

THE STORY OF PETER And THE STORY OF RUTH

Aunt Hattie's Bible Stories

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by

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CHAPTER FOUR

PETER SAYS JESUS IS THE CHRIST

TWO YEARS passed by, two years spent with Jesus, filled with deeds of power and glory. The twelve men grew more attached to their great leader, but there were difficulties. The enemies of Christ were ever upon His track to hinder and confuse His ministry, if possible.

It was not long after Jesus had fed the four thousand on the shore of Galilee that He and His disciples went north to visit the villages of Caesarea Philippi.

As they walked along the way they stopped in a shady spot on the hillside to rest, and Jesus went apart alone to pray. He joined His friends later and they spent some time talking things over.

I think I can see the interest on the faces of those men as Jesus said, simply, **“Whom do men say that I am?”**

It was as though He said, “You have been out in the crowds these past few months and have heard comments about Me, about My miracles and My teachings. Tell Me some of them. What are men saying about Me?”

Jesus already knew the answer to His question. He well knew how little the men of the world thought or cared about Him. He knew that most of them were indifferent and uninterested, yet He asked the question to set His disciples to thinking.

Oh, yes, they had heard many opinions voiced by men of the crowds. One of the disciples answered Jesus' question by saying, “Some think that You are John the Baptist.”

Another one said, “I heard a man say that he thought You might be Elijah.”

Still another said, "I heard a group of men talking about You the other day and they were of the opinion that You were Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

By this time every eye was fixed upon the Lord. The men were waiting to hear what He would say for Himself but instead He asked them a deep, searching question, "**But whom do you say that I am?**"

Peter, beholding the wonderful face of his Lord had but one answer: "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**"

How it must have warmed and comforted the heart of the Lord Jesus to find one who appreciated and, at least partly understood Him!

Looking into Peter's loving face He said, "**Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.**"

"And I also say unto you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

What did Jesus mean?

It was as though He said, "Blessed are you, son of John, but you did not think this great confession out of your own mind. My Father in heaven told you what to say. Yes, you are Peter, and your name means 'little rock.' You have just said that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God. You have said the truth and upon this great rock, Christ, I will build My Church and I'll build it so strong and secure in Myself that even hell cannot break it down."

In the City of Rome there is a great cathedral, named and built in honor of St. Peter, because men thought that Jesus founded His Church upon Peter. The Lord did not say that He would build His Church upon Peter, the Latin word for "little rock," but upon Christ, the Rock of Ages, whom Peter had just confessed.

I am thinking of the disciples that day as they sat listening to this wonderful confession of Peter.

The Lord Jesus did not deny that Peter had spoken the truth; He blessed him for what he had said. I believe that all of these men spoke their approval of Peter's declaration, for all of them were Jews looking for the promised Messiah, who would establish their nation and be their King, and reign in Jerusalem.

How thrilled they were with the very thought of it! They had found the One for whom the nation had been looking for for centuries. In every way He fulfilled the promises concerning the Messiah. Surely He would immediately restore the kingdom to Israel.

The Bible record reads:

“And he began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”

Coming just after the glorious confession that He was the Christ, it was too much for Peter. It didn't fit in at all with his new dreams of the coming kingdom. In a moment he was beside himself with grief and disappointment. He went over to Jesus and, putting his hand upon Him, rebuked Him saying, **“Be it far from You, Lord; this shall not be unto You.”**

As though he said, “O, no, no, nothing like that must come to You, Lord. We won't have it. We will never stand for our blessed Lord being nailed to a cross. You are the Son of the living God and You must not die.”

Poor Peter! How little he understood the cost of his own and our salvation! He was looking for a Messiah for his own nation Israel, and did not know that this same Lord Jesus was to become, through death, the Saviour of the world.

No sooner had Peter spoken the words of rebuke than Jesus turned upon him and said, **“Get behind Me, Satan; you are an offense unto Me; for you are thinking not of the things of God but of men.”**

So you see Satan put those words in Peter's mouth, for he hates the Cross that means our salvation.

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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