

Interesting



Of the Bible

Interesting Men in the Bible: Peter

Matthew 16:18 *“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

The Catholic Church considers Peter the first Pope. It's a bold assertion considering the first pope is not ordained until the tenth century. Before the first pope, there were a series of bishops that led the Roman church. The word Pope was coined early on but it's in reference to the word father. There is a Muslim/Christian sect that claim their pope is a descendant of Jesus that did not die on a cross but fled to Pakistan. Jesus' mention of the rock and cornerstone point to the establishment of this thing called the church. He also said that Hades would not overcome it. Our Lord also mentioned that John might not die. Jesus said a lot of things. Yet, many of those things are taken out of context like John not dying. Peter is part of the beginning of Christianity, but he is not the beginning of the church: Jesus is.

It had to begin somewhere. I get it. If we are to begin with Peter then we are to begin with a flawed man. A man that had no more or less sin than any of us. The story of Peter is the character arc of this man. Most of the disciples begin as one person but end up better than they started. Jesus has that effect on us all. It's about change and growth in the Lord and your personality. Peter began as a man named Simon. The Bible only changes the name of a few men.

Those men went on to become great leaders. Yet, this Simon didn't start out as a great man. He was just an opinionated fisherman who loved the Lord.

When are you called? I don't like rabbit trails in the Bible. It can be so easy to assume something and take it's meaning the wrong way. There is a strange phenomenon in the Bible I call names. Most of the names of the characters in the Bible have meaning attached to them. Jesus means to deliver or recue. Moses means to draw out of water. These names are strongly connected to their story. It's the same with Peter. His name means rock. However, God constructed His Bible, there seems to be meaning attached to the names of people within it. I think Jesus chose to rename Simon (Peter) because he was bold and adventurous. Only a man who would dare to walk on water, rebuke his Lord, and dangerously follow him at the prison could be the rock for a young church movement.

Peter is fishing. It's his job. It might even be his passion and way of life. The modern era gives us baseball and many other things we can attach ourselves to. In Peters Day they were culturally Greek or Jewish. Yet, they were carpenters, fishermen, and stone setters. It goes deeper than that. Jesus called him Simon Peter or Simon bar Jonah. It means son of Jonah. This man will forever be attached to his name and what it stood for. Yet, at the end of the day he was a simple fisherman who may have not even known how to read or write. So, when Jesus told him that he would now fish for men rather than fish, it made sense.

I think Jesus new Peter and Andrew well before he called them to ministry. In-fact they continued to fish the whole time. Who would feed Peter and his family if they didn't? In the book of Luke, we have Jesus going into Simon's house. It's before he calls him Peter. Jesus heals Peter's wife's mother. Yet, Peter and His brother Andrew are believers in the Jewish God. They become followers of John the Baptism. John introduced them to Jesus and intern Jesus

introduced them to a new way. Simon has a character arc. This humble fisherman has his name changed and his discipleship changed. I suspect over Jesus' three years of ministry Peter's whole world and outlook changed.

Why is Peter the one to be named as the rock? It's his opinion and big mouth. He boldly told Jesus that he would not die. Peter believed with all his heart that Jesus was the long-awaited messiah. This disciple asked to walk on water. He tried to follow Jesus into the prison. He has bold faith, gutsy actions, and leadership skills. It takes time. This man tried to pick another disciple after Judas killed himself. He tried to dance a fine line between the gentiles and Jews. This man's speech in Acts 2 is astounding compared to a fisherman's demeanor. Clearly Peter is electrified after Pentecost. He goes on to heal a man. He rejects calls to make himself a god in the people's eyes. Acts 4:13 *"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."* This is an amazing character arc.

This man may have had a rough nature as a fisherman. There may have been pride and arrogance in his words. Now we see Peter writing two small books of the Bible. Words that show his character change. It displays his respect for Jesus and the church that he was called to build. Look at 1 Peter 2:4 *"As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."* Jesus picked the right man for the job of leading the church in its infancy. The name rock fits this man to a tee.