

THE STORY OF PETER And THE STORY OF RUTH

Aunt Hattie's Bible Stories

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by

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CHAPTER ONE

WE INTRODUCE PETER

ZEBEDEE, what in the world is taking place down in the Jordan Valley? James and John came home to lunch today so stirred up they could talk of nothing else."

"Mother," answered her husband, "if you could be with us down at the fishing docks to hear all that we hear from travelers coming up from there, you would be excited."

"Tell me about it," urged his wife.

"Do you remember," he began, "a number of years ago we heard about a child who was born when his father and mother were old?"

"Do you mean the son of Zacharias, a priest serving in the Temple and his wife, Elisabeth?" she asked.

"Yes, the very same."

"O Zebedee, I had not thought about him in years. I remember when they told about Zacharias being stricken dumb for a number of months before the child was born. Then, too, the child was named out of the Jewish order. The relatives were determined to call him Zacharias for his father but his parents called him John. That boy must be around thirty years of age now. But what has that to interest our sons today?"

"Much indeed," replied her husband, "for this same John is the evangelist who is preaching in such power down east of the Jordan. Travelers tell strange stories about him. They say that he is a queer fellow, eats locusts and wild honey and wears a camel's hair coat held on with a leather belt. Until he began to preach he spent most of his life as a hermit in the wilderness mountains."

“Well, well, that is interesting, Zebedee. Tell me more.”

“But all report that his preaching is in great power,” he continued. “And then, he seems to have a different message from our present-day priests for he tells of One who it soon to come, One, even our promised Messiah.”

Just then James and John came rushing into the house exclaiming, “Mother! Father! We want to go down Jordan way and hear that man John preach. We just saw Peter and Andrew and they are both arranging to leave tomorrow morning.”

Zebedee and his good wife looked at each other, then Zebedee said that he thought that he and the hired servants could manage the boats and the nets for a few days if they really wanted to go.

“Are you sure that Peter is going?” added their mother anxiously. “He is older and I would feel better about your going if I knew that he was to be with you.”

“Yes, he is getting ready now,” answered the boys as they hurried off to make preparations.

“But how can he leave his family?” the practical mother inquired of her husband.

“Oh,” answered Zebedee, “I think the family can manage. Peter’s wife’s mother lives with them and so far as the fishing business is concerned I’ll look after things, for you know we are partners in business. I, too, am glad to have our boys go along with Peter. He’ll keep a close watch over them. I declare, mother, James and John are so full of life that they keep me on tip-toe all of the time. Maybe this trip is what they need.”

So it was arranged and at the early dawn of the following day the four young men joined the company of those going to Bethabara.

As they neared their destination the highways were thronged with travelers coming and going from the places of the great revival.

Were the meetings held in a tabernacle or coliseum? No, and in no one particular place, but wherever John was, that was the meeting place and the crowds gathered around him to hear his message. You are wondering where I found this story. It came to me as I have introduced it because I like to think about what might have happened, and what might have been said before the Bible account begins.

These young men were just like young men are today. We know they were fishermen of Galilee and they went down where John was preaching, for the Bible says so.

Before this great evangelist, John, was born, the angel Gabriel told his father and mother that their son would be filled with the Holy Spirit and would lead many people of Israel to the Lord their God.

God also said that John would be the forerunner of His Son, Jesus Christ. A forerunner is an announcer. When we tune in the radio to hear an address by some noted man, we hear the announcer introduce him. John was the one to announce or introduce Jesus Christ, God's Son, when He should begin His ministry.

John had baptized the Lord Jesus in the Jordan River and right afterward the Spirit of God had driven Him into the wilderness mountains to be tested by Satan. We do not know just where He was during that time, but probably not far from the scene of the baptism.

While Jesus was away John continued to preach. The Bible says that he called himself **“a voice crying in the wilderness.”** His message was **“Prepare the way of the Lord. Make His paths straight.”**

Then something happened. The Lord Jesus returning from the mountains came again to John. Of course John recognized Him and wanted everyone to see and know Him.

The Bible says, **“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. This is the One of whom I have been telling you. Down at the Jordan when He asked me to baptize Him I saw the Spirit of God, like a dove, descend upon Him and God told me that this was his beloved Son.”**

Again the next day John the Baptist was standing with Andrew and John. They, I am sure, had come to believe the great and powerful messages of the fiery evangelist, John.

As they stood talking they saw the Lord Jesus walking before them and John cried out, “There He is. Behold the Lamb of God.”

Every Jew knew what was meant by the **“Lamb of God.”** In the Temple in Jerusalem every morning and every evening a lamb was sacrificed for the sins of Israel, a picture of the Son of God who would come some day and shed His blood for the sins of the whole world.

I think the two fishermen friends, John and Andrew, knowing these things, were stirred in their hearts, for they immediately followed Jesus.

When the Lord Jesus turned and saw them following, He asked them what they wanted.

I wonder if His kindly words put them at ease and gave them the courage to answer, “Master, where do You live?”

And the Lord Jesus, knowing the earnest hearts of these young men, invited them to go home with Him, to the place where He was staying for a few days. All the rest of that day they spent with Jesus, the Son of God!

I wonder what they talked about. The Bible does not tell us, but one thing is true, Jesus in some way persuaded them that He was the long-looked-for, promised One.

All during their talk with Jesus I think Andrew had his big, stalwart brother in mind. Perhaps he said to himself, "My, how this Man would appeal to Peter!" I believe that as soon as his visit with Jesus was over he hurried to the inn where they were staying, into the room where Peter was, exclaiming in boyish enthusiasm, "**Simon, we have found the Messiah of Israel!**"

Peter, older and serious, may have said, "Not so fast, Andrew. You are excited. Quiet down and tell me more. James and I have been wondering what became of you and John. You have been gone all day."

Then Andrew rehearsed the wonders of the day spent with the Lord. Then Peter, too, became interested and said, "I'll go with you and see for myself."

The Bible says, "**And he brought him (Peter) to Jesus, and when Jesus beheld him He said, you are Simon, the son of Jona; you shall be called Cephas,** [which is the Greek word for stone]."

Jesus saw in Simon Peter a loyal disciple and friend, one who in the future years would be as dependable as a stone or rock.

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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