



Saint Peter: The Underestimated Apostle

Martin Hengel

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"You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my community."

-- Matthew 16:18, author's translation

Given that Peter fades from view halfway through the book of Acts and that he left no gospel account in his name, it is tempting for many biblical scholars to dismiss him as a vague figure in Christian history and downplay his influence in the early church.

Martin Hengel rejects this underestimation of the apostle and argues that Peter was in fact the Rock, central to the development of both the Jewish and the Gentile Christian communities. Hengel clearly shows how each of the four gospels specifically highlights Peter's foundational role. He considers what Peter's message must have been as an eyewitness of Christ, reflects on Peter's theology, and draws attention to Peter's work as an organizer and mission strategist. Hengel also examines the contributions of married apostles -- like Peter -- and their family communities to the rapid and enduring spread of the Christian message.

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