

PETER

Like the majority of us, Peter was a very complicated person. There were times when you would have been glad you had him with you ... and there would also have been times when you would have wished he was somewhere else! Nonetheless, Jesus 'was working on him' for Jesus had chosen him *knowing* exactly the type of person Peter was ...

God never makes mistakes with His choice! ... Sometimes you might think you are inadequate and you doubt what you can do for the Lord ... but the Lord has chosen you to be His servant and His child. John wrote, [Rev. 1:5](#) *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father*

Now, He wouldn't have done that if He didn't think He would succeed in making out of you what He desires. So, He gives you and He *will* give you all you need to live the Christian life to His requirements ... and we see this with Peter.

Take, for example, the occasion in Jn. 6, following the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000+. Jesus went on to explain how He was the Bread of life, [Jn. 6:35](#) *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger.* They had just eaten ordinary bread, - produced miraculously, - ... but ordinary bread. You are all going to be hungry again ... but when you eat from the bread I'm telling you about, said Jesus, you will be fully and completely satisfied!

And He proceeded to further turn the illustration in on Himself, [48](#) *I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world,* - referring to how He would die as the sacrificial Substitute on the cross ... You must *believe* what I am saying to you because I am this 'bread' you must feed on to receive everlasting life! This is the message He told them they must personally believe.

Well, of course, many of His listeners were not prepared to accept what He was saying because they were not capable of understanding it, [60](#) *Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? ... And Jesus knew how it was offending them (v. 61).* However,

He did not change the message or make it any easier for them to accept and, as a consequence, ⁶⁶ From that time many of his disciples [*i.e. the larger band of 'followers'*] went back, and walked no more with him. ... His teaching caused a *split*, - a division, - because many of His former so-called 'disciples' could not agree with Him, and they walked out ... This is what He meant when He said on another occasion, **Lk. 12:51** Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division.

And so, after the division, ... ⁶⁷ Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? ⁶⁸ **Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.** ⁶⁹ **And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.** ... Those profoundly theological and Christological words came from the lips of none other than *Peter!* ... *Peter!* ... However, Peter, - on His own, - didn't work it out ... any more than it wasn't Peter on His own who declared Jesus to be **Mt. 16:16** the Christ, the Son of the living God, at Caesarea Philippi ... on his own. How did Peter know exactly the right answer to give? Here's how, **Mt. 16:17** And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ... God had revealed it to him, and that was how Peter could also utter the words in Jn. 6, ⁶⁸ ... Thou hast the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ **And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.** ... These were direct revelations from God, otherwise Peter would not have known to have said them.

Every believer has a direct revelation from God for that is what began the salvation process. No one can come to a saving faith apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. No one can figure out salvation in Christ unless and until it is revealed to them by God. No amount of human thought or study can explain how Jesus came into this world to become the Saviour of sinners. Salvation by grace is the *mystery* work of God that only can be known when *He* opens the mind to believe, and the heart to receive. ... That is the only way Peter understood ... and Jesus was training him! ... Peter had never been to a Bible college, or stood up in any religious context ... Outside of fishing, he would have been limited in his knowledge ... But he had been with Jesus!

And that is what changed him and ultimately made him into a disciple who confidently preached and presented Christ ... and that is why the Lord prepared him for and used him on the Day of Pentecost, and afterwards. In fact, in the days after Pentecost Peter and John had been 'pulled in' before **Acts 4:5** ... their rulers, and elders, and scribes, ⁶ And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas,

and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem ... all the weighty theologians of the day had ³ laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day because they were ² grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ... ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, ⁹ If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; ¹⁰ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. ... Peter, - without changing or diluting his message, - preached Christ crucified ... ¹¹ This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. ¹² Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

The religious rulers, - as we say, - couldn't 'get over what they were hearing', ¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. ... That was the reason for Peter's authority, - he had been with Jesus!

Three thousand people saved on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41) ... and it didn't stop there for ⁴⁷ ... the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. ... And it kept going on, **Acts 4:4** many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand ... **5:14** And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. ... The Jewish leaders didn't know what to do ... such was the powerful move of the Holy Spirit through the streets and market places of Jerusalem, **5:33** When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them. ... The authorities could not stop the fire of the Holy Spirit burning the Gospel into the hearts of sinners, and it began when *Peter* preached Christ. ... We are not boasting in Peter because Peter was simply the disciple God used ... We are boasting in the Saviour he presented!

He wasn't preaching about himself. Neither was he preaching what the people wanted to hear. ... And the reason he kept preaching with such power was because the message was like a burden laid upon his heart by the Holy Spirit ... to tell others about Jesus! That is what qualified him, - he preached **Mt. 16:16** the Christ, the Son of the living God! That is what the Lord commissioned him to do for the Lord told him, ¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon

this rock I will build my church σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, You are rock (no definite article), - Peter (Πέτρος) means ‘rock’, - ... and upon this πέτρα, - πέτρα is a different word to Πέτρος for πέτρα means an *area* of solid rocky ground, - ... and Peter, you have just announced Me as the Messiah, the Son of the living God ... and *that* confession of faith *you* made, – that has been revealed to you, - is the *Rock*, - the foundation, - upon which I shall build my Church.

And that is how Paul understood it, **Eph. 2:19** Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; **20** And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; **21** In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: **22** In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. ... It is also the way Peter himself understood and explained it **I Peter 1:1** ... to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia ... **2:2** ... Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Jesus told Peter that upon the words of his confession of faith, the Church would be built. And actually, it wasn't Peter's words *per se*, for Peter, - under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, - was quoting from the prophecy of Isaiah ... from what *God Himself* had said, **Is. 28:16** Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste [*i.e. he that believeth shall not be 'running about like a headless chicken'*]. ... That was the kind of preacher Peter was, - he preached nothing other than God's holy and precious Word! ... That is the only kind of preacher/servant God sends.

And Jesus told him, **Mt. 16:18** That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it [*... will neither pull it down or overcome it*]. **19** And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ... When you preach Me, - *Christ*, - the gates of Hell (Hades) will not stop the message from reaching its target for the gates of Hell will be barred, and the gates of Heaven opened. *That* is the authority with which the Gospel shall be preached ... That is how confident Jesus was when He later prophesied, **Mt. 24:14** this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations ... The Gospel, - that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, - will reach everywhere ... and through the means at our disposal today, we see how that prophecy is being fulfilled.

And it cannot be stopped for not even all the hosts of Hell, - through the persecution of believers, through the perversion of apostasy, lukewarmness, confusion, or anything else, - can stop the mighty power of the Gospel to change lives, and achieve God's purposes for His glory. ... Peter, - through preaching Christ, - unlocked the doors of Heaven for the Jews in Jerusalem when he preached that great sermon on the Day of Pentecost.

It was like a flood that overwhelmed its hearers. Its opponents could do nothing to stop its progress. They had no power to stop the advance of the Gospel. And then afterwards, all those [Acts 2:9](#) Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, [10](#) Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, [11](#) Cretes and Arabians went back home with the Gospel ... and many more communities, districts, regions, and countries heard that Jesus Christ died on the cross, outside the city walls of Jerusalem for sinners. ... God's plan was 'in full swing'!

And there is nothing can stop Him. He has a whole raft of operations that began with Peter and which continue on to this very day ... And the work He gave to Peter and the apostles is not finished yet because it has been 'passed on down the chain'. Jude, the brother of Jesus and one of the most influential leaders of the early Church, wrote, [3](#) I ... exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. That is our legacy!

And Peter was the man God greatly used in the propagation of the Gospel in those early days. ... How did he progress? Did he make any more mistakes? Did he do everything right and proper from then on? ... Well, we'll take a look in our next study of this very down-to-earth servant of God.