

# Synopsis of the life of St. Peter

Click on each of the links below, ([blue underlined](#)), to see the scripture verses at Biblia:

Simon Peter, also known as Cephas ([John 1:42](#)), was one of the first followers of Jesus Christ. He was an outspoken and ardent disciple, one of Jesus' closest friends, an apostle, and a "pillar" of the church ([Galatians 2:9](#)). Peter was enthusiastic, strong-willed, impulsive, and, at times, brash. But for all his strengths, Peter had several failings in his life. Still, the Lord who chose him continued to mold him into exactly who He intended Peter to be.

Simon was originally from Bethsaida ([John 1:44](#)) and lived in Capernaum ([Mark 1:29](#)), both cities on the coast of the Sea of Galilee. He was married ([1 Corinthians 9:5](#)), and he and James and John were partners in a profitable fishing business ([Luke 5:10](#)). Simon met Jesus through his brother Andrew, who had followed Jesus after hearing John the Baptist proclaim that Jesus was the Lamb of God ([John 1:35-36](#)). Andrew immediately went to find his brother to bring him to Jesus. Upon meeting Simon, Jesus gave him a new name: Cephas (Aramaic) or Peter (Greek), which means "rock" ([John 1:40-42](#)). Later, Jesus officially called Peter to follow Him, producing a miraculous catch of fish ([Luke 5:1-7](#)). Immediately, Peter left everything behind to follow the Lord (verse 11).

For the next three years, Peter lived as a disciple of the Lord Jesus. Being a natural-born leader, Peter became the *de facto* spokesman for the Twelve ([Matthew 15:15](#), [18:21](#), [19:27](#); [Mark 11:21](#); [Luke 8:45](#), [12:41](#); [John 6:68](#), [13:6-9](#), [36](#)). More significantly, it was Peter who first confessed Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," a truth which Jesus said was divinely revealed to Peter ([Matthew 16:16-17](#)).

Peter was part of the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, along with James and John. Only those three were present when Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus ([Mark 5:37](#)) and when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain ([Matthew 17:1](#)). Peter and John were given the special task of preparing the final Passover meal ([Luke 22:8](#)).

In several instances, Peter showed himself to be impetuous to the point of rashness:

- It was Peter who left the boat to walk on the water to Jesus ([Matthew 14:28-29](#))—and promptly took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink (verse 30).
- It was Peter who took Jesus aside to rebuke Him for speaking of His death ([Matthew 16:22](#))—and was swiftly corrected by the Lord (verse 23).
- It was Peter who suggested erecting three tabernacles to honour Moses, Elijah, and Jesus ([Matthew 17:4](#))—and fell to the ground in fearful silence at God's glory (verses 5-6).
- It was Peter who refused his feet to be washed ([John 13:8](#))—on Jesus' reply he swung to the opposite "not only my feet, but my hands and my head" (verse 9).
- It was Peter who drew his sword and attacked the servant of the high priest ([John 18:10](#))—and was immediately told to sheath his weapon (verse 11).

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- It was Peter who boasted that he would never forsake the Lord, even if everyone else did ([Matthew 26:33](#))—and later denied three times that he even knew the Lord (verses 70-74).

Through all of Peter's ups and downs, Jesus remained his loving Lord and faithful Guide. Jesus reaffirmed Simon as Peter, the "Rock," in [Matthew 16:18-19](#), promising that he would be instrumental in establishing Jesus' Church. After His resurrection, Jesus specifically named Peter as one who needed to hear the good news ([Mark 16:7](#)). And, repeating the miracle of the large catch of fish, Jesus made a special point of forgiving and restoring Peter and re-commissioning him as an apostle ([John 21:6, 15-17](#)).

## What can we learn from the life of St Peter?

**Jesus overcomes fear.** Whether stepping out of a boat onto a tossing sea or stepping across the threshold of a Gentile home for the first time, Peter found courage in following Christ. "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear" ([1 John 4:18](#)).

**Jesus forgives unfaithfulness.** After he had boasted of his fidelity, Peter fervently denied the Lord three times. Jesus lovingly restored Peter to service. Peter was a *former* failure, but, with Jesus, failure is not the end. "If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself" ([2 Timothy 2:13](#)).

**Jesus patiently teaches.** Over and over, Peter needed correction, and the Lord gave it with patience, firmness, and love. The Master Teacher looks for students willing to learn. "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go" ([Psalm 32:8](#)).

**Jesus sees us as He intends us to be.** The very first time they met, Jesus called Simon "Peter." The rough and reckless fisherman was, in Jesus' eyes, a firm and faithful rock. "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion" ([Philippians 1:6](#)).

**Jesus uses unlikely heroes.** Peter was a fisherman from Galilee, but Jesus called him to be a fisher of men ([Luke 5:10](#)). Because Peter was willing to leave all he had to follow Jesus, God used him in great ways. As Peter preached, people were amazed at his boldness because he was "unschooled" and "ordinary." But then they took note that Peter "had been with Jesus" ([Acts 4:13](#)).

# Miraculous Draught of Fishes

## Luke Chapter 5 verses 1 to 11

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

<sup>2</sup> and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

<sup>3</sup> And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

<sup>4</sup> Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

<sup>5</sup> And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

<sup>6</sup> And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

<sup>7</sup> And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

<sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

<sup>9</sup> For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

<sup>10</sup> and so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

<sup>11</sup> And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

# Miraculous Draft of Fishes

## Reflections

1. Why do you think Jesus gets into the boat? (*Open water is a natural amplifier for sound.*)
2. In verse 4, how does the scene change? If you were Simon, how would you be feeling? What would be on your mind? Consider what Jesus says to him in verse 4. What difficulties would an experienced fisherman have with this suggestion? (*Night is often the best time for fishing and shallow areas are the best places.*) What do you notice in Simon's response in verse 5? What feelings and conflicts is Peter expressing?
3. Look at verses 6-7. What words and phrases in these verses indicate the size of the catch? Why is the size of the catch significant?
4. What is Simon's reaction in verse 8? Is this what you would expect? From his reaction, what do you think he perceives about Jesus? What does he perceive about himself? Why do you think he says he is a sinful man? Why is this an especially strong experience for Simon (being a fisherman)? What does his response say about who Jesus is? What does this say about who we are?
5. What might Jesus be saying to you about an area of your life where you feel confident, or perhaps over-confident? What might he be saying to you about what trust in him means, or what faith is?
6. Notice the way Jesus responds to Simon in verse 10. How might he have responded? "You will be catching people" (King James version: "I will make you fishers of men") is a famous phrase. What do you think it meant to Simon Peter? What does it mean for you? Why does Jesus say this to Simon now, rather than saying it earlier?
7. James and John have watched this whole thing. What might have gone through their minds as Jesus made the suggestion to Simon about putting out into the deep?
8. How does the account end, in verse 11? If you had been one of these three fishermen, what characteristics of Jesus would have led you to leave everything to follow him? What do they learn in this experience that they'll need in the work they'll be doing from now on?

# St. Peter Scripture References

Below is an extract from the Authorised King James Schofield Reference Bible of scripture references to St Peter. This is by no means a complete record of all the verses where Peter is mentioned but may be of assistance as a starting point.

Events in St. Peter's life reviewed at the fellowship meeting are highlighted in yellow.  
Click the highlighted scripture verse(s) to view at BibleGateway.

**PETER**, a stone: Matt 16.18

## Pre-Crucifixion

**APOSTLE**, called Matt 4.18; Mark 1.16; Luke 5; John 1.35  
sent forth Matt 10.2; Mark 3.16; Luke 6.14  
**tries to walk to Jesus on the sea** [Matt 14.22-33](#)  
confesses Jesus to be the Christ Matt 16.16; Mark 8.29; Luke 9.20  
**rebuked by Jesus** Matt 16:22-23, [Mark 8:31-33](#)  
witnesses the transfiguration Matt 17; Mark 9; Luke 9.28; 2 Pet 1.16  
**refuses to have feet washed** [John 13.6-10](#)  
self-confidence reprov'd Luke 22.31; John 13.36  
**thrice denies Christ** Matt 26.69; Mark 14.66; [Luke 22.31-34](#);  
John 18.17

## Post-Crucifixion

his repentance Matt 26.75; Mark 14.72; Luke 22.62  
assembled disciples addressed Acts 1.15  
Jews preached to Acts 2.14; 3.12  
brought before the council Acts 4  
condemns Ananias and Sapphira Acts 5  
denounces Simon the sorcerer Acts 8.18  
restores Aeneas and Tabitha Acts 9.32, 40  
sent for by Cornelius Acts 10  
instructed not to despise Gentiles Acts 10.9  
imprisoned and liberated by an angel Acts 12  
his decision about circumcision Acts 15.7  
rebuked by Paul Gal 2.14  
bears witness to Paul's teaching 2 Pet 3.15  
comforts and exhorts the church 1 & 2 Pet  
martyrdom foretold by Christ John 21.18; 2 Pet 1.14