



# MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

## **PETER**

*Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right." Acts 10:34-35*

Peter the apostle is one of the most prominent characters in the Gospels, a rough and tumble man whose emotions often got him into trouble, and yet he was clearly one of the favorites of Jesus Christ, who loved him for his big heart. Peter's true name was Simon. With his brother Andrew, Simon was a follower of John the Baptist. When Andrew introduced Simon to Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus renamed Simon, Cephas, an Aramaic word meaning "rock." The Greek word for rock, "petros," became this apostle's new name, Peter.

He is the only Peter mentioned in the New Testament. Peter was a natural spokesman for the twelve. Often, however, he spoke before he thought, and his words led to embarrassment.

Jesus included Peter in his inner circle. He was among those same disciples Jesus chose to witness the transfiguration. Those same three saw Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Most of us remember Peter for denying Christ three times during the night of Jesus' trial. Following his resurrection, Jesus took special care to assure Peter that he was forgiven.

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled the apostles. Peter was so overcome that he began to preach to the crowd. Acts 2:41 tells us 3,000 people were converted that day. Early in his ministry, Simon Peter preached only to Jews, but God gave him a vision in Joppa of a huge sheet containing all types of animals, warning him not to call anything made by God impure. Peter then baptized the Roman centurion Cornelius and his household and understood that the gospel is for all people.

Tradition says that persecution of the first Christians in Jerusalem led Peter to Rome, where he spread the gospel to the fledgling church there. He was later crucified upside down because he told the Roman soldiers that he was not worthy to be executed in the same manner as Jesus.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PETER THE APOSTLE**

After being invited by Jesus to come, Peter got out of his boat and for moments walked on water. Peter identified Jesus as the Messiah, not through his own knowledge but the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He was chosen by Jesus to witness the transfiguration. After Pentecost, Peter boldly proclaimed the gospel in Jerusalem, unafraid of arrest and persecution. He also penned the books 1 Peter and 2 Peter.

### **PETER THE APOSTLE'S STRENGTHS**

Peter was a fiercely loyal man. Like the other 11 apostles, he left his occupation to follow Jesus for three years, learning from him about the kingdom of heaven. Once he was filled with the Holy Spirit after Pentecost, Peter was a fearless missionary for Christ.

### **PETER THE APOSTLE'S WEAKNESSES**

Simon Peter knew great fear and doubt. He let his passions rule him instead of faith in God. During Jesus' final hours, Peter not only abandoned Jesus but denied three times that he even knew him.

### **HOMETOWN**

Native of Bethsaida, settled in Capernaum.

### **OCCUPATION**

Fisherman, a leader in the early church, missionary, Epistle writer.

### **FAMILY TREE**

Father – Jonah    Brother - Andrew