

THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH
IXb. RESTORATION OF PETER and JESUS' SEARCHING
QUESTIONS 1&2 Sometime Early Iyar (late April), A.D. 33

John 21:14-15

¹⁴This is already ⁰third [time] /Jesus was-displayed to-His /disciples after-being-raised-up out-of ⁰dead-ones. ¹⁵Then when they-finished-eating-breakfast, /Jesus says to-the Simon Peter, Simon of-Jonah! ^{Yōnāhs}, \$Are-you-persistently-loving [sovereignly preferring over self and others] Me more than-these [men or things (fish, nets, and boat) or both]? He-says to-Him, Yes, Lord! Yourself, You-perceive [are-aware] that I-am-persistently-fond-of [tenderly-affectionate-toward] You\$. He-says to-him, Persistently-feed the lambs of-Mine!”

Introduction: What question did The Resurrected Lord Jesus Christ ask Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, which brought to his remembrance his boast and denial? How does this question pertain to us all today? What is the highest and most effective motivating force in human life?

After His Resurrection-Ascension during the following forty days, The Lord Jesus very specifically and deliberately took steps to restore Peter to fellowship and discipleship before He ascended to Heaven the second time after His Resurrection-Ascension on the third day after crucifixion. Last time we considered the difference between conversion and regeneration, two different steps, which may occur immediately or after for some at a time after conversion. First The Lord dealt with Peter's Restoration. We considered three factors in Peter's Restoration to discipleship: The Preparation For Peter's Restoration, The Process of Peter's Restoration, and The Proof of Peter's Restoration. In the process of Peter's Restoration a message was sent to him by an angel through Mary **Mahgdahlaynáy** and the other women disciples that went first to the tomb that Resurrection morning who immediately obeyed (Mk. 16:7). They did exactly what they were told to do and left nothing out. Peter was was informed to go back to Galilee where he first met Jesus to renew his initial commitment and to follow Him afresh with renewed vigor.

When professing believers in The Lord Jesus Christ seriously go astray from Him, they must go back to where they first started to follow Him as Peter did. Most often those who seriously go astray in publicly denying The Lord Jesus Christ as Peter did, want to just pick up where they left off thinking they did accept Him once, but without seriously considering the consequences that their previous behavior invoked. But they need to go back to where they first started to follow the Lord and be converted and regenerated as Peter did.

Then later that day Jesus Appeared to Simon Peter. The description of this appearance is not recorded in Scripture. Only the report of the fact that Jesus did appear to Peter is recorded. (Lk. 24:33,34 cf. 1 Cor. 15:5).

Then we noted that at some unspecified time later within two weeks Peter committed **three** wrongs. He made a wrong decision, went in a wrong direction with a wrong influence, and behaved in a wrong demeanor.

1. A Wrong Decision - under control of self (v. 3). The concept of departure is reflected in the use of tense of the verb (present tense, the tense of duration is used with no ending limit) indicating that Peter has decided to return to the fishing business and not just a one day or one week or one month occasion but indefinitely.
2. A Wrong Direction - leading others astray (v. 3) - with a wrong influence. Peter had a strong influence on the other disciples. He was

the older brother of the first two disciples of John the Baptizer and was the first named in the list of the twelve disciples.

3. Wrong Demeanor - fruitless (v. 3) discouraged (v. 5), unclothed (v. 7), and hungry (v. 12).

Just like Peter those who go astray after first beginning to follow The Lord Jesus Christ, they need to go back and be converted and experience regeneration.

Then we considered three facts in The Process of Peter's Restoration - his Spiritual Conversion (21:2-22).

1. The Circumstances: A Frustrating Morning in Galilee (vs. 3b-5).

After spending the whole night casting and dragging nets fruitlessly, having caught nothing, they surely must have been frustrated and perhaps even wondering if it was such a good idea to go back to fishing.

2. A Familiar Miracle (vs. 6,8,11) multiplication of fish to feed the eight tired and hungry disciples -- 153 (50x3+3) great fishes. But didn't Jesus perform a suchlike miracle before this? Certainly this miracle triggered the disciples' memory! But notice the emphasis on the number three in the total number of great fish, no doubt used to remind Peter of His three denials twice, three before the first cockcrow and three more thereafter and before the second cock-crow, and this being the third appearance Jesus displayed to His disciples together. Fifty times three, plus three more, a total of one hundred-fifty-and-three.

3. A Forceful Manifestation of Jesus' power and insight - miraculously fed for the third time (vs. 12-15) - more emphasis upon the number three. He miraculously fed the multitude of 5000 (Mt. 14:15-21) and 4000 men plus women and children (Mt. 15:31-38) with a few loaves of bread and some fish. This is the third miracle of miraculous feeding the disciples experienced here on Galilee's shore (v. 14).

Then The Lord Jesus persisted with Peter until Peter recognized and confessed his lack of true love, sovereignly preferring The Lord Jesus Christ above all others (both people and things) and substituting affection instead.

We then considered The Lord's Confrontation with Peter and the question asked three times, each of which He used to cause Peter to consider his need to 1/ Recognize the Inadequacy of his Love, his self-denying, self-renouncing, self-surrendering, and self-sacrificing love; 2/ Reverse his Indifference to the meaning of 'Love'; and 3/ Reverse his Direction in love i.e. his affection, by insistently asking The Question that Searches: Sin, Stubbornness, and Selfishness within and calls for: Sacrifice, Surrender, and Complete Submission.

Now let us consider the question (Jn. 21:15).

“¹⁵Then when they-finished-eating-breakfast, /Jesus says to-the Simon Peter, Simon of-Jonah^[Yōnāhs], \$Are-you-persistently-loving^[sovereignly preferring over self and others] Me more than-these^{[men or things (fish, nets, and boat) or both]?}” (Jn. 21:15 APT).

- I. Searches the Depths of the Heart (v. 15) Reveals the Inadequacy of Love.

“\$Are-you-persistently-loving^[sovereignly preferring over self and others] Me?”

‘Loving’ is the translation of the present indicative tense Greek verb *ἀγαπάω* (Aghahpáhō) which indicates linear (progressive) action which never ends nor stops. Its literal meaning is ‘persistently-sovereignly-preferring-over-self-and-others.’ Jesus used this word which is the highest level of emotion in His question to Peter, but Peter answered Him with a word which is the next level lower than Aghahpáhō love (see Chart of “The Continuum of Love in The Greek Language” on Happy Heralds’

Web-site under Charts). This level of love has four aspects in order to identify it. Each of these aspects were prevalent in the Life of The Lord Jesus Christ in order to provide Salvation, Eternal Life, and the enabling power and ability to implement them and The God expects them to be demonstrated in the life of those who appropriate His Salvation and Eternal Absolute Life in exchange for and as a result of receiving His gift of Love. These aspects are not produced by human effort but by appropriating them by faith even as Salvation and Eternal Absolute Life is appropriated. They are produced by The Holy Spirit in demonstrating gratitude as motivated by Him. These four aspects are:

A. Self-denying (Jn. 8:28,29; Rom. 15:3; Phil. 2:7,8).

The Lord Jesus told the Jews who challenged Him, “ I-am-doing not-one-thing~ on-account-of Myself, but-on-the-contrary according-as My /Father taught Me, I-am-speaking these-things. . . . I-am-continuously-doing the pleasing-things~ to-Him all-the-time” (Jn. 8:28,29 APT). Then Paul wrote, “³For even The Christ did not please Himself” (Rom. 15:13 APT). And when Paul wrote of The Christ he recorded, “⁷ . . . He divested Himself by taking a-bondslave’s ⁰form when-becoming in smilitude to humans ⁸and, since-being-found in outward-appearance as-a-human He-humbled Himself and became obedient til death, in-fact a-cross-death^[descriptive genitive]” (Phil. 2:8 APT).

B. Self-renouncing - giving up one’s will, interests, desires (Jn. 5:30; 6:38). John recorded what Jesus said to the Jews that were persecuting Him, “Myself, I-am-able to-do not-one-thing by Myself. . . . because I-am-continually-seeking not the determined-will /belonging-to-Me, but-on-the-contrary the determined-will of ⁰Father Who^m sent Me. (Jn. 5:30 APT). And again, “I-have-descended out-of The Heaven, not in-order-that I-continually-do the determined-will belonging-to-Me, but-on-the-contrary the determined-will of-The-One+ |Who| sent Me” (Jn. 6:38 APT).

C. Self-surrendering of: the will, the emotions, and control (Phil. 2:5-8). Paul wrote to the Philippians, “⁵For this is-continually-to-be-minded in-you& which also |was-minded| in-Christ Jesus, ⁶Who, while-continuously-existing ⁰in-form ⁰of-God, deemed-the-process-of-being equal ⁰with-God not seizure. ⁷On-the-contrary He-divested Himself by taking a-bondslave’s ⁰form when-becoming in-smilitude to-humans ⁸and, since-being-found in outward-appearance as-a-human He-humbled Himself and became obedient til death, in-fact a-cross-death^[descriptive genitive]” (Phil. 2:8 APT).

D. Self-sacrificing (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 3:16; 4:9,10; Eph. 5:2; Jn. 15:13 cf. Rom. 5:10). The Lord Jesus Christ came out of *ἀγάπη* (ahgáhpay) Love for the purpose of giving Himself as a sacrifice through an intense agonizing death on the cross for you and me and the whole world including all of the sinful humanity of all time.

II. Searches the Desires of the Heart (Ps. 37:4) - The Question Reveals the Incongruity of Love, “Loving **Me**?”

A. Rejection Displayed (Mt. 16:21-23);

When Jesus announced the first time in Sivan (June) A.D. 32 that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem to suffer many things from the political and religious leaders of the Jews, Peter rebuked Him in this way as Matthew recorded (Mt. 16:22,23):

“²²And when /Peter took Him aside, he-began to-rebuke Him, saying, |God be| Propitious to-You\$, O Lord! This~ shall-positively-not -be to-You\$. ²³But [aorist temporal participle]after-being-turned He-said to /Peter, \$You-are an-offence^[scandal] to-Me because \$you-are-mindingnotthe-things~ belonging-to-The God, but-on-the-contrary

the-things~ belonging-to-humans” (Mt.16:22,23APT).

Thus in this way The Lord expressed rejection to Peter’s behavior.

B. Erection Desired (Mt. 17:4,5).

“⁴Then /Peter answered and said to /Jesus, O Lord, it is good for us to be here; if (and-it-is-true) You-are-determinedly-willing, let-us-make three tabernacles here: one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah. ⁵While He was yet speaking, lo! an-illuminated, shaped-cloud overshadowed them. And lo! a-call out-of the cloud said, This-One+ is My /Beloved /Son, in-Whom I-am-delighted. You-are-to-continually-hear Him!” (Mt. 17:4,5 APT).

Peter was caught up in a wordly concept of the populace concerning erecting a building as a memorial for famous religious leaders who have impacted their religion but he was instantly rebuked by God The Father Who called out loudly from Heaven. He called their attention away from action toward erection to put all their attention upon His Beloved Son. Then He caused them to see no one, neither Moses nor Elijah but Jesus only. Beloved, we regenerated disciples need to take a lesson from this event! We need to take all our attention away from the physical building in which we gather together to worship and focus all our attention upon The Person of The God’s Beloved Son, The Lord Jesus and concentrate all our energy and attention upon the building that He is building, The True Church which is spiritual and not physical.

C. Recognition Deprived (Jn. 18:10,11 cf. Mt. 26:51-54).

When the Jewish leaders and the Temple Militia came into the Garden of **Gethsaimahnáy** to arrest Jesus and take Him to the high priests’ houses for trial before crucifixion, Peter struck The high priest’s bondsman with a short sword and cut off his ear. Instead of recognizing Peter’s loyalty and bravery, The Lord Jesus rebuked Peter and told him to put his sword into the scabbard. And finally:

D. Reward Demanded (Mt. 19:27).

After Jesus told the rich young man to sell his possessions and give to poor ones, he departed grieving because he had many properties. Then the disciples became astounded and asked Him, So then who is able to be saved. Peter interjected, “Lo! we ourselves abandoned all-things and we-followed You\$. So-then what shall-it-be to-us?” Peter expected a reward for serving The Lord Jesus Christ, just like so many people today. “What’s in it for me?” is the attitude that prevails. The answer is not pertinent to the expected immediate reward but to the long run after the race of life is run. But it behooves us to obey the instructions found in His word so that we shall not be chagrined and sadly disappointed in the end thinking that The God should reward our human driven unscriptural conception of pleasing Him. Eternal Life with Him after death when it cost Him the loss of the company and presence of His Son By His side eternally and the agonizing crucifixion-death of His Son burning in the midst of unique Darkness and Eternal Tormenting Fire for three hours on Calvary before returning to His former position on The Throne in Heaven by His Father’s right hand. Since such A Gift cost them both so much to give such a costly to us sinful and wicked sinners, how can we even think it too much to expect in return the gift of all that we have and are in **ἀγάπη**(ahgáhpay) Love ?

Do we demonstrate this kind of love in our lives daily and persistently in our lives?

Application:

What will you do beginning to permit this *ἀγάπη* (ahgáhpay) Love shine through you by means of yielding to The Holy Spirit's working in your heart to demonstrate this self-denying, self-renouncing, self-surrendering, and self-sacrificing love?

Dr. Fred Wittman

For next week: Read and meditate upon: **Jesus' Searching Questions of Peter nos. 1 and 2** (Jn. 21:1-23).

- II. Searches the Delights of the Heart and Reveals the Intensity of Love.
“More than these?” (v. 15 cf. Mt. 26:31,33; Mk. 14:27,29) -- genitive pl.
= men or things or both: fishing equipment, fish, disciples.
- A. His Pride “I” (Lk. 22:33; Jn. 21:3). That terrible ‘I’ gets in the way too often. After Regeneration it should begin to diminish! Have you found it does since you professed to receive Christ as Lord? Have I?
- B. His Profession ‘Fishing’ (Jn 21:3 cf. Mk. 1:16-18).
- C. His Pleasure - getting a reward (Mt. 6:33 cf. 19:27).
“,”
- IV. Searches the Deceit of the Heart and Reveals the Inconsistency of Love.
- A. Selfishness (Jer. 17:9,10). Boast (Lk. 22:31-33)
“,”
- B. Stubbornness (Ps. 139:23,24; Mt. 16:22,23).
- C. Sinfulness - Worldliness (Lk. 5:8; 1 Jn. 2:15,16)
- V. Searches the Devotion of the Heart and Reveals the Insincerity of Love.
- A. Submission (Jn 12:22).
- B. Surrender - Repent at once, constantly commit persistent trust and repeatedly confess that Christ is your Lord, Master in place of Satan, and Savior (Rom. 10:9,10; 6:12,13).
- C. Sacrifice (Rom. 12:1,2).

D. Success in persistently Following Him in order to win (Jn. 21:19,22).

“”

C. Scripture records that ‘Peter was wholly turned’ (21:20) The Greek word translated ‘wholly turned’ is **ἐπιστραφεῖς** (epeestrafē-ées) which is an aorist 2 passive temporal participle. This indicates that the action of the participle is considered to have taken place prior to the action of the main verb. The verb **ἐπιστρέφω** (epeestréfō) which is composed of the verb **στρέφω** (stréfō) which in the middle voice refers to change of direction means ‘turn oneself about, change one’s course or direction, but in the active or passive voice it refers ‘to conversion and complete change of life and when the prefixed preposition **ἐπί** (epí) is added it indicates intensification and completeness. So whether **ἐπιστρέφω** is translated ‘was wholly turned’ or ‘was converted,’ either meaning is accepted according to context. Not only does this indicate that after this encounter with The Lord Jesus Christ Peter was walking and following The Lord in restored fellowship and discipleship, but he also was concerned about John, the beloved disciple. Although this statement indicates Peter’s restoration, he still displayed his carnal nature until after Pentecost. Note his carnal concern about John’s future and what The Lord’s plan for him was which was none of his business and The Lord Jesus implied as much when He asked Peter, ‘What is it to You?’ (Jn. 21:22c APT). We will suspend further consideration of The Proof of Conversion There is also another incident of display of the flesh before Pentecost which will be considered in a lesson after The Lord Jesus Christ Ascends to be seated on His Throne back to His Father in Heaven.