

Peter, personal details and ministry.

Peter was originally called SIMON or SIMEON, a very common Jewish name in the New Testament with the meaning "hearing."

Peter was the son of Jona, [Matt. 16:17](#).

"17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

There is no record in the Bible of the name of his mother.

Peter came in contact with Jesus through his younger brother, Andrew, [John 1:40-42](#).

"41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."

Peter was brought up in Bethsaida on the western coast of Galilee, and had the occupation of a fisherman. Peter (Simon) was a Galilean, they had a reputation for a desire of freedom from the government and often had conflict with those in control.

They spoke a peculiar dialect. so that when Peter appeared before the Sanhedrin, they thought he was an "unlearned man", who they thought would have had some difficulty with the pronunciations of his words.

[Acts 4:13](#)

"13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. "

This Galilean accent would remain with Peter and it would betrayed him as a follower of Christ when he stood within the judgment-hall [Mark 14:70](#).

"70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. "

And at Pentecost [Acts 2:7](#).

"7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaean? "

Peter's Family.

Jesus appears to have lived with Peter, [Matt 8:14](#);

"14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever."

[Mark 1:29,30](#);

" 29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her."

[Luke 4:38](#)

" 38 And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

39 And he(Jesus) stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them. "

These verses indicate that Peter was married before he became an apostle. There is some indication that Peter's wife and possibly his family may have been with Peter on his missionary journeys, [1 Cor. 9:5](#);

"5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? "

[1 Peter 5:13](#).

"13 The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. "

Peter's Home

When Jesus started His ministry Peter seems to have been living in a large house in Capernaum. His house had to be large because the scripture tells us that there was not only Peter's direct family but also his wife's mother and his brother Andrew. In addition it appears that Jesus also seems to have lived with Peter during His ministry, [Mark 1:36-39](#);

" 36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee.

38 And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils."

[Mark 2:1-4](#).

"1 And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay."

As was often normal with the Jewish house the roof was easily accessible.

Peter's Called.

John the Baptist had his ministry near the Jordan at Bethabara, [John 1:28](#),

"28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing."

This had attracted Andrew and John. When John the Baptist identified Jesus as the "Lamb of God," [John 1:29](#),

"29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. "

Andrew and John then followed Jesus to where he was living at the time. After listening to the words, teaching and apparent authority of Jesus they felt that He was the looked for Messiah, [Luke 4:22](#);

"22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"

[Matt. 7:29](#).

"29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Andrew then went and told Peter and brought him to Jesus, [John 1:41](#).

John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

"41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."

When Andrew brought Peter to meet Jesus, Peter was given a new name by Jesus, "Cephas," this is an Aramaic name which means "a rock", the Greek version, "Peter" was to mainly displace "Cephas" and become the normal name used for Peter. [John 1:42](#)

"42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."

Jesus occasionally still used his old name "Simon," [Matt. 17:25](#);

"25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? "

[Mark 14:37;](#)

"37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? "

[Luke 22:31,32.](#)

"31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. "

The next stage in the story occurs by the Sea of Galilee, Simon and Andrew, James and John had just completed an unsuccessful night of fishing and Jesus approaches and requests the use of a boat to preach from, [Luke 5:1-3](#).

"1 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,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3 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. "

After the time of preaching, Jesus tells Peter to row the boat out and put his net into the water, [Luke 5:4-11](#).

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

5 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.

6 And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 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.

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

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

10 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.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him."

Peter could have turned to Jesus and asked "what do you know about fishing?" But he trusted in the request of Jesus and reaped a fantastic reward for the act of faith. The miracle touches the heart of Peter, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord,"

From that day the four fishermen followed Jesus.

The Ministry grows.

As the ministry of Jesus grows, Peter slowly becomes the spokesman and leader of the Apostles, [Matthew 10:2-4](#);

"2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him."

[Mark 3:13-19](#);

"13 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:
16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;
17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:
18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite,
19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house. "

[Luke 6:13-16,](#)

"13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;
14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,
15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,
16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor."

Peter's faith and belief is growing with time, [John 6:66-69](#);

"66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.
67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?
68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.
69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

[Matthew 16:13-20;](#)

"13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?
14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye 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 unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.
18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
"

[Mark 8:27-30;](#)

"27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?
28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.
29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.
30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him. "

[Luke 9:18-20.](#)

"18 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?
19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.
20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. "

As the end of the ministry approached Jesus often spoke of His coming suffering, Peter tries to tell Jesus this will never happen, but Jesus responds by speaking to Peter much sterner words than ever used on the other disciples, [Matt 16:21-23](#); [Mark 8:31-33](#).

Peter was soon to experience the real nature of Jesus when Peter, James and John were taken up into a mountain by Jesus and saw Him transfigured before them, [Matt 17:1-9](#).

On the return of Jesus and the disciples to Capernaum, Peter is approached by the collectors of the temple tax, a tax which every Israelite of twenty years old and upwards had to pay [Exodus 30:13-16](#). The tax collectors pointed out that Jesus had not paid the tax, [Matt 17:24-27](#). Peter was soon to learn that God can provide all his needs. Jesus has already anticipated the coming question and asks Peter "where does a king get their tribute, from their own children or others." "From others" responds Peter. Jesus continued "Therefore, Jesus as the Son of God, is not required to pay for the support of the House of God. But to prevent the wrong impression among the people at this time, including no respect for the House of God, it will be paid."

The money is supplied by a miracle. Because of His deity and omnipotence Jesus knew that a fish had money inside it and that it would be the first to be caught on a fishing line. The fish contained sufficient tax money for Jesus and Peter.

The Passover Meal.

The final stages of the ministry are being set when Jesus sends Peter and John [Luke 22:7-13](#) into the city to prepare a place where he should keep the Passover feast with his disciples. It was during this meal that Jesus warns of the coming failure of the disciples, especially Peter, [Luke 22:31-34](#); [Matt 26:33-35](#); [Mark 14:29-31](#).

The Garden of Gethsemane events

[Matt 26:36-56](#); [Mark 14:32-52](#); [Luke 22:39-53](#); [John 18:1-11](#). Following a time of prayer and submission to the will of His Father by Jesus, the next stage of God's plan of salvation takes place. The armed soldiers, led by Judas, arrive to arrest Jesus, Peter, taking a sword, attacks Malchus and cuts off his ear. Jesus did not want to be charged with resisting arrest so He stops the disciples attacking the soldiers and then heals the man immediately, so removing any evidence.

Peter's Failure.

Peter is subjected to examination by various people gathered in the judgement-hall. The denial of Peter is proof of the warning words of Jesus, [Matt 26:57,69-75](#); [Mark 14:53,54,66-72](#); [Luke 22:54-62](#). Peter leaves ashamed of his failure.

The Resurrection.

Peter, accompanied by John are the first disciple to see the empty tomb, He, without fear, entered into the empty grave [John 20:1-10](#), and saw the "linen clothes laid by themselves," [Luke 24:9-12](#)). The risen Jesus makes first contact with Peter, [Luke 24:34](#); [1 Cor 15:5](#). Later, as the disciples were by the sea, Jesus challenged Peter three times on his future actions, "Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou Me more than these?" He said unto Him, "Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee." He said unto him, "Feed My lambs." [John 21:1-19](#).

The Ascension.

The Gospels record no more details about Peter personally, though he was obviously present at the events recorded. Following the ascension of Jesus back into heaven, the disciples are instructed to wait for the coming Holy Spirit, [Acts 1:1-14](#).

The next mention of Peter in the choice of the Judas Iscariot replacement in [Acts 1:15-26](#).

Following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the disciples take the message to the Jews present in Jerusalem for the Feast. Peter's speech being recorded by Luke, [Acts 2:14-47](#), the result is Glory to God as many thousands accept the way of salvation. From that day Peter, full of the power of God becomes the trusted guide and director of the fellowship of believers, the fearless preacher of Christ in Jerusalem and abroad. Only in [Acts 10:5, 32](#) and [Acts 15:14](#) do we find a reference to the old name of Simon.

The First Prosecutions

Following the miracle at the Temple Gate, [Acts 3:1ff](#) the religious leaders started the prosecution of the Christians, Peter ends up in jail and appears before the High Priest and other religious leaders, [Acts 4:1ff](#). He boldly defended himself and his companions in front of this council.

The Holy Spirit at work in the early Church

Ananias and Sapphira, [Acts 5:1-11](#). Many people are turning to the message of salvation, the fellowship of Christians is growing, many of those who were better off were helping the poorer members financially through giving to the fellowship. However, this act of help by some was to show the effect of pride and lying to the Holy Spirit.

[Acts 5:14-42](#). There is a fresh time of persecution by the religious leaders, the whole body of the apostles is arrested and put in prison, but during the night God releases them and they are found teaching in the temple the following morning. Following a defence by Peter and the action of one of the religious leaders, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, the disciples are beaten then released.

Saul, later to become Paul, starts his persecution of the Christians, [Acts 8:1-4](#).

Peter leaves Jerusalem.

God needed the Believers to take the message away from Jerusalem so He allows the persecution to increase, as a result the Christians with the message of salvation were spreading out from Jerusalem. The apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God and send Peter and John. While they were there the Holy Spirit is given to the Samaritans just as He was given to the Jews on Passover, [Acts 8:14-25](#). After working for some time in Samaria, Peter returned to Jerusalem, and reported to the Jerusalem church the results of the work in Samaria.

Following the conversion of Paul, he meets Peter during this time, [Acts 9:26-30](#); [Gal. 1:18](#).

[Acts 9:32-43](#) Later Peter leaves Jerusalem again, to go on a missionary journey to Lydda and Joppa.

The Message is taken to the Gentiles.

God now opens the door to the Gentiles by sending Peter to Cornelius of Caesarea, [Acts 10:1ff](#). Peter remained in Caesarea for some time, then returns to Jerusalem to explain why he took the message to the Gentiles, [Acts 11:1-18](#).

More Persecution.

Herod the king now starts to persecute the Church, finally killing James the brother of John with the sword. This act pleased many groups of Jews so he now arrests Peter. During the night God released Peter who left the area via the church at the house of Mary, [Acts 12:1-19](#).

The Council at Jerusalem.

A group of Jewish Christians from Judea were insisting that circumcision was essential to salvation. This was brought before the Council at Jerusalem, [Acts 15:1-31](#); [Gal 2:1-10](#), Peter was very much involved in the discussion and pointed out that salvation was through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and circumcision was not necessary, and this was accepted by the Church leadership.

There is no further mention of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles. He seems to have gone to Antioch after the council at Jerusalem meeting. It was here that Paul had to reprimand Peter of errors, [Gal 2:11-16](#).

After this Peter appears to have carried the Gospel to the East and to have ministered for a while at Babylon, on the Euphrates, [1 Pet. 5:13](#).

There is no satisfactory evidence that he was ever at Rome. Where or when he died is not accurately known. It is thought that he probably died between A.D. 64 and A.D. 67.