

Lesson One — A Man Called Peter

Day One — The Call of Peter

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A man called Peter. A man called by Christ to be His disciple...and later, His apostle. A fisherman called to become a fisher of men, and later, a shepherd of Israel. A strong man. A man of undaunting courage. A man with great words. A man who betrayed a Friend, who wept bitterly, and then lived to be perfected, confirmed, strengthened, and established through suffering. A man who was the first to speak out boldly to the leaders of Israel after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension. A man called Peter.

But what made this man tick? What was his heart beat? And how is it that his words are so applicable today?

Our study in I and II Peter will help us answer these questions. But before we delve into the writings of Peter to see what he said to the early churches in Asia (and what he says to us in these very same words), let's get to know this man a little better.

Day One — The Call of Peter

Today we are going to find out a couple of the details of Peter's life — how he met Jesus, and how he was called by Him. Read the following passages from the different Gospel accounts, and make brief notes of what you learn about Peter on the sheet in your Appendix entitled *The Man Peter*.

His Call:

Matthew 4

18 And walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 And they immediately left the nets, and followed Him.

Mark 1

16 And as He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18 And they immediately left the nets and followed Him

Luke 5

1 Now it came about that while the multitude were pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; 2 and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them, and were washing their nets. 3 And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the multitudes from the boat. 4 And when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." 5 And Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at Your bidding I will let down the nets." 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish; and their nets began to break; 7 and they signaled to their partners in the other boat, for them to come and help them. And they came, and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" 9 For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

His Family:

Matthew 8:14 And when Jesus had come to Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever.

His Apostleship:

Matthew 10

1 And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-gatherer; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. 5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them...

His Walk on Water:

Matthew 14

22 And immediately He made the disciples get into the boat, and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. 23 And after He had sent the multitudes away, He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. 24 But the boat was already many stadia away from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night He came

to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were frightened, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” 28 And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” 29 And He said, “Come!” And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!” 31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and *said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. 33 And those who were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, “You are certainly God’s Son!”

His Bold Proclamation:

Matthew 16

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

Christ’s Rebuke: (Immediately after Peter made the above statement of faith, he stumbled. This passage follows the one above):

Matthew 16

21 From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. 22 And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.” 23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”

We’ll stop here for today, and pick up tomorrow in learning more about the man, Peter.

Day Two — Eyewitness of the Glory

Today we will pick up where we left off yesterday. We are getting to know Peter as a man. Remember to make notes on the sheet from the Appendix.

Peter had a very unique opportunity afforded him. He was able to witness Christ in His coming glory. There was a reason for this in the mind of God. God knew that Peter would one day pen the words of II Peter 1:16. God would use Peter as an eye witness of a future event, relating a future hope set before all Christians, preventing them from easily being led astray by false teachers. Read about the accounts below:

His Eye-witness:

Luke 9

27 “But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.”

28 And some eight days after these sayings, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went up to the mountain to pray. 29 And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming.

30 And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, 31 who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. 33 And it came about, as these were parting from Him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah” — not realizing what he was saying. 34 And while he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!” 36 And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

Now for a sneak preview of II Peter. The event we just studied is what Peter referred to when he wrote:

II Peter 1

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”— 18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

19 And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

There you have it.

Day Three — The Night of Denial

We are gaining a brief perspective of the life of Peter. In part, we have seen his courage, his presumption, and his opportunity. Now we will see his denial and sorrow and restoration. Add notes to your sheet as you study.

This is the evening beginning the day of Passover. Peter had walked with Christ for about three years. Along with James and John, Peter had been one of the three of the inner circle, his name mostly being mentioned first in the list. He had been privileged to see and witness things which others had not been. And here, we come to the night Christ would be betrayed and brought to trial. You would think that Peter would have understood better, would be stronger, smarter. But...

His Refusal of Christ:

John 13

1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. **2** And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, **3** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God, **4** rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. **5** Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. **6** And so He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" **7** Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter." **8** Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." **9** Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

Then Jesus proceeds to tell the twelve that one among them would betray Him. They talked among themselves, wondering who it might be. Then Peter makes a statement. Actually, all four of the Gospels give this account (which is unusual). We will look at all four accounts because you will have a more complete picture of all that was said.

His Misplaced Confidence:

Matthew 26

31 Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.'" **32** But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." **33** But Peter answered and said to Him, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away." **34** Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a cock crows, you shall deny Me three times." **35** Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too.

Mark 14

29 But Peter said to Him, "Even though all may fall away, yet I will not." **30** And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me." **31** But Peter kept saying insistently, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all were saying the same thing, too.

Luke 22

31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; **32** but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." **33** And he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" **34** And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the cock will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."

John 13

36 Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered, “Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later.” 37 Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.” 38 Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times.

Overcome by Sleep:

Mark 14

33 And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. 34 And He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch.” 35 And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground, and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. 36 And He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt.”

37 And He came and found them sleeping, and *said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” 39 And again He went away and prayed, saying the same words.

40 And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

41 And He came the third time, and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!”

Draws a Sword:

Mark 14

43 And immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44 Now he who was betraying Him had given them a signal, saying, “Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him, and lead Him away under guard.” 45 And after coming, he immediately went to Him, saying, “Rabbi!” and kissed Him. 46 And they laid hands on Him, and seized Him. 47 But a certain one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

In that last verse, guess who the “certain one” standing by Jesus was, who drew the sword? It was Peter!

John 18

10 Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave’s name was Malchus. 11 Jesus therefore said to Peter, “Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?”

Luke 22

47 While He was still speaking, behold, a multitude came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. **48** But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” **49** And when those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” **50** And a certain one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. **51** But Jesus answered and said, “Stop! No more of this.” And He touched his ear and healed him.

Matthew 26

52 Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. **53** Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? **54** How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?”

Perhaps Peter was trying to show Jesus that he really was willing to die for him. Then, when Jesus rebuked him for his attempt at protecting Him, he fled. They all fled, just as Jesus told them they would do — ***‘I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED’*** (Mt. 26:31).

Follows from afar:

Matthew 26

57 And those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. **58** But Peter also was following Him at a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and entered in, and sat down with the officers to see the outcome.

Put yourself in Peter’s place. How he must have felt! Would Peter actually deny his Master as he had been told he would? Could he possibly do that?

Peter’s denial:

Mark 14

66 And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, **67** and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, “You, too, were with Jesus the Nazarene.” **68** But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.” And he went out onto the porch. **69** And the maid saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, “This is one of them!” **70** But again he was denying it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too.” **71** But he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this man you are talking about!” **72** And immediately a cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, “Before a cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And he began to weep.

Luke gives us a detail which must be mentioned when telling this story. The detail is in the first half of verse 61. (I cannot imagine that moment for Peter.)

Luke 22

55 And after they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. **56** And a certain servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight, and looking intently at him, said, “This man was with Him too.” **57**

But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know Him.” 58 And a little later, another saw him and said, “You are one of them too!” But Peter said, “Man, I am not!” 59 And after about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, “Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too.” 60 But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, a cock crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, “Before a cock crows today, you will deny Me three times.” 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

Imagine Peter hearing the cock, and looking immediately at Jesus to see if Jesus would hear and remember. Peter’s eyes dashed to Jesus, only to see Jesus’ eyes focusing directly on Peter. Their eyes met! The pain that must have been on Peter’s face, and the intense searching in Christ’s eyes. The word *looked* used in v. 61 is intensified and implies that Jesus really looked him over. Jesus’ eyes must have pierced him through. It is no wonder that Peter went out of the city and wept bitterly. This depicts a scene of judgement and the result of denying Christ. (See Mt. 22:11-13.)

Bitter tears, outside the city? (Just in the way of thinking this whole thing through — Do you realize that we will also stand under the gaze of Jesus’ eyes in that future day? You only have now to make things right with respect to Him. At that future moment, you will be powerless to change any of your actions. Something to think about.)

See you tomorrow.

Day Four — “Go, Tell My Disciples and Peter...”

Can you imagine the pain and sorrow which filled Peter’s heart during those three days, from the trial to the resurrection of Christ? How Peter must have wished he could turn back the hands of time and do things differently! Or at least have a moment with Jesus...just once more. Let’s look at what happens. (Be sure to have your sheet from the Appendix in hand, in order to fill in detail about Peter.)

Go, tell My disciples and Peter:

Mark 16

1 And when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. 3 And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” 4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. 5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. 6 And he said to them, “Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. 7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He said to you.’” 8 And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Did you notice the phrase of verse seven? Why do you think the man in white specifically mention Peter?

Upon hearing this, what anticipation this must have brought to Peter's heart. Up to this point, Jesus has manifested Himself two different times, but Peter is not mentioned at either appearance. Knowing just what Peter needed, Jesus orchestrated the circumstances explicitly. Peter had to wait until Jesus' appointed time, which was soon to come.

Gone fishing:

John 21

1 After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way. **2** There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples. **3** Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out, and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing. **4** But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. **5** Jesus therefore said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No." **6** And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find a catch." They cast therefore, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. **7** That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." And so when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea.

I have wondered why all of them just didn't drop what they were doing and get to the shore as soon as possible. It could be that the others in the boat may have already seen the Lord since His resurrection, and Peter had not. Perhaps. Perhaps not. At least it seems that they were giving to Peter what he so desperately desired — time alone with Jesus.

We are not privy to the conversation, which took place between Jesus and Peter when he first came to shore. Its absence is glaring to me, but Spiritually deemed left out. Obviously, Peter couldn't wait to have his one-on-one time with Him. And we can only surmise that Peter profusely apologized to Jesus, and that Jesus generously forgave him.

Finally, the others get their job done and arrived to the shore...

John 21

8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish. **9** And so when they got out upon the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid, and fish placed on it, and bread. **10** Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught." **11** Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. **12** Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. **13** Jesus came and took the bread, and gave them, and the fish likewise. **14**

This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

The question asked and answered:

John 21

5 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter,

“Simon, son of John, do you love <agapao> Me more than these?”

He said to Him,

“Yes, Lord; You know that I love <phileo> You.”

He said to him, “Tend My lambs.” 16 He said to him again a second time,

“Simon, son of John, do you love <agapao> Me?”

He said to Him,

“Yes, Lord; You know that I love <phileo> You.”

He said to him, “Shepherd My sheep.” 17 He said to him the third time,

“Simon, son of John, do you love <phileo> Me?”

Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love <phileo> Me?”

And he said to Him,

“Lord, You know all things; You know that I love <phileo> You.”

Jesus said to him, “Tend My sheep.

Why does Jesus ask the question using the word *agapao*, but Peter answers with the word *phileo*? While generally speaking there may not be much variation between the two different words for love, it is curious that both words are used here. And not just once. There may well be reason for the differences.

Here are some possible distinctions:

phileo is the kind of love which more denotes to that of being a friend to (fond of (an individual or an object)), i.e. have affection for (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling);

agapao is wider, embracing especially the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety: the two thus stand related very much; the former being chiefly of the heart (emotion) and the latter of the head (will).

Perhaps *agapao* denotes a more sacrificial, unconditional love, while *phileo* denotes more of a tender affection, a brotherly love. Peter has just come off of tremendous guilt for having denied the very One for whom he said that he would die. And here, in this first meeting, Jesus asks him if he loves (*agapao*) Him more than the others. Perhaps Peter felt he could not commit to that level of love, and he answers accordingly. Jesus asks him again, and Peter gives the same response. Then Jesus lowers the level a notch, and asks Peter about loving (*phileo*) Him a third time. The text notes that Peter was grieved for this question. And Peter responds by admitting that the Lord knows all things.

But even with this dialogue, Jesus lets Peter know that He can still use Peter — “Tend My sheep.” What do you think Peter is being told here? What is Jesus asking him to do?

Jesus commissioned Peter to tend and shepherd His sheep. Peter took this commission seriously, and became the strongest spokesman of the disciples. (Paul was not in the picture as of yet.) And it might be assumed that it was because of the commission of the Lord, that Peter wrote these two letters which we will be studying, even in the final few years of his life — some thirty or so years later.

Let's see the end of the conversation between Jesus and Peter on the beach that morning:

John 21

18 “Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go.” 19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me!”

20 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” 21 Peter therefore seeing him said to Jesus, “Lord, and what about this man?” 22 Jesus said to him, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!”

We'll take it up here tomorrow.

Day Five — Filled with the Spirit and with Power

Forty days pass since Jesus rose from the dead. We are not told all the stories of those forty days, much less the stories of the years He spent on earth. In fact, the Apostle John writes something which would give us the idea that it would be impossible for all of them to have been written. On the heels of the passage we ended with yesterday, John wrote these final two verses.

John 21

24 This is the disciple who bears witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true. 25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.

Those are the last words in the Gospel of John. But the story goes on. Let's pick it up in the first chapter of Acts. You will need your Bible for today's work.

In order to see Luke's summation of those forty days, read Acts 1:1-14. Notice the summary of the subject matter during those forty days (1:3b). What was the subject of Christ's post-resurrection ministry?

With that summation, and command spoken by Christ, the disciples were to carry forth the same message — the message concerning the Kingdom of God. Yet, they were to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit. This promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, ten days after Christ's ascension. The Holy Spirit filled Peter with so much strength, that he gave a most powerful message on that day. Picture this...Tens of thousands of Jews from the surrounding countries, near and far, had come into Jerusalem some sixty days (+/-) prior. It was required of them to come to Jerusalem in order to celebrate the spring feasts days,

Understanding I and II Peter — Striving to Obtain the Outcome of Faith

Lesson One A Man Called Peter

that of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost (Deut. 16:16). Because the trip was so far for many, they may have remained in the city for the duration. Those who went home for the fifty or so days between the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost, had to make the return trip. The same crowds who had been present for Christ's death, would have also been present for this day of Pentecost.

With that in mind, look at Acts chapter two. First read Acts 2:1-13, and in the space below, list the different countries represented by people present to hear Peter's powerful message.

Now turn in your Bibles to I Peter 1:1. List the countries mentioned in the address of Peter's letter, some thirty years later. Do you see any of the same names listed here, as those in Acts?

With that in mind, read Peter's message on this first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. What was the crux of the message (vv. 15-36)?

And what was the response of the people listening (vv. 37-41)?

Throughout the first fifteen chapters of the book of Acts, one can see how Peter is used by God in powerful ways. At one point, during the mounting persecution by the Jews, Peter finally meets a man named Saul. This was a man who greatly persecuted the newly formed church. He was present as a Jewish leader for the martyrdom of Stephen, giving hearty approval for Stephen's stoning. But now this one, who so fearlessly persecuted the church, was converted and sought out Peter. Peter accepts him into the fellowship of believers, and Paul eventually takes centerstage in evangelizing the world.

Next week we will see how God used both Peter and Paul to minister to the people in Asia.

As you conclude this week's study, please take the sheet from the Appendix *The Man Peter* and from the list of items you have written on it, write a brief description below of what kind of man Peter is.

See you in class.