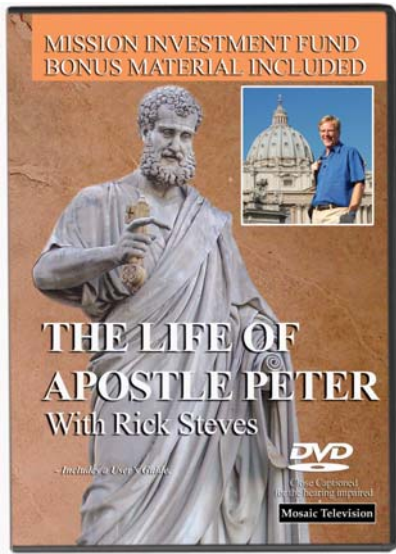


The Life of Apostle Peter with Rick Steves Transcript



1. N. Clayton Croy:
He is a guy who has fish scales on his hands, who wound up being handed the scales of ecclesial justice, by Jesus.
2. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:
When you get down to it, we know more about Peter and Paul in the New Testament than anyone except for Jesus.
3. Joy A. Schroeder:
I think that we can draw from Peter is that even someone who is fallible, someone who can be a failure, is still chosen and accepted by Christ.
4. Rick OC: [St. Peter's Square]
Hi, I'm Rick Steves. We're in the Vatican City at the Basilica of Saint Peter, the world's grandest church to celebrate one of Christianity's most influential figures, the Apostle Peter. Thanks for joining us.
5. Rick VO:
In this video we'll recount the story of the Apostle Peter from his early days as a fisherman along the Sea of Galilee...through his three-year adventure with Jesus...to the tumultuous events surrounding Jesus' death, and resurrection.
6. Rick OC: [St. Peter's Square]
And we'll tell the story of Peter's transformation into a charismatic leader of the early church, his legendary martyrdom here in Rome, and why Christians everywhere look to Peter as a model for what it means to be a follower of Christ.
7. Rick VO:
Our source is the Bible--accounts from the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the Book of Acts.
8. Rick OC: [St. Peter's Square]
The New Testament is quite about Peter's last days, so we'll turn to early church tradition for that story. We'll sprinkle in commentary from biblical scholars. To help it all sink in...we'll visit some of the places in which Peter lived, worked, and died. And we'll enjoy some of the great art that helps to tell the story of the Apostle Peter.
9. Rick VO:
The Apostle Peter was an eyewitness to the three-year public ministry of Jesus,

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- his death and--most importantly for Christians--his resurrection. Peter and Paul are the apostolic superstars of what scholars call “the primitive Church” those formative years when the teaching of Jesus was forged by his first followers into what would ultimately become a global religion. The Apostle Peter was an ordinary person—just a simple businessman. He was a fisherman--who met Jesus, took great risks, and then went on to do extraordinary things. We can learn lots from the life of Peter.
10. Joy Schroeder:
I think he has a lot to say about how simple ordinary people in ordinary vocations can be called to do very extraordinary things.
 11. N. Clayton Cory:
He is a guy who has fish scales on his hands, who wound up being handed the scales of ecclesial justice, by Jesus.
 12. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:
When you get down to it, we know more about Peter and about Paul in the New Testament than really anyone else except for Jesus. And certainly of the twelve, we know most about Peter.
 13. Rick OC: [St. Peter’s Basilica]
We’re in St. Peter’s Basilica. To Roman Catholics, Peter was the first Pope. Popes today draw their authority based on Jesus’ words to Peter in the book of Matthew.
 14. Rick VO:
Peter was originally named Simon. Jesus gave him the nickname Peter because it means the rock. Playing on this Jesus said, “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.” Regardless of what they think about the first pope, all Christians agree that Peter is a central figure in the Gospel story and an architect of the early Church. It was Peter who rallied the followers of Jesus in the first few days of the Church. Peter helped to open the doors of Christianity to non-Jews.
 15. Rick OC: [Hadrian’s Villa]
And most important, Peter demonstrated to everyone through his mistakes, that you don’t have to be perfect to be a Christian. We love Peter because he is accessible – human.
 16. Rick VO:
The Bible describes Peter in shockingly human terms; at times he’s a great orator, compromiser and bold professor of the faith. At other times, he’s timid, impetuous and lacking in faith. Peter’s a guy we can identify with.
 17. Rick OC: [Hadrian’s Villa]
Peter was born by the Sea of Galilee about the same time as Jesus during the reign

of Herod the Great—the bad guy in the nativity story.

18. N. Clayton Croy:

Herod the Great was sort of suspect in Jewish eyes because he was an Idumian. He was probably best known for two things, building things and killing things. He was a great builder. He significantly expanded the Temple precincts, the area around the temple. He built a number of other buildings in the area of Palestine. But the other side of his character was his paranoia and his suspicion of anyone who might rival his power. He was well known to have killed members of his own family who crossed him.

19. Rick VO:

Threatened by a newborn king, King Herod tried to eliminate baby Jesus by famously killing every first-born son in Bethlehem. During this time, Jewish communities like that of Peter's lived under a strict Roman rule. Some were obedient and managed okay, others bucked Roman rule and had trouble.

20. Joy A. Schroeder:

It does seem to be the case that some of Jesus' followers would have been the people who would have had real problems with Rome. Jesus seems to have had different message that wasn't about revolt and uprising but maybe a more profound way of turning the world's ideas of power upside down.

21. Rick VO:

Peter and his brother Andrew lived on the shore of the Sea of Galilee--the region's largest freshwater lake. It's only 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. But in the thirsty Middle East, that was enough to call it a sea. Peter and Andrew were fishermen here. Peter owned his own boat and they likely made a pretty good living with their partners, James and John. In Peter's time, fishing was big business.

22. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:

The impression is often given that Peter has nothing and at that point it is easy to follow Jesus. I think that's really an anachronistic view of the world in which Simon Peter lives. He lives in Galilee, which is a very rich region. The fields during the ripe times of the year are just absolutely beautiful. And the fishing business on the sea of Galilee is also a very stable business. People don't necessarily become rich but they can live well

23. Rick VO:

It was on the shores of this same lake that Jesus began his public ministry. Imagine Jesus walking along this shore and seeing the brothers casting their net into the lake. According to the gospels of Matthew and Mark, Jesus said to them, 'Follow me, so you can fish for people.' Jesus must have been pretty convincing because they immediately left their nets and followed him. Their friends, James

and John, joined them as Jesus quickly assembled his unlikely dream team.

24. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:

Well we know that he was married because we have reference to his mother-in-law. He has a home that one can still visit in the city of Capernaum, there is very high credibility that this is a kind of condominium complex where Simon and his extended family live. And he had a business there, which kept him certainly above the poverty level. So while there are struggles economically in Galilee, there is a great deal for him to give up to follow this Jesus.

25. Joy A. Schroeder:

To have Peter, a fisherman, he's described as illiterate, is unlettered, someone who's not educated, is described as someone who doesn't always get it. To have someone like this as an important leader in Christianity says something about a little fledgling movement.

26. Rick VO:

Capernaum was a busy town on the Sea of Galilee. Since Peter and Andrew lived here, Jesus used this city as a base of operations. Jesus preached in a synagogue that once stood here.

27. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]

While in Capernaum, Jesus visited Peter's home and healed his mother-in-law. This Gospel reference indicates that Peter was married. But there's no mention of him having any children.

28. Rick VO:

For three years, Peter and a close-knit band of disciples traveled with Jesus throughout the Galilee region healing the sick and learning everything they could from their teacher.

29. N. Clayton Croy:

Obviously Jesus had a group of followers that was much broader than the twelve. When you think about when he fed people, thousands showed up. So there were hundreds or thousands of folks who were curious about him. But then he appoints twelve to be apostles, to have a special relationship with him.

30. Rick VO:

Jesus singled out twelve of the disciples and gave them the title, Apostle. The word means messenger or delegate. Peter is listed first, often appearing as spokesman for rest of the twelve. And Jesus treated Peter along with his fishing buddies, James and John, as a kind of intimate inner circle among the apostles.

31. N. Clayton Croy:

He is part on an inner troika, a threesome of the twelve apostles that seem to have a special close relationship with Jesus. That would be Peter, James and John.

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- And we find that in three scenes in the Gospel of Mark, when Jesus raises the daughter of Jarius, Peter, James and John are there, when he goes to the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James and John accompany him. And towards the end of his career, when he prays in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter James and John are especially mentioned there. Whom do you want with you at times like that? Sacred moments, revelatory moments, agonizing moments... you want your closest companions.
32. Rick VO:
With mountains surrounding Galilee, storms brew quickly.... handy for a Rabbi keen on teaching his apostles a lesson.
33. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]
Jesus, wanting to be alone, asked Peter and the others to go out for a boat ride. They did and a storm hit. The disciples were terrified. They thought they'd drown. Just then, Jesus appeared to them, walking on the water. "It's a ghost!" they said. Jesus said, 'Take heart, it's me; don't be afraid.' Peter yelled back, 'Lord, if it's really you, command me to come to you on the water.' Jesus said, 'Come.'
34. Rick VO:
Peter got out of the boat, and walked towards Jesus. Noticing the wind, he began to sink and cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus caught his hand and said, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"
35. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:
Why I find that a very helpful story for me in my own life is that it does encourage me to get outside of what we often call our comfort zone, to get into new ways of trying to tell the story of Jesus, to get into new ways of serving, that may be really pretty risky. Sometimes when we get out there and start doing whatever this new venture is, we look around and boy there isn't really much underneath us, and it's easy to begin sinking down. Then the issue is who sustains us? And the one who sustains us is Jesus.
36. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]
It must have been a heady time. Enthusiastic crowds followed Jesus, Peter and the disciples wherever they went. People were fed, healed and encouraged. Jesus' fame spread throughout Galilee.
37. Rick VO:
Back in Jerusalem, religious leaders, hearing about this charismatic teacher, dispatched emissaries with orders to learn more about this Jesus and his followers. In a key moment, Jesus turned to Peter and asks, "Who do you say that I am?" "You're the Messiah, the Son of the living God" said Peter. Jesus, pleased with his answer says, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah."

38. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]

This is the crux of the Peter debate. Protestants believe the “rock” Jesus referred to is the confession—not Peter, but what he said. The rock upon which the church is built is the acknowledgement that Jesus is the Messiah— son of the living God.

39. Joy A. Schroeder:

When Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” they give different answers, Elijah for instance, but Peter says, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” That account that is often times referred to as the confession of Peter. It is so important that some churches actually give a day in their church calendar to that day.

40. N. Clayton Croy:

Protestant interpreters have struggled a little bit with this notion of the Church being built on Peter, the Rock. And have occasionally wanted to construe that passage in Matthew 16 as saying that the “rock” is really Peter’s confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the son of the living God. But the word play makes that an unlikely interpretation. Because Jesus says, “You are Peter, and on this *petras* in Greek, on this rock... it would be as if Jesus said, I am going to nickname you Rocky. And on this “rock” I am going to build my church. Because of that word play it seems that Jesus there in Matthew 16 is really thinking of Peter as the leader of the community. The one on whom this community is going to be built.

41. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:

One of the things that’s really striking is that the gospels don’t white wash Simon Peter, I mean we’re talking about Jesus, who is the Messiah, who is the Lord, who calls Simon. After he has given him this nice nickname, calls him Satan. If I were editing it, that wouldn’t be there. There would be a lot of things about Simon that would not be there if I were editing them.

42. Rick VO:

This is Mt. Tabor. It lies between Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee. The Church of the Transfiguration and the ruins of an old crusader fort crown the summit. Jesus’ Galilean ministry was drawing to a close when he and his inner circle--Peter, John and James--climbed Mt. Tabor. As Jesus prayed his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white.

43. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]

Just then, Old Testament prophets Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking to Jesus. Peter, impressed by the appearance of these heroes of old, wanted to build a memorial, right on the spot. Just then, a cloud came over them and—as if saying “Hey Peter...focus”--a voice said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to

- him!"
44. Rick VO:
Following the Transfiguration, Jesus, Peter and the disciples made their way to Jerusalem to observe the huge Jewish festival called Passover.
45. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]
As Jesus entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, crowds threw palm branches on the ground crying, "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."
46. Rick VO:
At what would be their last supper together, Jesus stunned the disciples who were already worried that Jesus' life was in danger. Jesus announced that he would be betrayed and that Peter himself—the leader of the apostles--would deny him three times before morning. Making their way out of the dark and sleeping city, the group crossed the valley to a garden known as Gethsemane. Here, Jesus asked Peter and the others to spend the night praying with him. The weary Peter and his friends doze off, later to be confronted by a squad of guards led by Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples. Always the pro-active one, Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of one of the approaching gang. Healing the man's ear Jesus said, "Sheath your sword. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"
47. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]
The lowest point in Peter's life came during Jesus' trial before the high priest.
48. Rick VO:
For three years Peter followed Jesus, witnessed miracles, and had a front row seat for what appeared to be the coming of the Messiah. Now, as predicted, Peter denied even knowing Jesus.
49. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:
While he is being interrogated, Peter denies knowing Jesus. Even in Mark, he gets to the point where every self respecting fisherman would do he starts swearing about it, that no, he doesn't know this Jesus. What's happening in every situation is that he is dishonoring Jesus and this is an honor and shame culture. He won't even acknowledge that he knows the man even while everybody around him realizes that he knows Jesus is a direct dishonoring of who Jesus is. He is shaming Jesus.
50. Rick VO:
After Jesus' crucifixion, Peter and the other disciples were distraught. Their leader was dead. Their hopes and dreams were dashed—all seemed lost.

51. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]

According to John's gospel, on the Sunday morning after the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, Mary Magdalene burst in with the exciting news, his tomb was empty.

52. Rick VO:

Investigating, Peter and John found Jesus' linen burial clothes rolled up where the body had been. Bewildered and disoriented, they went home. Later, Mary Magdalene returned with even bigger news. She had seen the Lord...alive. That night, Jesus himself appeared, showed Peter his wounds and calmed and reassured him, saying, "Peace be with you." Weeks later, before ascending back into heaven, Jesus had breakfast with Peter by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?" Peter replies as many times as he had earlier denied him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." And that's exactly what Peter did.

53. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]

Peter's time with Jesus transformed him from a small town fisherman into the bold leader of a movement that one-day would eclipse the entire Roman Empire. No longer quick to anger or jump to conclusions, Peter had matured.

54. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:

They didn't have the New Testament, they didn't have the creeds of the Church. At the beginning, my sort of fantasy is that they are all sort of standing around saying "huh, what does this mean?" Then they needed to figure out what it meant and what the next steps would be. Part of the witness of Acts then, in the very beginning of Acts, is showing Peter as that lead figure, to pull the group together to begin to see a vision for this movement and to move people ahead.

55. Rick VO:

After Jesus' ascension, Peter and the other disciples found themselves back in Jerusalem—on their own, confronted with the challenge of building the church. The Book of Acts tells us that a violent wind filled their meeting place. All were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages.

56. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]

It was as if the Holy Spirit was determined not to let any language barrier get in the way. This was Pentecost. Fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus, it's considered the birthday of the Christian church—a church destined to spread across the globe.

57. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:

The believers are able to speak in a number of other known languages in order to express the gospel. Peter then, becomes the one who interprets for the emerging

- Christian community, what has happened, not only to themselves, but then to the non-believers who have witnessed this and are aware of it. The general population, the non Christ believers are saying, they must be drunk, and one of my favorite verses in the bible is Peter says, no it's only 9:00 in the morning.
58. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]
The early Church was off and running and Peter was energized. He was filled with a new sense of mission: tell the world about the resurrected Christ. If that meant risking his life, so be it.
59. Rick VO:
Peter's preaching soon landed him in jail. Facing the judge, he explained, "We just can't keep from speaking about what we've seen and heard."
60. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]
The first Christians were Jewish—in other words...they had to be circumcised. Soon, non-Jews wanted to join. Peter and the other leaders were forced to decide if non-Jews, in other words, those who were not circumcised, could become Christians. This was a big controversy among those early Christian leaders.
61. N. Clayton Croy:
This is a point at which the Gospel mission is being broadened beyond Jews to include gentiles. And it is not just a little episode. It is not an exception to the rule that gentiles are receiving the Gospel now. The rule has been rewritten.
62. Rick OC: [Hadrian's Villa]
Two camps formed. Peter thought gentiles should be circumcised, become Jews first, then become Christian. Paul, who was a missionary to the gentiles, argued a tiny bit of cosmetic surgery had nothing to do with believing in Jesus. Paul would have said that when it comes to spiritual transformation, the body part needing work...is your heart.
63. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:
Because all the earliest Christ believers as far as we can tell, the very earliest, were Jewish people. It was only natural that they would think in terms of circumcision and ritual washing, not baptism but other ritual washings, Jewish festivals, Jewish food laws, and so forth. And we have some evidence then of a bit of a struggle in the early church between, sometimes, Peter and Paul.
64. N. Clayton Croy:
The two titans in the early church particularly vis-à-vis Jewish/gentile ministries, are clearly Peter and Paul. And Paul reflects on this in his first couple of chapters of Galatians. What you see there is a little bit of inconsistency in the practice of Peter. Ultimately they decide that there really isn't a divide between them theologically. That they wind up affirming on another's ministry.

65. Rick VO:

Peter's willingness to change his mind and allow non-Jews into the new Christian religion helped the early church to spread far beyond its roots in Palestine. Antakya is a city along the Mediterranean Coast. In the first century it was known as Antioch. Tradition holds that Peter lived and worked in this early Christian center.

66. Rick OC: [St. Peter's Basilica]

Some scholars think it was likely that Peter was the source for the Gospel of Mark.

67. Joy A. Schroeder:

He was very important. He was clearly a leader in the early Christian movement but the idea that he was the one who founded the church in Rome that idea is found as early as the 180's of the common era. But that idea that he was the one who founded the church in Rome, that really can't be true, the church seems to have already been there by the time Paul is writing to the people at the church in Rome, writing his letter of Romans. There was this desire to make this apostle be connected to Rome. There's a very good chance Peter never went to Rome at all.

68. Rick OC: [Roman Forum]

The Bible says nothing about Peter during his later years. According to tradition, he came here to Rome, capital of the western world where he taught, led the local Church and was finally martyred.

69. Rick VO:

This obelisk stood here long before any church. It marked a Roman chariot racecourse. If Peter was martyred here, he would have seen this on the day he died.

70. Rick OC: [St. Peter's Square]

During the chariot races the Romans killed people. It was kind of the ancient equivalent of half time entertainment. According to legend, Peter was crucified here. Afterwards, his followers took his body to a little hill the Romans called, the Vatican and buried him there. For the next couple centuries, Christians gathered quietly at his tomb to worship. Then, in about 313 when Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity, and had a huge church built right on top of St. Peter's tomb. Eventually, this evolved to become the grand St. Peter's and Vatican that we know today.

71. Rick VO:

Christian art often depicts Peter crucified upside down. Faced with death, Peter asked to be executed more humbly than his friend, mentor, and savior—nailed to

a cross like Jesus...but upside down.

72. Walter F. Taylor Jr.:

He is a person who was willing to move out from what was comfortable to him, was willing to give up a great deal for Jesus, but also the consistent witness of the gospels is Jesus who strengthened him. I think part of the witness for us is that God is able to take us, whatever our strange combination of abilities, skills, and limitations and family issues and whatever, and to do something more with who we are and who we can become than we are able to do on our own.

73. Joy A. Schroeder:

I think that we can draw from Peter is that even someone who is fallible, someone who can be a failure, is still chosen and accepted by Christ. I think he has a lot to say how simple ordinary people in ordinary locations can be called to do extraordinary things.

74. N. Clayton Croy:

An early news anchor, it may have been Walter Cronkite, who liked to close his broadcast by saying something like, "You can learn more about these stories by reading your local newspaper." Which is shifting people to a different medium. But he was exactly right to tell them to do that. In this video, you are getting just a little glimpse of what the figure of the Apostle Peter was like. If you want more information on this story, go to the Gospels, and the first half of the Acts of the Apostles.

75. Rick OC: [St. Peter's Square]

The Apostle Peter was an important leader in the early church. But it's the story of Peter's human shortcomings combined with the determination and resilience of his faith that makes him both an inspiration and a worthy model for Christians today. Thank for joining us. From Rome, I'm Rick Steves wishing you happy travels...peace...and God's blessings.