

### **Paul and his Journeys- Part 3 Paul meets Peter**

Last month we read how Paul went about preaching the gospel without worrying about the consequences. For three years he preached boldly in Arabia and Damascus. After this time, he left Damascus by being lowered in a basket through a window on the city wall to avoid capture by his enemies. Now it was time for him to meet up with Peter in Jerusalem.

Being one of the twelve disciples, Peter had been in the presence of the Lord during His ministry on the earth. He is commonly perceived as being impulsive and temperamental, and misinterpreted many of the teachings of the Lord. He was often rebuked by the Lord, even up to the point where he was called “Satan” by Jesus (Mathew 16:23). He is most famous for thrice denying the Lord when under question, even though he had previously said that he would die before doing so. Nonetheless, the Lord knew that after Peter had received the Holy Spirit he would be suitable for doing the Lord’s work, and was therefore given ‘the keys of the kingdom of heaven’ (Mathew 16:19), and told to ‘feed’ the Lord’s sheep (John 21:17).

Peter was also present on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was first poured out. He quickly used his keys to the kingdom of heaven (the knowledge of salvation), to try and get the confused onlookers into the kingdom too: expounding the Old Testament prophecies with great authority, and telling them to repent, be baptised, and receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38). Most people would never have been as foolish as Peter was before he had received the Holy Spirit, yet most also have difficulty measuring themselves up to his achievements after he had received.

By the time Paul met up with Peter, it was a few years after the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the new Testament Church was quite established amongst the Jews (the gentiles had not yet been converted). When Paul tried to join himself to Peter and the disciples in Jerusalem ‘they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple’ (Acts 9:26). The Jerusalem disciples would still have remembered the man that so fiercely threatened and persecuted the Church, putting their fellow brothers to death. It is therefore understandable that they were slightly apprehensive in allowing Paul to fellowship with them. However, Barnabas, who was to become a missionary partner of Paul, took him and brought him unto the disciples, sharing Paul’s testimony with them. When the disciples knew that Paul was now preaching the faith which he once destroyed, they ‘glorified God’ in His great mercy towards Paul. (Galatians 1:23-24)

Paul spent fifteen days accompanying himself with Peter and James the Lord’s brother (Galatians 1:18). No doubt the entire time would have been spent discussing spiritual matters and sharing countless testimonies. During this time also, Paul went about preaching boldly, and (as usual) people sought to kill him. When his fellow apostles knew that the Grecians were after his life, they sent him to Tarsus and the regions of Syria and Cilicia to preach. It wouldn’t be for another fourteen years<sup>1</sup> before Paul would again meet up with Peter face to face, however, the next meeting between the two would be one of rebuke: - even though Peter would have been so firmly established in the Lord, and had great understanding, he was still cowardly in his behaviour towards the gentiles, and the time would come when he would need to be openly rebuked by Paul.

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<sup>1</sup> It is actually likely that that Paul met Peter when Paul carried relief to the brethren in Judea during the famine. Peter was imprisoned and released during this period. The bible does not record whether they met again here.

Differences between Paul and Peter:

|   | <i>Paul</i>   | <i>Peter</i>  |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Education</i>  | Gifted Jewish scholar   | “unlearned and ignorant”                              |
| <i>Marital Status</i>                                   | Single  | Married   |
| <i>Relationship with Jesus when he was on the earth</i> | Probably had heard of Him through Jewish circles, and they had possibly even met.           | One of His 12 disciples                               |
| <i>Behaviour towards early Church</i>                   | Persecuted the Church   | Established the Church                                |
| <i>Received the Holy Spirit</i>                         | Some time after (probably a few years) the day of Pentecost, when he was visited by Ananias | On the Day of Pentecost when it was first poured out  |
| <i>Primary Missionary Focus</i>                         | Gentiles  | Jews  |
| <i>Bible Books Written</i>                              | 14  | 2   |
| <i>Death</i>  | By tradition he was beheaded or torn apart by wild animals as a martyr                      | By tradition he was crucified upside down as a martyr |

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