. Nonetheless, God used Peter to take the gospel to the Jews, Samaritans, and then Gentiles (compare Acts 1:8 with Acts 2, 8, 10).

What's to learn?

→ Being a witness to the risen Lord transformed Peter into a leader that would remain true to Christ at all costs. Explaining what compelled the Apostles to preach the gospel, Peter stated, "For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20; note 5:29). When we contemplate the truth (and implications) of the resurrection, our lives will be transformed as well!

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