



FINDING THE MESSIAH

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 13:36-38

Being Broken

DAY ONE Observation

John 1-12 record the public ministry of Jesus to the nation, while chapters 13-17 record the private ministry of Jesus with His disciples. Those who find the Messiah are taught what it means to follow Him.

Being blissfully unaware of his own weaknesses...Peter furnishes, perhaps, the best illustration found anywhere in Scripture of the problem of the Unknown Self. —William Hendriksen

Simon Peter is one of the most interesting character studies in all of Scripture. Because he speaks and acts so quickly...and so often...we come to see his personality on full display. All four gospels record Peter's self-reliant declaration that he would never deny or fail the Lord.

Pray and ask God to speak to your heart as you read John 13:36-38, along with the other gospel accounts of Peter's bold declaration. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Record the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

³⁶ Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward."

³⁷ Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake." ³⁸ Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times." (NKJV)

Matthew 26:31-35

³¹ Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:

*'I will strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'*

³² But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

³³ Peter answered and said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.” ³⁴ Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.”

³⁵ Peter said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And so said all the disciples. (NKJV)

Mark 14:27-31

²⁷ Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:

*‘I will strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep will be scattered.’*

²⁸ “But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”

²⁹ Peter said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.” ³⁰ Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.”

³¹ But he spoke more vehemently, “If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And they all said likewise. (NKJV)

Luke 22:31-34

³¹ And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”

³³ But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” ³⁴ Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.” (NKJV)

How would you describe Simon Peter from these passages? What stands out to you?

DAY THREE Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Read the following passages regarding Simon Peter. Take note of aspects of his character.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter)." [Cephas and Peter mean "rock" in Aramaic and Greek] (John 1:40-42)

On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, ² and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³ Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. ⁴ And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. ⁷ They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But 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 and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." (Luke 5:1-10)

And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸ And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." ²⁹ And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." ³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him. ³¹ And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." (Mark 8:27-33)

But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." ²⁸ And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." (Matthew 14:26-33)

Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. ³⁰ And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who

appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³ And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. ³⁴ As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!" ³⁶ And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen. (Luke 9:28-36)

What stands out to you about Simon Peter from these passages? His character? His words? His actions? His relationship to Jesus? Write down 5-7 characteristics that you see in him.

Now read excerpts from Peter's letters to the churches written later in his life.

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. (1 Peter 3:8-10)

⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:5-8)

How do you think Peter changed later in life? What do you think led to these changes?

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from J.C. Ryle's *Expository Thoughts on John*, as well as his commentary thoughts from Luke 22:31-34.

13:36-38. These verses show us...**how much self-ignorance there may be in the heart of a true believer.** We see Simon Peter declaring that he was ready to lay down his life for his Master. We see his Master telling him that in that very night he would "deny Him three times." And we all know how the matter ended. The Master was right, and Peter was wrong.

Let it be a settled principle in our religion, that *there is an amount of weakness in all our hearts, of which we have no adequate conception, and that we never know how far we might fall if we were tempted.* We fancy sometimes, like Peter, that there are some things we could not possibly do. We look pitifully upon others who fall, and please ourselves in the thought that at any rate we would not have done so. We know nothing at all. The seeds of every sin are latent in our hearts, even when renewed, and they only need occasion, or carelessness and the withdrawal of God's grace for a season, to put forth an abundant crop. Like Peter, we may think we can do wonders for Christ, and like Peter, we may learn by bitter experience that we have no power and might at all.

The servant of Christ will do wisely to remember these things. "Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:12.) A humble sense of our own innate weakness, a constant dependence on the Strong for strength, a daily prayer to be held up, because we cannot hold up ourselves--these are the true secrets of safety. The great Apostle of the Gentiles said, "When I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor. 12:10.)

Luke 22:31-34. We learn, from these verses, **what a fearful enemy the devil is to believers.** We read that "the Lord said,

Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." He was near Christ's flock, though they saw him not. He was longing to accomplish their ruin, though they knew it not. The wolf does not crave the blood of the lamb more than the devil desires the destruction of souls.

...We learn, secondly, in these verses, **one great secret of a believer's perseverance in the faith.** We read that our Lord said to Peter, "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not." It was owing to Christ's intercession that Peter did not entirely fall away.

The continued existence of grace in a believer's heart is a great standing miracle. His enemies are so mighty, and his strength is so small--the world is so full of snares, and his heart is so weak--that it seems at first sight impossible for him to reach heaven. The passage before us explains his safety. He has a mighty Friend at the right hand of God, whoever lives to make intercession for him...daily pleading for him, seeing all his daily necessities, and obtaining daily supplies of mercy and grace for his soul.... (Heb. 7:25.)

...We learn, thirdly, from these verses, **the duty incumbent on all believers who receive special mercies from Christ.** We read that our Lord said to Peter, "So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen and build up your brothers." It is one of God's peculiar attributes, that He can bring good out of evil. He can cause the weaknesses and infirmities of some members of His Church to work together for the benefit of the whole body of His people. He can make the fall of a disciple the means of fitting him to be the strengthener and upholder of others.

What stands out to you from Ryle's words? Why?

DAY FIVE
Application

Re-read John 13:36-38 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of John 13 to your daily life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study on Simon Peter? Why?

In what area(s) of your life can you tend to be "over-confident" or rely on your own abilities?

In what area(s) of life can you tend to be critical of others?

Just like Peter, it can be easy for us to deceive ourselves and to overlook our own weaknesses and sins (cf. 2 Sam. 12:1-13; Jer. 17:9; Jm. 1:16). Sometimes we can even be critical of others in the very area in which we ourselves struggle...without even knowing it. We should always pray the prayer of David in Psalm 139:23...*Search my heart!*...and be open to the input of others.

In what area of your life has God shown you your weakness, humbled you, or brought you to a place where you needed to depend on Him and/or on others more? How has this changed you?

Read 2 Peter 1:3-8 and reflect on Peter's words...perhaps written near the end of his life.

³ His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. ⁴ Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In verses 5-8, Peter lists eight qualities that we are to *make every effort* to see increasingly increased in our lives. **Write these eight qualities in the boxes below.**



Which of these qualities do you need more in your life? Why?

Write out a prayer to God and ask Him to continue to break you and remake you more and more into the image of His Son.
