

A close-up photograph of a woman and a young girl. The woman, on the left, has dark hair and is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. She is wearing a white top. The girl, on the right, has dark hair tied up and is also smiling, with her eyes closed. She is wearing a blue sweater with pink and yellow stripes. They are hugging each other. The background is a solid light blue.

# ***GRACE & TRUTH***

**MAGAZINE**

- ***A Mother's Love***
- ***How To Be A  
Godly Woman***
- ***His Disciple Peter***

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Paul Alberts  
MANAGING EDITOR

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# GOD'S EXAMPLES

**I**n addition to the ways the Lord used Peter when he lived on this earth, the Lord uses him and other Bible characters to teach us lessons today. There is much to learn from Peter's life and those of the others – not just about them, but especially about God and His ways.

If we were honest with ourselves, I doubt that any of us would like our lives so widely publicized – considering our own faults and errors in life. When we look at characters such as Peter it is very easy to find reasons to criticize. But I doubt that any of us is really any better. As we see the wonderful qualities of the Lord displayed in His interactions with Peter and others, we should recognize that He is also showing us the same grace. We have much in our own walks with the Lord Jesus Christ to appreciate, giving Him our thanks and praise.

When we see the Lord in His kindness responding to Peter's downfalls, we should also be challenged as to our own reactions to other people's mistakes, especially those of fellow believers. And I would be surprised if there were very many of us who

do consistently well in displaying the love of the Lord in such circumstances, especially when the person seems to fail repeatedly. Of course we will never in this life be made entirely in His image, but that should not keep us from becoming more and more like our Savior in our reactions and behavior day by day.

I would close with a few words of instruction from the apostle Paul: "Speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine ... be temperate, dignified, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance ... be reverent in [your] behavior ... teaching what is good ... in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds ... showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Ti. 2:1-11 NASB). "Malig nong ... be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. For we also once were foolish ourselves" (3:2-3).

May the Lord bless you through the articles that follow.

*Paul*

# Companionship With Christ

by W. T. P. Wolston

(Adapted from “Simon Peter – His Life And Letters”)

**T**he Lord enters Peter’s house at a most opportune time (Mk. 1:29-31). He comes out of the synagogue where He had just been casting an unclean spirit out of a man, and *forthwith* (a characteristic word of Mark’s gospel, meaning immediately or without delay) He goes to Peter’s house. “Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick of a fever” and they tell Him about her. It was most natural that they should tell the Lord of the sick woman, and He heals her with a word.

Now it has often been taught that a man must remain unmarried in order to fully follow the Lord; but here we learn that Simon was a married man, and he was a man who had affections large enough to take in his wife’s mother, not only into his heart but into his house. We live in a day when mothers-in-law are often overlooked or viewed with contempt. But not so here – and God has not recorded this in the pages of His Word for nothing!

I have no doubt Peter’s wife was very upset that day. Her mother, possibly (for we do not

read of children) the dearest object save her husband that she had in the world, lay sick of a fever. Luke 4:38 (KJV) says, she was “taken with a great fever.” But Jesus “stood over her, and rebuked the fever, and it left her;” and He “took her by the hand, and lifted her up,” and “she ministered unto them” (v.39, Mk. 1:31), instead of being ministered to. She became useful, a mother-in-law that served others.

Do you think it was by chance that the Lord went there that day? I believe not. If we go back a few days in Peter’s history we remember that he had given up all to follow the Lord. Having abandoned his earthly calling so to do, it is quite possible that his wife might have felt somewhat anxious as to ways and means, and may have thought if she did not say, “How are we now to be cared for and supported?” The Lord comes into her house – her home; takes her mother by the hand, and heals her with a word. As the loving daughter sees her mother healed and restored, she must have felt quite assured as to

the wisdom of her husband's action in fully following the Lord. And I do not doubt that before Peter left again to accompany his Master in His labors, he got a word of this sort from his wife, "You follow Him fully, Simon; I see well you are on the right track; He has the heart and the power to care for us in all things."

This scene is so like the Lord. He ever loves to put His servants at rest at home, as well as to set them free to follow Him. It is sweet to think that He has His eye on the often-solitary wife at home, with her cares and burdens, while the husband, called to labor in public, is frequently and necessarily away. You who may feel alone, notice how the Lord thinks of you!

Passing on now to the third chapter of Mark, we find the special call which Peter received from the Lord. After a night spent in prayer (see Luke 6:12), the

Lord selected those who should be His companions in His pilgrim pathway here. We read, "He ordained twelve, that *they should be with Him*" (Mk. 3:14). I know nothing more blessed than that!

People think it is a wonderful thing to be saved, to escape the damnation of hell – a wonderful thing to go to heaven; and it is. But to go to heaven in Scripture is always to be with a Person. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8) and "to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1:23) is the language of Scripture.

To be with Him, to enjoy companionship with the Lord Jesus Christ is what God calls us to; and here these men, in a very special way, were called to be with Him. Have you been called to be with Him, my reader? You are not called to be an apostle as these men were, but the eternity of a Christian is to be *with Jesus!* **GT**

 Jesus said,

*"I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* (Jn. 14:3)

"Forever with the Lord!  
Amen, so let it be!"

*(Isaac B. Woodbury, 1819-1858)*



# THE IMPACT

## OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HAD ON PETER

*by Colin Salter*

**P**eter was not looking to meet the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Lord was looking to meet Peter. This Galilean fisherman was happy enough simply fishing for his living (Mt. 4:18) – something he had been brought up doing. He did not know that God had a different, greater purpose for him. Just as truth is still truth even when we don't think it is, Peter needed to learn that God's plans are always the best!

### I'LL LEAD AND YOU FOLLOW

"Come, follow Me, Jesus said [to Peter and Andrew], and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt. 4:19 NIV). Verses 19, 20, 22 and 25 all use the word "follow." A follower is somebody who pays attention to what someone else is doing or saying. Accepting the master's leadership, they may all then become companions, taking the same direction through life. On that one day in Capernaum, Peter's life began to be changed. The Carpenter from Nazareth

would shape the new fisher-of-men, remaking Peter into one of God's men. To get the most out of life, let God have His way continually: "At once they left their nets and followed Him" (Mt. 4:20).

### TRANSFORMED AND THEN SENT

Notice how Peter introduces himself in his letters: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:1), and "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:1). It was Jesus who had "designated apostles" (Lk. 6:13-14) – the word meaning a person sent forth or commissioned for a clearly defined job. Our Lord Jesus used His three-plus years of ministry to transform Peter from a man of the world into a man of the Word. Peter was born anew (1 Pet. 1:3) and he encouraged others to be born again (1 Pet. 1:23). He treasured his Bible as the "word of the Lord" (1 Pet. 1:24-2:2), and the teaching our Lord Jesus invested into Peter's life

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produced Christian fruitfulness in the fisherman. Then through Peter's teaching, the Lord was reproducing this in many others.

What God wants us to know and do is found in His Word. Read it, learn it and do it always!

### SENT TO SERVE

The word "servant" in 2 Peter 1:1 is actually the word "slave" – the lowest of servants. Peter was not boastful about being an apostle. Rather, he saw himself as an average shepherd (1 Pet. 5:1-4) accountable to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. By influencing as many people as he could for the Lord Jesus Christ, Peter was storing treasure in heaven.

We need to have our hearts and eyes fixed on the eternal rather than the things of this earthly life. Christian priorities in life show how sincere we really are. The British preacher C.H. Spurgeon thought that many believers were like shop windows – attractive and bright outside but empty on the inside. Spurgeon felt that such individuals were pretending to be what in reality they were not.<sup>1</sup>

### THE MOST MOVING EXPERIENCE OF ALL

Peter wrote: "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory saying, 'This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain" (2 Pet. 1:16-18). The word "majesty" (Greek: *megaleiotetos*) means the highest divine honor. Peter's eyes therefore feasted on the highest divine honor of the Lord Jesus!

Sharing his heart, Peter recalled our Lord's transfiguration (Gk. *metamorphoo* – from which we get our English word "metamorphosis," meaning "a major change that makes someone or something very different"<sup>2</sup>). Along with James and John, Peter saw the glory of God radiate through our Lord Jesus. It was a highpoint in their learning from God about Himself. The man they were following, Jesus, was none else but God! The Lord Jesus did not change here, but He did give a special revelation about Himself, causing these three witnesses to be determined to follow Him.

### SEEING IS BELIEVING

Three transfiguration accounts are in the New Testament: Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8 and

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Luke 9:28-36, while John adds his witness of the Lord's glory in John 1:14 and 1 John 1:1-3. Seeing the glorious Lord Jesus Christ transformed Peter. Having heard the Father say, "This is My Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!" (Mk. 9:7), Peter could not flee from the throb of God's heartbeat, so to speak. It was like a rhythmic African drum: "I am pleased, well-pleased, oh so pleased with My Son. I am pleased with My Son, only Son, beloved Son. I am pleased, well-pleased with My one and only Son." Peter walked accordingly the rest of his life. It took him through his many highs and lows, for he knew God loved him and was his Savior – and he knew his Savior pleased God and was God.

### LIFE LESSONS THAT CHALLENGED PETER

Peter learned by watching and listening to the Lord Jesus. Today we can learn from reading these six narratives found in the Gospels and Acts:

Seeing Jesus walking on water Peter climbed over the boat's side and began to walk towards Him. Taking his eyes away from the Lord, Peter began to sink. But the Lord's strong hand rescued him (Mt. 14:22-33). We must keep our attention firmly focused on our Lord Jesus.

Challenged by Jesus to say who they thought He was, Peter declared, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:13-20). God disclosed to Peter deep spiritual truths about salvation and the Savior. Let us keep our testimony about the Lord Jesus pure, remaining useful in God's service.

Immediately after this high point came a really depressing experience – Peter rebuked his Lord who was teaching about going to the cross (Mt. 16:21-28). The fisherman needed to learn there was "strength of weakness" which God would use to defeat sin and Satan. Fighting with force is the world's way, not the Word's way.

As the crucifixion drew near, Peter refused to believe the Lord Jesus when He said, "You will all fall away on account of Me" (Mt. 26:31-35). He had too much confidence in his own ability, causing him to disrespect even the word of the Lord Jesus. Matthew 26:69-75 records how Peter distanced himself from his close Friend and Teacher by denying Him. All Christians must be careful here.

After the resurrection the Lord Jesus talked to Peter about this incident. The lesson was about repentance and love; and the Lord desired to restore His servant. Peter, who had bitterly cried immediately after denying the



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Christ (Mt. 26:75), was challenged over his love for the Lord Jesus. The link between those three denials and these three questions (Jn. 21:15-19) is deliberate. For believers, failure does not lead to automatic disqualification for with our Lord there is always a way back. Peter could still look forward to glorifying God (Jn. 21:19). In spite of so many disastrous failures in my past, I thank God that I can look ahead, seeing myself joining millions of others in giving worthy praise to the impressively majestic, Almighty, Creator God in His heaven (Rev. 4-5).

Peter, the first preacher recorded in the Church (Acts 2:14-41), spoke in the power of the Holy Spirit about what God had done and was doing. Verses 22-24 are key: “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him.”

Peter spoke from his personal

experience with the Lord Jesus – what he had seen and heard. I’m sure he had given these events much thought and probably had long discussions about them with the other disciples. Now he wanted others to “Repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38). As his own life had been turned right around, so he wanted others to be converted as well.

Perhaps some in the crowd were looking to meet Jesus while others had seen and heard but not yet trusted Him. Peter saw his job to be winning as many as possible to the Christian faith – born into saving faith through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is our God-given task too (Mt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:7-8).

### LIFE CHANGING FOR YOU?

In these six examples we can see something of the deep and lasting impact of the Lord Jesus on Peter’s life. It was life changing! We must regularly check our own lives to make sure we keep on “keeping on” – following our Lord Jesus closely, going in the right direction. His purpose must always be ours, every moment of every day! **GT**

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<sup>1</sup>C.H. Spurgeon *Majesty in Misery* Vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth) p.109, sermon preached February 12, 1882.

<sup>2</sup>Macmillan School Dictionary (Oxford) 2004.



# PETER'S

## FALL AND RESTORATION

*by Kevin Quartell*

One of the most striking names of God in the Old Testament is the “God of Jacob” (Gen. 49:24). As we read about Jacob in the book of Genesis we might well marvel at the patience of God. How slow Jacob was to learn the lessons God was seeking to teach him – to learn to cease from relying upon himself and to rely wholly upon His God. Yet, in amazing grace, God never gave Jacob up. He continued working as a Master Potter shaping the stubborn and resisting clay until at last, at the end of Jacob’s life, we see the divine workmanship shine. In those closing scenes he is found as a blesser, a worshiper and a prophet (Gen. 47-49). Isn’t it comforting to know that in a similar way our Father will never give us up until He has formed us to be like His blessed Son (Rom. 8:29)?

The New Testament equivalent of the “God of Jacob” might be the “God of all grace,” which is found in Peter’s first epistle (5:10). Peter

himself had need, like Jacob and each of us, to learn of this grace and of the God of all grace in the circumstances through which he passed. Like Jacob, he also had to learn to stop trusting in himself and to lean completely upon his blessed Lord. Have we learned that lesson?

Let’s briefly consider Peter’s denial of the Lord and his subsequent restoration as given to us in the Gospels. Our intention is not to pick on Peter but to shine the light into our own hearts and ask if we have learned the lessons Peter had to learn. Perhaps even more importantly, we want to see the dealings of the Lord Jesus with Peter and learn more of His heart of love and grace that warns, rebukes and restores His failing disciple. As the writer to the Hebrews assures us, our blessed Lord Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). His love as displayed in Peter’s life is just the same as seen in His ways with us today.

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## PETER WARNED

Peter had walked with the Lord for the three and one-half years of His public ministry. His brother Andrew had first introduced him to the Lord (Jn. 1:40-43), and a short time later the Lord Jesus called Peter to leave everything in order to follow Him (Lk. 5:1-11). What a wonderful experience that must have been! We have the four Gospel accounts of how the Lord “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38 KJV), delivering men from the physical effects of sin and, more importantly, from sin’s spiritual effects. Peter, along with James and John, was privileged to be with the Lord when He raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead (Lk. 8:41-56). Also, he and the two brothers were alone with the Lord when He took them up into the mount and was transfigured before them (Mt. 17:1-8). For a few moments they saw His glory shining forth! Peter witnessed all this, and we know even on certain occasions he was given power by the Lord to heal and to preach. Yet, despite all this, Peter proved through sad circumstances how little he knew either himself or his gracious Lord.

It was at the end of those wonderful years of our Lord’s public ministry, on that very night in which He was betrayed by another disciple, that He gave Peter a spe-

cial warning: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you [literally “you all” – in other words, all the disciples], that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee [Peter], that thy faith fail not” (Lk. 22:31). How solemn were the words of the Lord Jesus. The fact that the Lord twice used his natural name, Simon, should have alerted Peter to listen closely. It is comforting to know that in all the pathway of our life every test and trial is fully seen and known by Him, even before we encounter it! And it is a great comfort to know that He prays for us.

Yet we may ask, “Why did He not pray that Peter would be *kept* from this test? Why did He pray instead that Peter’s faith would not fail in the midst of the test?” Is it not because our blessed Lord, fully knowing Peter’s heart, knew that he needed to be sifted – that the chaff of self confidence would be beaten out and the true wheat, the reality of God’s work in Peter’s heart, might shine out more brightly? Peter’s response to the Lord’s words show that this was in fact the case.

## SLOW TO BELIEVE

In his gospel, Mark tells us how strong Peter’s reaction was: “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I” (14:29). All others

might leave the Lord, but he never would. The Lord then plainly tells Peter that he was going to deny Him: "This day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice" (Mk. 14:30). These are the words of the One who is the Truth, the One who is the God who cannot lie (Ti. 1:2) and the One who knows us better than we know ourselves. However, so often like us, Peter did not believe what the Lord was saying about him. Peter repeats more vehemently, "If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise" (Mk. 14:31). How many of us, in a similar way, have been slow to believe the Lord's words? Consider these two examples:

1. "WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING" (Jn. 15:5) – in other words, nothing for the Lord. If we have not yet learned the helplessness in ourselves to do anything good and right for the Lord, we will not be able to appreciate the other side of the truth, which is in our next verse.
2. "I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENETH ME" (Phil. 4:13). Peter was a true believer and His love and devotedness for the Lord were very real, yet he still had to learn these lessons. He also had to prove that those who do not learn of them-

selves from the Lord's own Word in His presence must learn it through grievous failure away from Him.

### SLEEPING, NOT PRAYING

We read next that the Lord and the disciples arrived in the garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36-41). The Lord took Peter, James and John with Him farther than the others and expressed to them the sorrows He felt pressing on His holy soul. He knew all that had been prophesied in Psalm 22, Isaiah 53 and many other Scriptures was about to have its fulfillment. Well may we rejoice in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us (Gal. 2:20)!

The Lord warned the disciples to "watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation" (Mt. 26:41). He did not ask them to pray for Him, but for themselves. Three times the Lord went to pray to the Father and, as the perfect, dependent Man, He committed to Him all that was about to happen. After each prayer the Lord returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. Perhaps if Peter had only followed the example of His blessed Master he would have been spared from his fall. May we learn from His example and be men and women of prayer, committing all our circumstances into the hand of our God and Father. Unlike our Lord, we do not know

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what a day may hold. But that should make us realize all the more our need and dependence, causing us to turn to Him in prayer!

## THE DENIAL

After the Lord's third prayer in the garden, He was betrayed by Judas, arrested and eventually taken to the high priest Caiaphas' house, where He was questioned. There, as the Lord had told him, Peter denied three times that he knew the Lord Jesus:

1. To the maid who kept the door (Jn. 18:17),
2. As he stood with the servants and officers around a fire of coals (Jn. 18:25), and
3. When he was questioned by the kinsman of the servant of the high priest, whose ear he had cut off (Jn. 18:26-27).

Would Peter ever have thought he would deny his Lord before a young servant girl, the maid who was keeping the door? Yet we expose our own self-confidence when we think that we are prepared for any situation that we may face. May a greater sense of our own weakness drive us to the Lord to find in Him everything that we need in order to face every circumstance here!

## THE LOOK

"And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter" (Lk. 22:61).

We considered Peter's denial. Now we desire to consider how the Lord restored His failing disciple and learn, too, how He restores us when we fail. We read in 1 John 2:1 that the Lord Jesus is called our Advocate: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins." As our great High Priest the Lord Jesus intercedes for us to sustain us in the midst of the trials and temptations that we endure. However, when we sin He is there in heaven as our Advocate so we might be restored to fellowship with the Father.

If we sin we do not lose our salvation. Our verse in 1 John tells us that the Lord Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. Propitiation means that God is satisfied. Through the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross God has been once-for-all satisfied as to our sins. If we sin now as believers it is a family matter, as disobedient children towards our Father. That is why the Spirit tells us that the Lord is our Advocate with the Father rather than with God. We can never lose this relationship, but our fellowship with the Father and with the Lord Jesus Himself is interrupted when we sin.

As our Advocate, the Lord restores us. Here with Peter we see an example of how the Lord

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works in restoration: a prayer, then a look. The Lord had prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail in the testing. Then after Peter's denials the Lord looked at him and brought conviction of his sin. Peter went out and wept.

How does the Lord bring conviction in our conscience today? He uses His Word. One example in the Word of God is the washing of the disciples feet in John 13. The Lord said of the disciples (except Judas) that they were already "clean every whit" (v.13), they did not need an all over cleansing again, but they did need to have their feet washed. Similarly as believers, the Lord washes us with the water of the Word (Eph. 5:26). He applies His Word in the power of the Holy Spirit that we might be brought to see that in some point, thought, word or deed we came short of His glory. This is another important reason for daily reading and meditating on the Word of God.

### PETER'S RESTORATION

"He restoreth my soul" (Ps. 23:3). This verse should be a great comfort to us. The Scriptures do not teach that if we fail we need to restore ourselves, clean ourselves up, brush off the dirt and then present ourselves to the Lord. No, *He* is the One who restores our souls. If we are conscious of hav-

ing failed in something we should immediately turn to the Lord Jesus. We came to Him just as we were as sinners to be saved. If we fail as believers we need to come to Him just as we are as sinning saints and let Him restore our souls. He is the Savior and the Restorer!

From the records in the Gospels it appears that the Lord Jesus spoke with Peter alone before He met with all the disciples in the upper room (Lk. 24:34). We have no record of what happened in that meeting but we believe that one lesson we can learn is how much the Lord loves each one of His own. Do we sometimes fail? Does this change the attitude of the Lord Jesus towards us? Does He cast us away? Did He cast away Jacob or Peter? No, by God's grace we can say that He loves us still and His desire is to restore us to communion with Himself and the Father. If we resist, He may have to chasten [correct] us, but even that comes from a heart that loves us with an everlasting love!

### PETER'S HEART SEARCHED

We have seen that Peter's restoration began with the prayer of the Lord for him even before he failed. It continued with the look of conviction followed by the Lord's own personal meeting with Peter on the Resurrection morn-



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ing. The last step in Peter's restoration, what C.H. Mackintosh has well described as a "restoration of heart," took place beside the Sea of Galilee. There the Lord began to probe Peter's heart: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" (Jn. 21:15). Peter had boasted as much in saying that even if all others denied Him, he would go to death with the Lord. Peter replied, "Yea Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Now he does not claim to love the Lord more than the others. Three times Peter had denied the Lord, and three times the Lord Jesus questioned Peter as to whether he loved Him. The depths of his heart must be searched out and the root of self-confidence which caused the sin be fully exposed.

The Lord desires the same for us that we would not simply repeat the same failure again and again. Whatever the root may be in our hearts, the Lord desires to expose it to us that we might be delivered from it. The Scripture records that Peter was grieved when the Lord had asked him the question a third time. His reply, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee" shows that the root of

self-confidence in Peter's heart had been reached. He says as it were, "Lord, You know everything, and even if the love in my heart is so small that no one else can see it, You know that I love You." Simon Peter had been humbled and, rather than trusting any more in his own estimate of his love for the Lord, he was resting in the knowledge of the Lord's own estimate.

### FRUITFUL FOR THE LORD

"O LORD, Thou has searched me and known me" (Ps. 139:1). What was the result for Peter? Humbled and broken before the Lord, leaning on the Lord and not on himself, Peter was able on the Day of Pentecost to preach the first Christian gospel message and see 3,000 people become saved.

We may truly say that the Lord, the God of Jacob, had worked in a marvelous way in Peter's life. And beloved reader, He is working in your life and mine today, in His wondrous grace, to teach us not to lean upon ourselves but to lean upon Him – to cease from confidence in ourselves and to place all confidence in Him. May we learn the lesson for His glory and our blessing! **GT**

**IT IS COMFORTING TO KNOW THAT IN ALL THE PATHWAY  
OF OUR LIFE EVERY TEST AND TRIAL IS FULLY SEEN  
AND KNOWN BY HIM, EVEN BEFORE WE ENCOUNTER IT!**

# PETER

## What Have You Done?

by Hank Blok



### PETER? PETER! WHERE ARE YOU? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

Hearing these inquiries, what is your first impression? Is it, “Oh, what has he done *wrong* now?” Or is it, “Oh, I have to find Peter so I can thank him for being so nice”? Unfortunately, we often think the worst and, especially when we consider the disciple Peter, isn’t that just what we do think? We almost immediately remember several of Peter’s faux pas [blunders] that required the Lord’s attention. While that may be true, please note that each one provides a wonderful teaching opportunity.

### PETER SANK

Just about everyone knows about Peter’s taking his eyes off the Lord Jesus and sinking into the boisterous waters of the Sea of Galilee (Mt. 14:22-33). The incident has always impressed me and caused a deeper respect for this disciple. Yes, he required the Lord’s intervention to save him from drowning, but let’s look at the positive things that this situation can teach us.

#### ■ THE FACTS

1. Of all the disciples in the boat, only Peter went out to meet the Lord to be closer to Him.

2. He is the *only* person (other than the Lord) who truly walked on water (that wasn’t frozen).
3. When he sank he taught us the perfect prayer for our needs: “Lord, save me!”
4. Having prayed, he proved that the Lord Jesus does save those who call on Him.

#### ■ THE LESSONS

1. There are times when we may take the opportunity to get out of our comfort zone, stand up and publicly show our love for Christ.

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2. There is no record of Peter ever referring to his experience of walking on the water. Rather than boast of what he did, Peter spoke about the glories and majesty of his Lord (2 Pet. 1:16-18).
  3. When sinking, Peter called out, "Lord, save me." No doubt he looked up to the Lord. What an example! When in need, the best thing to do immediately is to look up and call on Him.
  4. Through this incident Peter provides a good scenario for a gospel message. It also helps the believer who takes his eyes off the Lord and starts to sink into the waters of trouble and despondency. In our own personal experiences, rescue may not come as quickly as in this instance. Yet the Lord knows, hears and is always there for us – available to help. Sometimes we might even have to sink a little deeper to learn that we cannot do things on our own ... but He has promised that nothing can come between Him and His child (Rom. 8:35-39).

## PETER FELL

Many would consider Peter to be one who "acts without thinking." He meant well in all of his actions but sometimes he showed that he didn't really know himself. We

see this in one of his misguided claims: "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee" (Mt. 26:33-35 KJV). He still had to learn an important lesson: "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mt. 26:41). And as we all know, on the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed by Judas, Peter denied his precious Master on three separate occasions – even cursing and swearing – saying, "I know not this man of whom ye speak" (Mk. 14:71). What can we learn from this most unfortunate event?

## ■ THE FACTS

1. The Lord knew Peter's character as well as his heart and what was going to unfold. Before this event even happened He could say, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Lk. 22:32).
2. Although Peter thought he could be different and never deny his Lord, he failed miserably.
3. When this favored disciple realized what he had done, beholding his Lord as He looked upon Peter, he went out and wept bitterly.
4. The one who denied his Lord was later used to bring many of

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his Jewish brethren unto salvation (Acts 2:41). He was also able to strengthen his fellow disciples by providing direction in the Church (Acts 1:15-26) and comfort to the weary (Acts 5:15-16).

## ■ THE LESSONS

1. Nothing takes the Lord by surprise – He knows “the end from the beginning” (Isa. 46:10). But He might let us fail that we may come to know what we are really like. Our Great High Priest did not pray that Peter would be kept from the trial, but that he would come through it with a stronger faith and commitment. Similarly the Lord Jesus may let us fail at some trial or temptation so we too might learn from it and come out if it as a stronger, more compassionate Christian. Take note of this: We never see Peter deny his Lord again and, in fact, he was allowed to die as he claimed he would – as a witness for the One who loved him and gave Himself for him.
2. We never really know what wrong we are capable of doing. After all, “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it” (Jer. 17:9)? It is important to realize that in the very point we feel we can never fall, that may

be exactly where the tempter may cause us to stumble!

3. When we need it, how good it is to have a bad conscience – whatever triggers it. In Peter’s case it was the Lord’s look. When David sinned it took the intervention of the prophet Nathan to point out his trespasses and bring about a work in his soul (See 2 Samuel 12:1-7). It is only when we truly realize what we have done, and the consequence of it, that the conscience can touch our hearts unto repentance and corrective action: “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of” (2 Cor. 7:10).
4. The Lord Jesus does not throw away or disown people who have failed him. He deals with them (1 Cor. 15:5; Jn. 21:15-17) and can change them into useful vessels to His honor.

Isn’t it amazing that we so often major on other people’s mistakes rather than their positives. When we think of Peter we too quickly think of these two incidents, and yet there are so many wonderful things that can be attributed to this dear man. Among other things, he was:

- The first chosen to be a disciple (Mt. 4:18, Mk. 3:14-16) and one of the three closest to the Lord (Mt. 17:1);

- The one who answered a question with the fundamental statement, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16);
- The one who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 16:19);
- The first to walk on the water (Mt. 14:29) and, later, the one to jump out of the boat to be close to the resurrected Christ (Jn. 21:7);
- The first evangelist with the message of the gospel of Christ (Acts 2:14-41);
- The main spokesman of the Church to the salvation of the Jews (Gal. 2:7-8); and
- He wrote two of the books of the Bible.

Having examined these events, it is easy to see that there were some very wonderful outcomes from Peter’s historical (maybe not so negative) events. They provide lessons as to the character of man – you and me included – and of the grace of God.

## THINKING ABOUT PRESENT FAILURES

Do you know a spiritual leader or elder, a person of special faith, or a child of God (including even

yourself) who has failed in his or her spiritual walk? It may be time to really analyze the whole situation with a positive attitude and not look only at the negatives of the error. The following questions should be asked with a humble spirit:

- What can we learn through this failure?
- What can be done to provide a Christ-honoring outcome from these situations?
- What conclusions do we need to apply in our own lives?

Furthermore, as the Lord prayed for Peter (Lk. 22:32) we should be praying for those who serve Him in a special leadership and pastoral role (and for ourselves) that the Lord would keep them (and us) personally faithful. Even if there is a sinking or falling, we can pray for restoration and a spiritual work within the soul that would again allow enablement to visible, profitable service (Lk. 22:32).

And finally, remember that Peter became very productive for the Lord even though he wasn’t perfect and even failed again, requiring a godly rebuke (Gal. 2:11-14). Oh, that the Lord would work through us to the blessing of others while being open to godly correction when we need it. **GT**

# Seven Miracles Performed For His Disciple Peter

by Alfred Bouter

The New Testament  
records several miracles  
that the Lord Jesus  
performed especially for  
His disciple Peter.

Those miracles and their  
stories teach us many  
things because the same  
lessons Peter had to learn  
were written for our  
instruction today.  
They help us to serve  
our Master.

## THE FIRST MIRACLE –

### *The Master's Power And Attraction*

.....  
“He got into one of the boats, which  
was Simon’s, and asked him to put  
out a little from the land. And He  
sat down and taught the multitudes  
from the boat ... They caught a  
great number of fish, and their net  
was breaking.” —Luke 5:3,6 NKJV

.....  
Peter and his co-workers had  
the tremendous privilege of  
receiving a visit from the Lord  
Jesus, whom they had met some  
time before. Now He revealed  
Himself to them as the Master,  
yet kindly asking Peter to make  
himself and all he owned avail-  
able to Him. Similarly, the Lord  
desires believers to become  
instruments for Him, “useful for  
the Master, prepared for every  
good work” (2 Tim. 2:21). Our  
Lord no longer walks on earth as  
in those days, but through His



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Spirit He is at work in many different ways, using His willing servants. Do we listen to Him by reading His Word and through prayer? Let's make ourselves available to Him just as Peter did – despite his protests.

Through a great miracle the Lord sent many fish into the net and we read that “their net was breaking,” which refers to some form of failure on man's side. How many more shortcomings there are today! Nevertheless, the Master is the Same, “yesterday, today and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

### ***This Miracle Is The Beginning Of Happy Service***

*“They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.’ —Luke 5:7-8 ESV*

The Lord explained the parallel between catching fish and catching people (v.10). Today our Lord wants to have and use believers as His servants despite their shortcomings. The fact that the Lord used failing people made this miracle so much more noticeable; and it made Peter realize that he needed others to help him. In the Lord's “gospel enter-

prise” we are at His disposal and are to help each other as co-workers, partners and co-disciples.

This great miracle made Peter aware of his lack of faith – even of sinfulness: stubbornness, selfishness and hardness of heart. All these things must be judged in the Lord's presence and removed from our hearts and lives so He can use us. The miraculous catch caused Peter to fall down at the knees of the Lord Jesus as he was drawn to Him in an irresistible way, ready for service and worship. Peter had become willing to submit and commit himself entirely to Christ. Are we? Furthermore, the Lord knew what was in His disciple's heart, so He did not do what Peter asked – to depart from him (v.8). Instead, the Lord said, “Fear not” or “Do not be afraid” (v.10).<sup>1</sup>

The earlier amazement caused by the Lord's words in the synagogue (Lk. 4:36) had not brought anyone to his knees before the Lord, but here Peter fell down at Christ's knees, giving Him homage and worship. Peter had been made ready for the Lord to use him and his boat, and now the Lord could prepare him for yet another service – catching people. In Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost, Peter brought 3,000 souls into the net of the gospel. At that time the net did not break, neither did the

ship sink! Today, still, the Lord desires us to be His devoted servants.

## THE SECOND MIRACLE –

### *Peter's Mother-In-Law Healed*

.....  
“Immediately He left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told Him about her. And He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.” —Mark 1:29-31  
.....

The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law was the second miracle the Lord performed for the benefit of His disciple – of great significance to Peter and a lesson for us as well. In the privacy of the home the disciples brought this need to the Lord’s attention even though He already knew it. This shows how important it is to bring our needs to the Lord immediately or “straightway” – a keyword in Mark. We are to go right away to Him, not trying to find remedies according to our own thinking first.

The feverish condition of Simon’s mother-in-law reminds us of the overly active Simon himself: a lot of “heat” or “energy” but without any results for God – she was just lying there. How

much activity, purpose-driven or not, is taking place in our days in the Christian profession? But are there any results for God? Without relying on our own efforts, may we turn to the Lord, what He thinks and teaches, counting on what He can do.

Taking Simon’s mother-in-law by the hand, in His grace and compassion the Lord identified with the great need. The One in whom there is no sin – who knew no sin, who did no sin, being apart from sin – went and took her by the hand. Then, in His power He raised her up “and immediately the fever left her” (v.31 NKJV). How wonderful! As a result of this intervention by the perfect Servant, Peter’s mother-in-law became a useful servant, for we read that “she served *them*” (Mk. 1:31). Matthew, which presents Christ as the King, records that “she served *Him*” (8:15). The energetic Peter needed the object lesson provided through this miracle – and so do we. Before leaving His disciples the Lord Jesus told them that all power had been given to Him and that He would be with them all the days to the end of the age (Mt. 28:20). Also today, in His compassion and grace the Lord is with us, working from heaven to help, heal and guide.

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It took great faith to leave the security of the boat behind and start walking on the water, but it was toward the Master.

### THE THIRD MIRACLE –

#### *Peter Walks On The Water*

.....  
*“Peter answered him, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.’ He said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’ Jesus immediately reached out His hand and took hold of him, saying to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’” —Matthew 14:28-31 ESV*  
.....

This account describes the third miracle performed especially for Peter, as he learned to appreciate who the Lord really was. After having taken care of the multitudes and their needs through the miracle of multiplying the five loaves and two fish, Jesus withdrew that evening to the mountain to pray. The disciples, however, were by themselves throughout the night on the raging sea – but the Lord did not forget them. He had seen their toil and came to them walking on the stormy water!

Peter responded to the Lord's majesty that He displayed when

approaching His disciples, “If it is You ...”. Recognizing Christ's power and greatness as King, which is Matthew's distinct theme, Peter responded in faith by asking the Lord to have him walk on the water. Peter relied on Him against all worldly odds. It took great faith to leave the security of the boat behind and start walking on the water, but it was toward the Master. It is like going forth “to Him, outside the camp” (Heb. 13:13).

So far, so good – but as soon as Peter's focus shifted from the Lord to the waves and the wind, he began to sink. Then, again in faith, he called on the Lord just as we are encouraged to do: “Call upon Me in the day of trouble” (Ps. 50:15). Peter's soul was already saved, but now he needed the Lord's salvation in a different way – and the Lord answered him without delay. He identified with Peter's need and rescued him. All believers must go through this kind of experience, learning to trust Him alone without any doubt. The Lord Jesus Himself was marked by a complete trust in God (Ps. 16:1). Today it is up to us to follow Him through calm

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or storm, confiding in Him. In a soon coming day the Jewish remnant will have similar experiences, learning to put their trust in the rejected Messiah.

#### THE FOURTH MIRACLE –

*"For Me And For You"*

.....  
*"When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, 'Does your teacher not pay the tax?' He said, 'Yes.' And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, 'What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?' And when he said, 'From others,' Jesus said to him, 'Then the sons are free. However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for Me and for yourself.'"*

—Matthew 17:24-27

.....  
Peter needed to learn how great the Lord is – that He cannot be put inside the box of human thinking. He understood that the Lord Jesus did not have to pay the temple tax because He was the King, the Son of God (Ps. 2). Yet there was another lesson for Peter. As a faithful Jew the Lord Jesus always kept the requirements of

the Mosaic Law – *not* the man-made traditions. Even though Christ had the privilege *not* to pay the temple tax because He is the Son, He used great liberty and *did* pay for He did not want to cause any offense or reason for stumbling. In His grace the Lord first put Himself on Peter's level and in his needs; but then He lifted Peter up to His own level when He said, "Give to them for Me and you" (Mt. 17:27). The Lord displayed His greatness, showing His omniscience and omnipresence when speaking to Peter and His omnipotence when providing the needed money.

Because of sin, the first Adam lost his power over the animal kingdom. But the last Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, demonstrated His power in a miraculous way, as described by Matthew. Peter had something to do as well, taking a hook and not a net as this fisherman was used to, and he obeyed. The Lord rewarded Peter's faith and obedience, for the very first fish he caught had a stater [a piece of money] in its mouth – a four-drachma coin, which was the exact amount for two persons' temple tax: "for Me and you"! This miracle is only described in Matthew – presenting the King who is not ashamed to call us His brethren, placing us on His level (Heb. 2:10-11).

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## THE FIFTH MIRACLE –

### *Malchus' Ear Restored*

.....  
*"Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear."*

—John 18:10

*"But Jesus said, 'No more of this!' And He touched his ear and healed him."*

—Luke 22:50

*"So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given Me?'"*

—John 18:11

.....  
During the night after His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Lord Jesus was arrested. While this was taking place Peter, obviously with the best intentions, wanted to defend his Master. Many believe that as long as you are sincere in whatever you are doing, it should be "OK." Peter's action, although sincere, was not correct at all! Before this happened Peter had forcefully protested when the Lord had predicted His coming sufferings and Jesus had had to rebuke him. Now in the Garden it seems that Peter still had not learned his lesson. We are no better. These things have been written for our instruction and we learn a lot from the fifth miracle that the Lord performed to help Peter.

Only Luke, the physician, records how Jesus healed

Malchus, restoring his ear that Peter had cut off – and this while Christ was being taken into custody. Otherwise, Peter surely would have been arrested as well. After Christ's declaration of the accomplished work on the cross, followed by His death, resurrection and exaltation in heaven, Peter came to understand what the Lord had taught. Now he was ready to explain to the crowd in Jerusalem that God's program, predicted in many Old Testament writings, had to be fulfilled (Acts 2:22-23) just as the Lord had told him (Mt. 26:54).

Taking up the sword, Peter in his zeal had been a stumbling block to the Lord and he would have caused himself great trouble as well if the Lord had not healed the servant. "Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword'" (Mt. 26:52). In Church history this command has not been obeyed, resulting in dreadful consequences. "Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once send Me more than twelve legions of angels?" (v.53). Peter still had to learn to submit fully to God's thoughts, which are higher than man's thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9). The enemy wants us to take things into our own hands instead of leaving them in God's.

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The miracle of the healing of Malchus' ear, which the Lord performed for Peter's benefit, teaches this lesson to us.

## THE SIXTH MIRACLE –

### *For Peter's Sake After Christ's Resurrection*

.....  
“So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.” —John 21:11-13

.....  
This sixth miracle performed for Peter's sake took place the third time Christ manifested Himself to His disciples during the 40 days between His resurrection and ascension. It provided the context for Peter's restoration after he denied his Master.<sup>2</sup> When his co-disciple John understood and said, “It is the Lord” (v.7), Peter jumped into the water to go to Him as fast as he could; and then they all saw that Christ had already prepared everything for a meal. This proved that the Lord did not need their help, but He wanted them to be involved. Likewise, the Lord does not need us but He likes to involve

us, working with Him. Peter understood and hauled the net, full of large fish, to the shore (v.11). The net did not break, in contrast to what had happened after the first miracle.

On the basis of Christ's death and resurrection, a new foundation has been laid and in this setting the Lord wants His own to get involved and work with Him. There is no room for distrust, lack of confidence, criticism, hindrance or failure. Peter therefore needed to be publicly restored before He could strengthen his brethren (Lk. 22:32) and have a public ministry for the Lord. It is striking that the Lord used a meal – “come and dine” (Jn. 21:12) – as the context for Peter's restoration. It reminds us of Paul's instructions that each one must judge or examine himself “and so eat” (1 Cor. 11:28).

### *Peter's Public Restoration*

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Feed My lambs.” He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of



*John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" and he said to Him, "Lord, You know everything; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."* —John 21:15-17

The miracle described in John's gospel that took place after the Lord's resurrection (vv.6-13) provided the background for the final part of Peter's restoration. The Lord had restored the personal relationship with His disciple and now He brought him back into full fellowship with the other disciples. Putting his trust in himself Peter once claimed that he would never deny the Lord (Mt. 26:33-35) – but with such self-confidence he had to fail. The Lord did not set His disciple aside, rather He brought him back and helped him to really put his trust in Him. John 21 puts special emphasis on what the Lord prepared; He had done everything that was needed. There was room still for Peter to do some work, to draw the net for example. These details show a remarkable balance between God's work on the one hand and man's responsibility and involvement on the other.

In a simple yet profound way, by the three questions He asked Peter, the Lord completely restored His disciple. Before

denying the Lord, Peter seemed to think that he was better than the other disciples. Now in the presence of the Lord and his co-disciples he learned to judge himself completely and put his trust entirely in Him. On this basis the Lord entrusted to Peter special shepherd care – not lording it over the sheep (1 Pet. 5:3), but feeding and leading them according to their needs and for God's glory. No doubt the restored Peter would agree with David's prayer, "Search me, O God" (Ps. 139:23). We all need this attitude and prayer to stay close to the Lord.

**THE SEVENTH MIRACLE –**  
*The Glorified Lord  
Sent His Angel*

.....  
*"Peter was ... kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, 'Arise quickly!' And his chains fell off his hands."* —Acts 12:5-7 NKJV  
.....

The seventh miracle that the Lord performed in relation to

Peter's needs was through His direct intervention from heaven – as He still does during the age of grace. The Lord sent “an angel of the Lord” because during the age of grace God sends angels<sup>3</sup> to serve the believers (Heb. 1:14). Though in prison, the always active Peter was resting, fully trusting the Lord who had told him that his service would continue until his old age (Jn. 21:18-19). Peter knew, therefore, that the time for him to die had not yet come, so he was able to sleep even though he knew King Herod had ordered his execution for the following day.

The Jewish Passover had caused a lapse of time between Peter's arrest and his execution as planned by Herod and this delay provided time for the believers to pray earnestly for Peter's release. Without a doubt, God heard those prayers. Acts 12:8-17 provides more details about Peter's miraculous deliverance, the praying assembly at John Mark's mother's home, Peter's visit and the believers' surprise in seeing him again.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The seven miracles the Lord performed for His disciple Peter equipped him to be used as an

instrument, sanctified (set apart), fit for the Master's use and prepared for all good work (2 Tim. 2:21). The Lord also worked miracles *through* Peter, using him as His instrument. Several incidents in Acts substantiate this point in much more detail.

Can the Lord use you and me to be His instruments today? May we echo the words of the hymn writer: “Make me a blessing to someone today!” (Ira B. Wilson, 1880-1950). **GT**

<sup>1</sup>The specific verb form used in the Greek text – *mē phobou* – occurs seven times in Luke's writings (Lk. 1:13,30, 5:10, 8:50, 12:32; Acts 19:9, 27:24).

<sup>2</sup>In His grace the Lord performed seven actions for Peter's restoration. Before Peter's denial they were Christ's *prayer* (Lk. 22:32), *warning* (v.31) and *counsel* (v.46); then, right after Peter's denial we see His *look* (v. 61). After Christ's resurrection (Mk. 16:7) He had a *message* for Peter that was followed by His *private interview* with him (Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5). The *seventh* part of the full restoration took place in the presence of the other disciples, as described in John 21:15-17. Also, the sixth miracle that the Lord performed for Peter (vv.11-13) is the third one that was linked with fish (see the first and fourth miracles).

<sup>3</sup>It is not clear whether this refers to “the Angel of the Lord” as known in the Old Testament. If so, it would be quite striking that the Lord in heaven, as the glorified Man, sent an angel who is the Angel of the Lord (the LORD Himself).

*Our Lord wants to have and use believers  
as His servants despite their shortcomings.*



*The purpose of this column is to help you study the Bible on your own. Look up the Bible references and think about them before writing your answers. Do not send this study to us, as this is not a correspondence course.*

## DISCOVER WHAT THE PREACHER HAS TO SAY IN ECCLESIASTES

CHAPTER 12 – By Alan Groth

*“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”*

*—Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 NKJV*

In this last chapter of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher uses a graphic description of what happens when a man gets old to exhort him to remember his Creator while he is young. Then he concludes the chapter with what man should do while he lives.

### Read Ecclesiastes 12

1. When should a man remember His Creator? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Why should he do so? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is he describing in verses 2-7? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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4. The Preacher uses word pictures to describe a number of stages leading to death. In your own words, explain what he is saying in:

v.2 \_\_\_\_\_

v.3 \_\_\_\_\_

v.4 \_\_\_\_\_

v.5 \_\_\_\_\_

v.6 \_\_\_\_\_

v.7 \_\_\_\_\_

5. As the Preacher wrote in the first chapter, so he writes in this last chapter. He says, “ \_\_\_\_\_ v.8.”

6. In verse 9, what did the Preacher do for the people? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How did he do this? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What are these like? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Who did he admonish by these? \_\_\_\_\_

10. The conclusion is that we are to \_\_\_\_\_ God and keep His \_\_\_\_\_ because He will bring every work into \_\_\_\_\_.

The Preacher is still teaching through acceptable words, words of truth. He has written them for our learning. Continue to study them!

Next month we'll *Discover* what the New Testament  
has to say about wisdom.



# HOW TO BE *A Godly Woman In Today's World*

*by Tom and Susan Steere*

**F**irst, we must recognize that “today’s world” is really no different from the “world” that ever was or will be until the Lord reigns on earth. Cultures may be different, but we all live in the same world. Technology has definitely changed over time, but the heart of mankind has not. The reply to God in the heart of men and women is similar, regardless of culture or technology.

With that said, let’s see what we can learn from the responses of a few women in the Bible who were women of faith, devotion and meekness.

## *Women of Faith*

Who comes to mind when considering women of faith in the Bible? There are many to choose from, like Rahab of Jericho who is mentioned in three places in the New Testament (Mt. 1:5; Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25). Sarah, wife of Abraham, is set forth as an example in the great chapter of

faith, Hebrews 11, as are Moses’ mother and “women who received their dead raised to life again” (Heb. 11:11,23,35). Then, too, the unfeigned faith of Timothy’s grandmother Lois and mother Eunice brought joy and thanksgiving to the heart of God’s apostle, Paul (2 Tim. 1:5). Let’s consider a few women.

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## *They Do Not Fear Man*

Our first example is **Rahab**, a prostitute in the corrupt city of Jericho. Taking an opportunity God must have set before her, Rahab the harlot hid the Israelite spies from the king of Jericho who would have killed them. This act of treason might be condemned if it were not for the just judgment of God against her wicked city. Rahab considered the condemnation of God greater than the condemnation of man so she aided these men at the risk of her own life. She openly acknowledged the LORD their God as "God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Josh. 2:11 KJV). Rahab put her faith immediately into action by tying in her window the red cord the spies gave her that very day (Josh. 2:21), even though the actual judgment was at least a month away. How often she must have checked to make sure that little scarlet cord was still safely there! For her faith she is recorded with the faithful in Hebrews 11. In fact, in James 2 she is mentioned on equal footing with Abraham, the father of all who have faith in God (Rom. 4:16). Rahab is an example of everyone who puts his or her trust in the blood of Christ and the Word of God. She also takes her place in the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1, her former life never being men-

tioned. Quite a woman who had faith in the great God!

What are a few things we may learn from Rahab?

- God accepts *anyone* who comes to Him in faith.
- He will never hold our past life against us.
- Our faith should manifest itself in action.
- God will protect and exalt those who have faith in Him.

## *They Do Not Fear Circumstances*

Abraham's wife **Sarah** grieved over her infertility as do many women today. After she was too old to think of bearing children, God repeated His promise that Sarah herself would bear Abraham a son. Sarah at first laughed at the thought of ever bearing any children, but she must have repented for Hebrews 11:11 says she received strength to conceive seed. Many women in those days feared childbirth as it could easily mean death from complications or infection. Being ninety years old must have compounded those fears. She could also have refused to have relations with her aged husband, fearing discomfort, inconvenience, frustration or ridicule. Sarah faced those fears and received the strength she needed because she



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judged Him faithful who had made the promise. She was rewarded with her beloved son Isaac, the father of Israel.

Another example is **Jochebed** in Exodus 2. She and her husband were not afraid of Pharaoh's command that every baby boy must be thrown into the river. She used her creativity to place a waterproof basket between the river and her precious child as she obeyed the king's command. She was rewarded for that fearlessness by being paid wages by Pharaoh's household to rear her own son, Moses.

Today, God exhorts women of faith to love their husbands and their children. This is not always easy as daily life becomes trying and personalities clash. Nevertheless, let us be sure we have the priority in our lives that God desires, no matter what our circumstances may be. God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20-21)!

### *They Hold On To The Promises of God*

Two women in the Old Testament saw their sons raised from the dead: the woman of **Zarephath**, by Elijah (1 Ki. 17:8-22) and **the Shunammite woman**, by Elisha (2 Ki. 4:18-37). Both of these women

came to the men of God in great consternation [dismay or distress] for the death of their beloved sons because God had promised life to them. Did they give up in despair when tested? No, they came to God, the Source of all life, and were rewarded with the restoration of their children. God has not often done miracles of this kind, but we may rest assured that if we are tried as these mothers were, He will hear our cries with pity and is able to send comfort in His own time and way. Disease, accident, even random violence may separate our children from us through death. But if we, as parents, and our children trust Christ (or by the Lord's mercy toward young children) we may rejoice with confidence that we will see them again and that they now are rejoicing with Him.

Women of faith, fearless of man and of their circumstances, hold to the promises of God!

### *Women of Devotion*

When it comes to dedication and devotion, who comes to mind – Ruth, Hannah, Mary the mother of Jesus, Anna, Mary who anointed the Lord's feet with that expensive ointment, or Dorcas? The common thread among these women, young and old, single, engaged, married or widowed,

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was that they kept one object in view without being sidetracked by the things of this world.

**Ruth**, a young widow, did not return to her family and former friends among the ungodly Moabites, nor did she follow after attractive young men, but she trusted in the God of Israel to provide a loving husband for her. She stayed under the protective wings of the One in whom she had come to trust. Ruth's object was a relationship with her kinsman redeemer, who turned out to be Boaz. He was a wealthy man who must have been much older than she, but who gladly redeemed her even though she was a Moabite. What a beautiful picture this is of Christ's redemption of ungodly sinners!

**Hannah**, like Sarah, dealt with infertility and consequent ridicule, but her devotion and desire for a child who would serve the LORD were rewarded with a son, Samuel. She followed through with her promise and willingly gave him to the service of the LORD, even as a little boy. God then blessed her with five more children, and Samuel became a great prophet (1 Sam. 1-2).

**Mary**, of course, was the chosen vessel to carry the Baby who would be "called the Son of the Highest" (Lk. 1:32). She was willing to be the handmaid of the Lord so she became the fulfill-

ment of the 700 year old prophecy: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14) – Immanuel meaning "God with us." She accepted this calling gladly, even though it meant disgrace before people who would misunderstand her pregnancy while still just engaged and not yet married. She was nearly put away by her fiancé, Joseph, for what appeared to be her unfaithfulness to him before their wedding. Yet God sent an angel to explain the situation, providing through Joseph protection for Mary and a legal connection to the throne of David for her child. Mary was highly favored by God and is highly honored today (Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:26-56, 2:1-20).

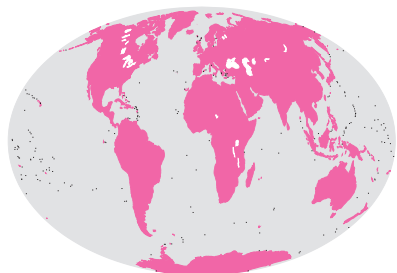
**Dorcas** of Joppa was evidently an older, single woman since no family was mentioned among the mourners at her death. Her single-minded dedication toward the needy around her resulted in many widows' devotion to her. They appealed to Peter who raised her from the dead. God's eye is even on the sparrows – little, devalued creatures in the eyes of the world – and He will reward those who serve Him in humbleness (Acts 9:36-42; Mt. 10:29-31).

**Anna**, a widow for 84 years who must have been more than 100 years old [or a widow 84

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years old], spent her time and energy devoting herself to fasting and prayer in the temple. She was rewarded by being an eyewitness to the redemption of Israel, embodied in the tiny child Jesus, and she became one of the first to spread the good news that God's promised Redeemer had come (Lk. 2:36-38).

The attitude of these women can be summarized by the words of Mary in Luke 1:38: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word." Ladies, do you accept the word of the Lord in your lives? Can you accept, especially in our days of extreme feminism, God's way for you? Are you willing to submit yourselves, not to man's domineering, but to the Lord's word, spoken through the apostles in passages like 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 and 14:34-37, 1 Timothy 2:9-15, Titus 2:3-5, and 1 Peter 3:1-6? Are you dedicated to following His Word? If you are, you may be described by our final theme of godly women.



## *Women of Meekness*

Meekness can be defined as power under control for another's benefit. Women hold a large amount of power in the family, in relationships and in the church. Their influence on the people around them is tremendous. Without meekness that same power can cause much heartache. Consider Eve who chose to act in independence from her husband and gave that forbidden fruit to Adam to eat. His choice to follow along with her plunged our race into perpetual sin and made our redemption necessary (see Genesis 3 and Romans 5:12-21). We thank God that there have been many women since who have acted in a "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:4). The passage in First Peter specifically mentions Sarah, the wife of Abraham. Just at the time her faith faltered concerning having a child, she called Abraham "lord" (Gen. 18:12). Her meekness saved the day, as it were, so she could eventually lay hold on God's promises and find strength from Him to bear a child at such an elderly age.

If your faith falters and devotion is slipping, remember to be meek and quiet. Commit yourself to God, and He will help you to grow in fearless devotion and to be strong in faith. **GT**

# Divine Titles

## AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

### Part Seven

by A. J. Pollock

## Son

Scripture clearly claims eternal Sonship and Godhead glory for our Lord Jesus Christ. The phrase “Eternal Son” is not found in Scripture but the truth these words convey is found throughout the Bible, sometimes stated and often inferred. Scripture acclaims Him as the Son in eternity before time began (Jn. 17:5; 1 Jn. 1:2) and as born into this world as Man (Heb. 1:5). Hebrews tells us that in these last days God has spoken by His Son (Heb. 1:2). When the prophets spoke, God was speaking through them. But when the Son spoke, God spoke. He is described as the brightness of God’s glory, the express image of His Person in its fullness (Heb. 1:3). Who could answer to this description? Only One, and He must be God Himself.

Hebrews 1:8 is very emphatic: “To the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom’” (NKJV). The Son is here addressed as God. What more testimony do we want? If God is eternal, what is the Son but eternal?

We quote another striking Scripture: “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (Jn. 17:5). These are the words of the blessed Lord. To our great delight and instruction, this prayer has been recorded for our worshipful meditation. The Son speaks to His Father of a glory that He had with the Father before the world began. This relationship then was in eternity before time – a glory clearly eternal, the glory of the Son. We have presented here two Persons, the Father and the Son, seen in eternity before the world began, eternal in their being and relationship, and reciprocative [mutual] in fullest measure.

Our Lord said, “All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father” (Jn. 5:23). This is blasphemy if not true. Thank God it is most blessedly true! What a claim our Lord made – and none could make such a claim, but God. “You believe in God, believe also in Me” (Jn. 14:1). Our Lord never refused worship offered to Him, for as God He was always rightly the Object of worship. **GT**

*Related thoughts shared by Walter Scott  
(adapted from The Bible Handbook)*

## *Son Of God*

“Son of God” occurs but once in the Old Testament (Dan. 3:25). The title applies to Adam in Luke 3:38 as the expression of his place and dignity in creation. The angels too are styled “sons of God” (Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7), but no angel is ever termed “Son of God,” much less “*the* Son of God.” “Son” is a title belonging to Christ by inherent right; and it becomes ours only by adoption.

“Son of God,” occurring nearly 50 times in Scripture, is the expression of Christ’s personal dignity and glory. “Son of the Father” (2 Jn. 3) intimates the blessed relationship eternally existing between the Father and the Son. “Only begotten Son ... in the bosom of the Father” (Jn. 1:18) is the declaration to us of the depth and tenderness of the love in which the Son ever abode with His Father. Dignity, relationship and love are unfolded in these divine and exquisitely beautiful titles.

Luke connects Sonship with the incarnation of our Lord

(1:35), Matthew with the calling out from Egypt (2:15) and Mark with the commencement of the Lord’s ministry (1:1). But John traces the Sonship of Jesus Christ before time began: “In the beginning was the Word” (Jn. 1:1). “From the beginning (1 Jn. 1:1) refers to a specific event – the appearing of Christ as Man in the world. “In the beginning was the Word” has no reference to either date or epoch. It is a truly remarkable phrase. Eternity, Personality, Deity, Co-equality and Creatorship are ascribed to Him who is the “Word” and the “Son,” and that within 42 words (Jn. 1:1-3).

The Church is built on the glory of Christ’s person divinely revealed: “Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16). The Divine glory of that name and person formed the ground of heavenly glory of the “Son” and is needed for Church foundation, blessing and glory – and is also the basis, solid and imperishable, on which our individual salvation most surely rests. **GT**

# NEHEMIAH

by Leslie M. Grant



*“Then he said to them, ‘Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.’” —Nehemiah 8:10 NKJV*

Nehemiah, meaning “comfort of Jehovah,” writes the history of his connection with the remnant of the returned captivity. He followed Ezra by about 13 years in going to Jerusalem, stirred through news he had received of the decayed condition of the city. God gave him favor with Artaxerxes, king of Persia, for whom he was cupbearer, and he obtained authority from the king to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

A man of faith and energy and a capable administrator, Nehemiah was able to organize the Jews for the labor of rebuilding the wall and imbue [instill] them with willingness both to work and to fight for God’s interests in the city. His firm decision, wise

avoidance of the enemy’s cunning snares, and short, earnest prayers cannot fail to attract every interested reader. Yet the authoritative influence of the Persian government is felt throughout and cannot be ignored.

Nehemiah is a book especially helpful in our day. It illustrates the fact that true devotedness to God on the part of His saints and their purpose of heart to build a wall of separation from the world and its evils will meet with bitter opposition from the enemy. Yet, however small and despised such a testimony may appear in men’s eyes, the firm, lowly faith of His own in a day of confusion is precious to God. **GT**

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*This column is taken from the book “The Bible, Its 66 Books In Brief.”  
It is available for purchase from Believer’s Bookshelf USA ([www.bbusa.org](http://www.bbusa.org))  
and Believers Bookshelf Canada ([www.bbcana.org](http://www.bbcana.org)).*



– continued from outside back cover

A feeble ray of hope cheered her: if only the tree, which was now also being swept along by the wild current, could support them they might survive. But soon that hope faded and the tree rolled and its branches creaked – they could not support the weight of the three of them.

But the mother's love would not allow her to waver. She tied the little ones to the smaller branches and, entrusting them to the One who orders the waves and the winds, she threw herself into the current and soon drowned.

When the waters receded the two children were found safe and sound still bound to the tree.

Oh, the great and wonderful love of a mother! Does not such selflessness move our hearts? Has there ever been a deeper love?

Yes, there is: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you," says the LORD in Isaiah 49:15 (NKJV).

Yes, there is a love greater than a mother's. She may give her life for her children, but Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gave His life for miserable sin-

ners who forgot Him and pursued Him to a shameful death. "When we were still without strength (defenseless), in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6).

"In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 4:10). "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us ... When we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:8,10).

God is good and merciful, and He still loves sinners. He loves you, friend. Trust yourself to the love of Christ. Come to Him just as you are. Be a sharer in this love that was sealed with the blood Jesus shed for sinners. Tell Him right now that you believe that He died for you, guilty and unworthy though you are. Receive Jesus Christ.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (Jn. 1:12). **GT**

*A version of this article is available in tract form from us in Spanish only. Ask for Spanish tract #113.*

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## A Mother's Love

**F**requently parts of southern France see great floods. The frightful torrents sweep away everything they find in their path: trees, houses and even entire villages. They come so suddenly that many of those who live in such places are carried without warning to their death.

Near Toulouse, some time ago, a mother with her two innocent children found themselves suddenly caught in the midst of the raging waters. Well knowing their danger the poor woman searched in vain for some means of rescue. But seeing that there was little hope for her, she dedicated all her energies to protecting the lives of her two children.

She could find no other way than to securely tie them to a board and leave them to the current, trusting the goodness of the Lord to save them. She placed the children on this small ark and released it with a fervent prayer, resigning herself to her own death.

The furious current swept the fragile little lifeboat quickly downstream, but only, to the horror of the mother, to hurl it against the trunk of a tree with such force that the plank shattered. With a superhuman energy the mother managed to reach the tree and, clinging to one of its branches, managed to rescue her two tender children from death.

*— continued on inside back cover*

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