

**THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH**  
**IXg. PETER'S RESTORATION AND JESUS' SEARCHING**  
**QUESTION Aspect 5 (concl.) Early Iyar (late April), A.D. 33**

John 21:18-22

“<sup>18</sup>Amen, amen, I-am-saying to-you\$, When \$you-were younger, you-were-repeatedly-girding yourself\$. And \$you-were-repeatedly-walking where you-were-determinedly-willing. But whenever you-grow old, you-shall-extend the hands-of-yours and another<sup>[same-kind]</sup> shall-gird you\$ and he-shall-bring |you\$| where yourself, you-are-determinedly-willing not |to-go|. <sup>19</sup>Now He-said this, signifying by-what-kind-of-death he-will-glorify <sup>[exalt-with-majestic-radiant-splendor]</sup> The God. And after-saying this, He-repeatedly-says to-him, Persistently-follow Me!” (John 21:18-22 APT).

**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? (*ἀγάπη*)

**Ahgáhpay Love!**

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, which occurred on the third day after crucifixion. After considering three facts in The Process of Peter's Restoration, i.e. his Spiritual Conversion. Consider the Circumstances: 1. A Frustrating Morning in Galilee; 2. A Familiar Miracle: multiplication of fish; and 3. A Forceful Manifestation of Jesus' power and insight.

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 the word meaning 'kind affection, fondness, or friendship' for '*ἀγάπη*' (ahgáhpay) love'.

We then considered The Lord's Confrontation with Peter and the question He 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.

Then we considered the five results of The Searching Question that The Lord Jesus Christ asked of Peter (Jn. 21:15) the first of which question Searches the Depths of the Heart and Reveals the Inadequacy of Love. 'Loving' means '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 *ἀγαπάω* (ahgáhpáō) or as it is recognized in English *ἀγάπη* (ahgápay) love. These four 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 that is motivated by Him. Then we considered the question that The Lord Jesus asked Peter, 'Do you persistently-love Me with *ahgápay* love [sovereignly-preferring-over-self-and-others] more than these?'

I. This question Searches The Depths of the Heart and Reveals the Inadequacy of Love in four aspects which are: self-denying; self-

renouncing i.e. rejecting one's will, interests, and desires; Self-surrendering of: the will, the emotions, and control, **and** self-sacrificing.

- II. This question Searches the Desires of the Heart and Reveals the Incongruity of Love, "Loving **Me**" in three aspects: Rejection of Truth Displayed; Erection of Building Desired; and Recognition Deprived.
- III. This question Searches the Delights of the Heart and Reveals the Intensity of Love. There are three things that draw away from our intensity of **ahgápay** love: Pride, Profession, and Possessions, all three of which require our keen attention in order to prevent them from drawing away our hearts.
- IV. This question also Searches the Deceit of the Heart and Reveals the Inconsistency of Love in three areas: selfishness, stubbornness, and sinfulness which covers worldliness. Sinfulness is akin to worldliness because it satisfies the flesh. Worldliness involves preferring anything and everything 'in-the-sphere-of-the-world,' which includes: the passionate-lust of-the flesh, and the passionate-lust of-the eyes, and the arrogant-display of-the manner of life without consideration of The God!
- V. Lastly this question Searches the Devotion of the Heart and Reveals the Insincerity of one's Love in four steps including:
  - A. Surrender,
  - B. Sacrifice, C. Submission, and D. Succeeding.
- A. Surrender all you are, all you have, all you will ever have, and all you hope to be to The Lord Jesus Christ permanently! Make an exchange of Masters from being a bondsman to Satan, Sin, Disobedience, and Unrighteousness to The God, to The Lord Jesus Christ The Savior, to Obedience, and to Righteousness.
- B. Sacrifice your body, soul, spirit, and self and all you possess to The Lord Jesus Christ (claiming nothing to be yours but all to be His!) now and forever.
- C. Submission is: "1. . . the act of yielding to power or authority, surrender of a person to the control of another, . . . 2. compliant behavior, . . . obedience, compliance; . . . to present self in all submission and humility." (Noah Webster in 1925 in Webster's New International Dictionary). This meaning suggests at least three stages or phases obedience, servitude, and yielding.
  1. Obedience (Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:22).

The first stage and step toward **ahgápay** love for The Lord Jesus Christ is total and complete obedience to all and everything that has been stipulated in The God's Holy Word, The Bible. Previously all our lives before being introduced to The Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Word we have been influenced and enticed by Satan just as Eve was in the beginning, back in the Garden of Eden. Ever since, humans hide and desire not to acknowledge their sins and sinfulness of disobedience. However, The Lord Jesus Christ came as a substitute (one who serves for a short period of time) and suffered the torment of everlasting darkness for three hours on the cross of Calvary to pay the debt of Sin which it is impossible for every human to pay. He suffered the torment for us and as The Lamb of God, He shed His Precious, Sinless Blood in complete obedience to His Father, The God in order to wash away the sins of everyone who submits to becoming persistently completely obedient in every detail to His Son and His Word, The Bible.

Since we became aware of the work that The Lord Jesus Christ accomplished on behalf of every human on Calvary, followed by His

Resurrection-Ascension and High-Priestly ministry in applying His precious, sinless blood on The Mercyseat in Heaven, it behooves us to (we must needs) return our grateful thanks in like behavior of our Lord Jesus Christ in love for Him and therefore **yield our bodies, our souls, our all in sacrifice to The God and our Lord Jesus Christ and become His bondslaves in complete obedience to Him.**

2. Servitude (Rom. 6:6,11-14; 16,17,18 ).

Servitude means Slavery or bondage i.e. bond-service as being bound to a master to whom the bondslave must obey all orders given by the master and we be beholden to the master to have all physical needs met by the master. Paul clearly defined, in his Epistle to Romans, this relationship between all humans and Satan, Sin, Disobedience, and Unrighteousness until an exchange of masters takes place and the sinner commits persistent trust in The God, His Son The Lord Jesus Christ, then he or she is to be a bondslave to The God, The Lord Jesus Christ, Obedience, and Righteousness to be one's own Master.

Too often the word 'service' or the term 'Christian Service' is substituted for 'bondservice' for convenience. But the proper translation of the Greek noun *δούλος* (doûlohs) is 'bondslave' and Greek verb *δουλεύω* (doleúō) is 'to serve as a bondslave.' But by using the convenient substitute, the true, full meaning of Scripture is lost and Satan is pleased because it will keep true disciple-saints from propagating The Truth and therefore instead serve Sin and Satan with their body members as weapons for warfare against The God instead of serving The God and The Lord Jesus Christ in the great warfare with Satan for souls of humans. Seldom in religious Christendom is this warfare mentioned. Yet it is a vital Truth, of which we must be aware as the nearness of the climax of this warfare increases an approaches as the Return of The Lord Jesus Christ in the air for His Church becomes apparently impending and is followed by the seven year Tribulation of Israel and then His Return to Earth to fight the final culminating battle of Armageddon.

There are four major facts taught by Paul concerning what transpires in the lives of those who commit persistent trust unto The Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:6,11-14 APT).

- a. Firstly, your body formerly belonging to Sin becomes ineffective or negated to Sin so that you are to serve as bondslaves to Sin no longer (6:6).
- b. Secondly, you become an Absolutely Living one in union with The Lord Jesus Christ and you are commanded to reckon this to be so in continual prohibition of yielding to Sin and Satan (6:11-14).
- c. Thirdly, you are commanded to **stop** habitually obeying the cravings of lust in and of your body (6:12).
- d. Fourthly, you are commanded to **stop** habitually offering as a sacrifice (or purposely yielding for use), the members of your body as weapons for warfare in the great war Satan is raging against The God (6:16,17) and **stop** delaying the fulfillment of The God's purposes and His determined will for you, which delay He allows in order to accumulate evidence against us to be used at The Final Judgment.

Paul's earnest entreaty contains four areas of warfare in one's personal battle with Sin and Satan. These four areas must be utilized if personal victory is to be obtained instead of deplorable and regrettable defeat: a. Repeatedly vanquish calculations or reasonings of a self-centered human; b. Repeatedly vanquish every height

elevating-self against the knowledge of-The God; c. Persistently bring into captivity every thought unto obedience to The Christ; and d. Whenever obedience is fully-fulfilled then persistently hold in the state of being-in-readiness to avenge every failure to hear-and-obey i.e. every disobedience to The Holy Spirit's still small voice (1 Kings 19:10-12).

### 3. Yielding or Submission.

If we really want The God to be with us, near to us, protect us, and provide for our needs every hour day by day, then we must comply with the mandate which James gave to the converted, regenerated Jews in His Epistle (James 4:7).

“<sup>7</sup>Therefore <sup>[submit, AV]</sup>subject-your-selves-at-once to-The God! <sup>[Byz. Mss. div.] /Moreover\</sup>withstand-at-once the Devil and of-himself, he-shall-successfully-flee away-from you& <sup>8</sup>Draw-near-at-once to-The God! and He-shall-draw-near to-you& (James 4:7 APT).

Then we must submit or subject-ourselves-completely-under the control of The God (Rom. 6:19). This yielding completely to The Lord Jesus Christ as Absolute Master and our body members offered up to Righteousness results in sanctification and a holy relationship with The God.

Now we resume to complete our study of the fifth aspect and results of The Searching Question that The Lord Jesus Christ asked Peter on the shore of Galilee, Do you *ἀγάπη* Love me, more than these? The fourth and final step of revealing your sincere *ἀγάπη* Love for The Lord Jesus Christ, which is Succeeding in Persistently following Him

### 4. Succeed in persistently following in order to win your personal battle and receive The Promised Awards (Jn. 21:18,19).

“<sup>18</sup>Amen, amen, I-am-saying to-you<sup>s</sup>, When <sup>s</sup>you-were younger, you-were-repeatedly-girding yourself<sup>s</sup>. And <sup>s</sup>you-were-repeatedly-walking where you-were-determinedly-willing. But whenever you-grow old, you-shall-extend the hands of-yours and another<sup>[same-kind]</sup> shall-gird you<sup>s</sup> and he-shall-bring <sup>you<sup>s</sup></sup> where yourself, you-are-determinedly-willingnotto-go!” (Jn. 21:18 APT).

#### a. The Responsibility that Peter Was Give upon Restoration to Discipleship.

##### (1) Persistently Shepherd and Feed the Sheep belonging to The Lord Jesus.

After asking Peter three times if he loved Him, twice using ‘*ἀγάπη* Love’ meaning ‘sovereignly preferring Jesus above self and all others’ and then using Peter’s own word that he claimed in response meaning ‘kind affection, fondness, or befriend,’ then Jesus told Peter, “Persistently feed My sheep!” Previously He told Peter to persistently shepherd His sheep and then to feed them. Feeding sheep involves providing sufficient food daily to sustain them, and to lead them to good pasture for them to feed themselves and by still waters for them to drink day by day, week after week. To lead sheep requires the shepherd to go before them to show the way (Jn. 10:4,12). Then he must protect them from attacks of wolves, lions, and bears ( Ps. 23:1-4; 1 Sam. 17:34-36).

The sheep and lambs are too meek and weak and are subject to serious and severe attacks of wild animals and snakes. So too, spiritual sheep of The Good Shepherd, The Lord Jesus Christ are

weak, easily deceived, and subject to attacks by that sinister and seductive Serpent, The Devil or Satan, who uses the poisonous venom of sin to tempt and seduce the sheep to keep them under his dominion and deadly control. We need The Good Shepherd, The Lord Jesus Christ and His under shepherds to feed, lead, guide, and protect them (us) from evil and false doctrine and false teaching which are venoms to the spirit and soul of every human. This job of shepherding, discipling, and teaching The Lord's sheep is an enormous job. That requires maturity and a broad understanding of The God's Word developed from personal discipleship, instruction, knowledge, and experience under a more mature bondsman-servant of The God.

(2) Recognize The Lesson for You and Me in what Jesus Taught Peter.

The Lord Jesus used the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep as a means of teaching the responsibility that He places upon those He calls to publicly care for His sheep spiritually. This is a huge responsibility and a full-time job that calls for total dependence upon The Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit and a heavier burden than most of His sheep really comprehend. This responsibility to maintain this relationship between Shepherd and sheep is exactly what The Lord Jesus commanded Peter to do and to all bondsman-disciples today who are pastors (shepherds), teachers, and elders and deacons of local churches.

The Responsibility to each of us is at least to go through these two stages of discipleship from Babe (1 Pet. 2:2) to Little Children (1 Jn. 2:12-14) and then begin to evangelize and disciple those we lead to The Christ at least as far as we have been disciplined. We are to be glad and thankful to do this after all that The Lord Jesus has done for us. It is a shame and stigma for the Church and The Lord Jesus Christ and for all those who have made a profession and claim to be saved but have never grown to maturity because of lack of being disciplined and personal commitment to grow in The Lord Jesus Christ.

b. The Result of Peter's Restoration to Discipleship.

Scripture records that 'Peter was wholly turned' (21:20) The Greek word translated 'wholly turned' is **ἐπιστραφείς** (epestrafeh-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** (epestréfō) which is composed of the verb **στρέφω** (stréfō) which in the middle voice refers to change of direction and means 'turn oneself about, change one's course or direction,' or make a complete 180 degree turn to go in the direct opposite 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** (epistréfō) 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 have noted what transpired between The Lord Jesus Christ and Peter that morning in early April, A.D. 33 resulted in Peter's Conversion to be followed shortly by his regeneration on the Day of Pentecost. But the question has often been asked of me, How do we know that we and others have been truly converted and granted Salvation? To answer this question, many years ago a list of Ten Evidences or Proofs of Salvation was compiled, all ten of which are witnesses to one's Salvation and possession of Eternal Absolute Life. A copy has been provided for your convenience to put in the flyleaf of your Bible for ready reference and frequent review. You may make copies to give to those for whom you are concerned, those whom you disciple, and your friends.

There is also another incident of display of the flesh by Peter before Pentecost, which will be considered in a lesson following the lesson on The Lord Jesus Christ's Ascension to be seated on His Throne alongside His Father in Heaven.

### **Conclusion:**

Today we concluded considering the fifth aspect of the searching question that The Lord Jesus asked Peter after He served the eight disciples breakfast on the shore of Galilee. Do you **ahgápay** Love me, more than these? After dealing with the matter of Repentance and Surrender to The Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord **and** Absolute Master of your life and all that that entails to become His bonds slave, no longer rendering bondservice to Satan, the next step is Sacrifice. Paul referred to the members of the bodies of regenerated saints as weapons or implements of warfare in the spiritual battle that Satan and his bondslaves (unregenerated people) constantly rage against The God and His Christ. Paul made it clear that the members of the bodies of all people are used as war implements either for God and beneficial good for Him, or for Satan and to be war implements of evil for Satan's beneficial good to the detriment of The Gospel. He entreated the disciple-saints because of The God's compassions upon us, that by our standing alongside The Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, to offer as a living sacrifice our bodies, as He offered His Perfect sinless Body for us on Calvary, to return, in **ahgápay** Love, our bodies as sacrifices and then to stop fashioning ourselves together with the world and its sensual attire.

Then we considered four major facts that transpire in the lives of those who commit persistent trust unto The Lord Jesus Christ: a. Your body formerly belonging to Sin becomes ineffective or negated to Sin; b. You become an Absolutely Living one in union with The Lord Jesus Christ; c. You **stop** habitually obeying the cravings of lust in and of your body; and d. You **stop** habitually offering as a sacrifice (or habitually, purposely yielding for use), the members of your body as weapons for warfare in the great war Satan is raging against The God. And **stop** delaying the fulfillment of The God's purposes and His determined will.

We then considered four areas that must be utilized if personal victory is to be obtained instead of deplorable and regrettable defeat: a. Repeatedly vanquish calculations or reasonings of a self-centered human; b. Repeatedly vanquish every height elevating-self against the knowledge of-The God; c. Persistently bring into captivity every thought unto obedience to The Christ; and d. Whenever obedience is fully-fulfilled then persistently hold in the state of being-in-readiness to avenge every failure to hear-and-obey.

Then we considered Yielding or Submission. If we really want The God to be with us, near to us, protect us, and provide for us every hour day by

day, then we must comply with the mandate which James gave in His Epistle and submit or subject-ourselves-completely-under The God. This yielding completely to The Lord Jesus Christ as Absolute Master and our body members offered up to Righteousness results in sanctification and a holy relationship with The God.

Then today we noted the Responsibility that Peter Was Given upon Restoration to Discipleship. Firstly, Persistently Shepherd and Feed the Sheep belonging to The Lord Jesus Christ, The Good and Great Shepherd of His sheep. Feeding sheep involves providing sufficient food daily to sustain them, and to lead them to good pasture for them to feed themselves and by still waters for them to drink day by day, week after week. Leading sheep requires the shepherd to go before them to show the way. Then he must protect them from attacks of wolves, lions, and bears. We need The Good Shepherd, The Lord Jesus Christ and His under shepherds to feed, lead, guide, and protect them (us) from evil and false doctrine and false teaching which are venoms to the spirit and soul of every human. This job of shepherding, discipling, and teaching The Lord's sheep is an enormous job, which requires maturity and a broad understanding of The God's Word developed from personal discipleship, instruction, knowledge, and experience under a mature bondsman-servant of The God.

Then you and I need to recognize the lesson which Jesus Taught Peter. The Lord Jesus used the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep as a means of teaching the responsibility that He places upon us to be disciplined and nurtured by an older disciple to mature even as those well-educated bondsman-disciples whom He calls upon to care for His sheep spiritually in a local church.

Finally, we answered the important question which has often been asked of me during my ministry of 63 years, 'How do we know that we and others have been truly converted and granted Salvation?'

**Application:**

What will you do beginning today to properly respond to The God's command to become an Absolutely Living one in union with The Lord Jesus Christ, persistently bring into captivity every thought unto obedience to The Christ, and then avenge every failure of ours to hear and obey?

Dr. Fred Wittman

**For next week:** Read and meditate upon: The Last Part of The Third and The Fourth Commandments of The Lord Jesus Christ to and for His Disciples after His Resurrection and prior to His Ascension to be Seated on the right of His Father, God (Mt. 21:1-23).