

## Sunday Circle – May 18, 2025

**NOTE: No Sunday Circle May 25. Final Sunday Circle before summer June 1.**

### Examining the Life of Peter

#### Names

Hebrew: Shimon bar Yonah (Simon son of Jonah/John), Simeon

Greek: Simon

Given by Jesus: Kepha (Aramaic כִּפָּי), Cephas (Greek), Petros (Greek and Latin), Peter meaning rock

In Scripture: Simon Peter (19 times)

#### Family

Father: John/Jonah

Brother: Andrew (one of the Apostles)

Wife: name unknown

Mother-in-law (mentioned in Gospels)

**Born** Circa. 1 AD in Bethsaida on the northern side of the Sea of Galilee

**Died:** Between 64-68 AD by crucifixion during the persecution by Nero on Vatican Hill in Rome (now the location of St. Peter's Basilica)

**Occupation:** Commercial fisherman

**Vocation:** Apostle and Bishop of Rome and Antioch

### Peter and Jesus in the Gospels

#### The calling of Peter

**Matthew 14:22-43** – Jesus walks on water and Peter goes to meet him and panics. Jesus catches him and says, **“You of little faith, why did you doubt?”** 32When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” (see also Mark 1:16-20, Luke 5:1-11, John 1:35-42)

#### Peter calls Jesus the Messiah and Jesus calls Peter the Rock

**Matthew 16:13-19** 13Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16Simon Peter answered, **“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”** 17And Jesus answered him, **“Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.** 18And

I tell you, you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church**, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (see also Luke 9:18-20, John 6:66-69)

### **Jesus Rebukes Peter**

**Matthew 16:21-23** 21From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22And **Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him**, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” 23But **he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”** (see also Mark 8: 31-33)

### **The Transfiguration**

**Matthew 17: 1-7** 1Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. 2And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. 3Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” 5While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” 6When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. 7But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” (see also Mark 9:2-7, Luke 9:28-36)

### **Jesus on Forgiveness**

**Matthew 18:21-22** 21 Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” 22Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times.

### **Washing of the Feet**

**John 13:3-17** 3Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, 4got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 5Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. 6He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” 7Jesus answered, “You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” 8Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” 9Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” 10Jesus said to him, “One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.” 11For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.” 12After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to

you? 13You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. 14So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. 16Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. 17If you know these things; you are blessed if you do them.

### **Peter's Denial of Jesus Predicted**

**Matthew 26:31-35** 31Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' 32But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." 33Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." 34Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." 35Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples. (see also Mark 14:27-31, Luke 22:31-34, John 13:36-38)

### **Peter's Denial of Jesus**

**Matthew 26:69-75** 69Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." 70But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." 71When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." 73After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." 74Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. 75Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly. (see also Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:54-62, John 18:15-18, 25-27)

### **The Resurrection and Peter's First Encounters with Jesus**

**John 20:2-3, 6-7** 2So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb... 6Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. (See also Luke 24:1-12)

### **The Three I Love Yous**

**John 21:15-19** 15When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my

sheep. 18Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” 19(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

## **Peter after the Resurrection**

Immediately Peter is shown to be leading the followers of Jesus in Acts 1-2.

- Peter calls for a new person to replace Judas Iscariot as an Apostle
- Peter addresses the people at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-42) saying in part “You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— 23this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. 24But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power...
- 38Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”
- Peter heals people (Acts 3:1-10, 5:15) 15so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by.
- Peter speaks in the Temple (Acts 3:11-26)
- Peter is arrested and testifies before the Council (Acts 4:1-22, 5:17-42)
- Peter and John go to Samaria and lay their hands on Samaritans who receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17)
- Peter travels to Lydda and Joppa healing Aeneas and Dorcas (Acts 9:32-43)
- Peter is also thought to have been in Antioch for some time, Caesarea, Corinth, and Rome.

## **Question of whether Gentile Christians First Needed to Convert to Judaism**

Peter initially thought that Gentile people should convert to Judaism, be circumcised, follow Jewish purity laws, etc. Peter changes his stance after having a vision from God.

Subsequently, he meets Cornelius, a Roman centurion. He then preaches to the Gentiles in Caesarea many of whom come to believe and they receive the Holy Spirit. Jewish converts who observed this and Jewish Christians in Jerusalem criticized him but he answered

2So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, 3saying, “Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?” 4Then Peter began to explain it to them... 12The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and

us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. 13He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; 14he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.' 15And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. 16And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" 18When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life." Acts 11:1-16)

In Chapter 15 of Acts Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem between 48-50 AD to discuss with Peter, John, and James the issue of whether or not Gentile believers needed to follow Jewish law in what would come to be called the Council of Jerusalem. Peter stands up and speaks in support of Paul's position and gains the Council's support.

### **The Primacy of Peter**

Catholics: Peter was the first bishop of Rome and his primacy among the apostles provides for the primacy of the Bishop of Rome

Eastern Orthodox Church: Peter was the rock on which the church was built due to his faith so all who share his faith are his successors. The primacy of Peter is seen in the relationship between bishops and priests in the diocese. All bishops are equal and the Bishop of Rome does not hold any primacy.

Anglicans and Episcopalians view Peter's faith in as the pattern for all Christians but he is not the foundation of the church. Jesus, whom Peter confessed is the Christ is the foundation of the Church. We do believe in the historic episcopate which is the understanding that Christian ministry passed down from the apostles.

### **Writings**

Two epistles of Peter – some scholars question the authorship. Jerome says that Peter may have used two different secretaries to write the letters

The Gospel of Mark is attribute to John Mark who was seen as an assistant to Peter

There are also a number of other non-canonical writings which have been either attributed to or written about Peter: the Gospel of Peter, a partially Docetic narrative that has survived in part; the Acts of Peter; the Acts of Peter and Andrew; the Acts of Peter and Paul; the Acts of Peter and the Twelve; a Letter of Peter to Philip, which was preserved in the Nag Hammadi library; Apocalypse of Peter, which was considered as genuine until the 4th century; and the preaching of Peter, a 2nd-century writing, only fragments survived

