

Kefa Called to Follow Yeshua

In my last post, I introduced my new series on the life and times of **Kefa** by examining his character and writings. In this post, we will look at his calling by **Yeshua** to follow Him.

This year, for my reading of Scripture, I have been using F. LaGard Smith's "The Narrated Bible in Chronological Order." ¹ I have enjoyed it so far and will be using its chronological order to focus on **Kefa's** calling and life. We will be bouncing around in the Gospels back and forth for a while.

We start in the Gospel of John with the proclamation of **Yeshua** as the **Messiah** and **Andrew** running to tell his brother about him.

³⁵ The next day, Yochanan (the Baptist) was again standing with two of his talmidim. ³⁶ On seeing Yeshua walking by, he said, "Look! God's lamb!" ³⁷ His two talmidim heard him speaking, and they followed Yeshua. ³⁸ Yeshua turned and saw them following Him, and He asked them, "What are you looking for?" They said to Him, "Rabbi!" (which means "Teacher!") "Where are you staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." So they went and saw where He was staying and remained with Him the rest of the day - it was about four o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰ One of the two who had heard Yochanan and had followed Yeshua was Andrew, the brother of Shim 'on Kefa.

⁴¹ The first thing he did was to find his brother Shim 'on and tell him, "We've found the Mashiach!" (The word means "one who has been anointed.") ⁴² He took him to Yeshua. Looking at him, Yeshua said, "You are Shim 'on Bar-Yochanan; you will be known as Kefa." (The name means "rock.") ~ John 1:35-42 (CJB)

Shim' on Bar-Yochanan is Aramaic for Simon, the son of John. **You will be known as Kefa**, is the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic **Kefa**, and usually given in English as **Cephas**. **Kefa** means **Rock** in Hebrew, "Petros" in Greek, which is usually translated as "Peter" in English.

In changing his name, we will learn it was as if **Yeshua** said, "Simon, you're about as stable as the sand on the seashore. But I see your potential; I see what you will become. That is why I'm changing your name to Rock. Stick with Me, **Kefa**, and you will see incredible changes take place in your person."

We pick up the story of **Kefa** when **Yeshua** begins His great Galilean Ministry.

¹ One day, as Yeshua was standing on the shore of Lake Kinneret (Lake of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias), with the people pressing in around Him in order to hear the word of God, ² He noticed two boats pulled up on the beach, left there by the fishermen, who were cleaning their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Shim 'on, and asked him to put out a little way from shore. Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat. ⁴ When He had finished speaking, He said to Shim 'on, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ Shim' on answered, "We've worked hard all night long, Rabbi, and haven't caught a thing! But if you say so, I'll let down the nets."

Kefa's obedience is exemplary; a fisherman might trust a Rabbi's teaching on religious matters but need not do so in his field of expertise, fishing. The fishermen had labored with a casting net or possibly a dragnet all at night.

¹ **Special Note:** To keep things simple, I will be using Smith's first cite and not referencing all the other citation's, except for clarification purposes and then only in the footnotes.

⁶ They did this and took in so many fish that their nets began to tear. ⁷ So they motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats to the point of sinking.

Because the overhead cost of equipment was high, fishermen often worked together in cooperatives; families would sometimes work together to increase their profits. It is not unusual for **Kefa** and **Andrew** to be in business with the family of **Zebedee**. Men working from more than one boat could let down more massive nets than those working from only one; fish could then be emptied onto the boat, or the nets hauled ashore.

⁸ When he saw this, Shim'on Kefa fell at Yeshua's knees and said, "Get away from me, sir, because I'm a sinner!" ⁹ For astonishment had seized him and everyone with him at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and likewise both Ya'akov and Yochanan, Shim'on's partners. "Don't be frightened," Yeshua said to Shim'on, "from now on you will be catching men - alive!" ¹¹ And as soon as they had beached their boats, they left everything behind and followed Him. Luke 5:1-11 (CJB)

After this display of **Yeshua's** knowledge and power, **Kefa** was astonished and saw him differently. He **fell** before **Yeshua** and said, ***Get away from me, sir, because I'm a sinner!*** **Kefa** knew that **Yeshua** was no mere miracle-working preacher.

Ya'akov and Yochanan, along with **Kefa**, will form **Yeshua's** inner circle. **Yeshua** used the massive catch of fish to illustrate the kind of evangelistic impact **Kefa** would have ***catching men*** (see Acts 2:41; 4:4). **Kefa** and the other fishermen ***left everything*** and followed **Yeshua**.

Even if they had a bad night, fishermen made a better income than most Galileans (most of whom were peasants), so leaving their job is an act of radical commitment that they would expect to affect them economically adversely.

Following their calling, they all went to **Capernaum** so **Yeshua** could teach in the synagogue on the Sabbath. When He finished, ***¹⁴ Yeshua went to Kefa's home, and there saw Kefa's mother-in-law sick in bed with a fever. ¹⁵ He touched her hand, the fever left her, and she got up and began helping Him.*** ~ Matthew 8:14-15 (CJB)

Based upon this passage, we learn that **Kefa** was married and his mother-in-law lived with them. Jewish men refrained from touching women in general to avoid any possibility of becoming unclean unless they had means by which they could ascertain their status (see Lev 15:19). But that did not stop **Yeshua** from touching her. His mother-in-law's ability to get up immediately and serve a meal indicates that her healing was instant and complete.

In my next post, we will turn to **Kefa's** appointment as an **Emissary** and his inquiring mind from the **Parable of the Watchful Servants**.