

## PETER : FAITH TRIED IN THE FIRE! : PART 1

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Satan Sifts Peter, Peter Declares Christ Messiah, Defining "Converted", Prodigal Son, Jesus Knew Mens' Hearts, Peter's Weak Faith, Peter Walks On The Water . . . And Sinks, Peter's Declaration Of Loyalty, Peter's Presumptuous Faith, Peter's Slowness To Understand, Peter Rebuked By Jesus, God's Ways Past Finding Out, Love Of Our Flesh, Betrayal In The Garden, Shepherd Gives Life For Sheep, Judas - A Hireling And Thief, Defining "Lost" And Apollyon, Christian Persecution, Why The Apostles Were Spared, Peter's Human Weaknesses, Pride, God's Way Up Is Down, Dangers Of Self, All The Apostles Backslide, Peter's Remorse And Inner Turmoil, Return To Galilee, Fruitless Fishing Night, Darkest Hour Before Dawn, Feed My Lambs, A Chronology Of Events, Getting Back On Track For The Lord, Jesus Appears A Total Of Three Times Prior To His Ascension

Some time ago, I was involved in a private online discussion with a dear sister in the Lord, and she informed me that she felt as if Satan was sifting her, just as he had tested and sifted Peter's faith, as we see by the following verses:

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."  
Luke 22:31-32, KJV

Upon reading the above verses, this dear sister came to the mistaken conclusion that Peter's heart had not really been converted to the faith; however, as I explained to her, that word "converted" is a bit misleading to us modern readers, who have a very different understanding of the word. In this particular case, it is not implying that Peter was not a believer. Quite to the contrary, Peter most certainly did believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Perhaps you will recall the following scene found in the Gospel of Matthew:

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 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."  
Matthew 16:15-17, KJV

It should be apparent to you then, that Peter was in fact convinced that Jesus was the long-awaited promised Messiah, BUT, that does not mean that, like some of us today, Peter did not have his moments of weakness when he doubted his inner convictions; and that is the crux of the matter. In the previous verses, the word "converted" is derived from the Greek word "epistrepho", which, in this case, means to

turn back to, or to return to. In other words, it indicates the opposite of falling away, or backsliding from the faith. As I was sharing this with my daughter in the kitchen a few moments ago, the Lord gave her an excellent example of what this word means: the story of the Prodigal Son. When the wayward son came to his senses, realized his error, and returned to his father's house, in a much humbler state of mind, he was in fact converted. That is precisely what the Greek word "epistrepho" means. God bless my daughter for being in tune to the Spirit! Even I didn't think of that example.

Being the Messiah, the Son of God, and the very Living Word of God, Jesus knew exactly what was in men's hearts. It is for this reason, that in the Gospel of John, we find the following interesting comment:

"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."  
John 2:24-25, KJV

In his Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle Paul was also inspired to write:

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."  
Hebrews 4:12, KJV

So Jesus, the Living Word, could in fact discern what was in men's hearts. Exactly what is in men's hearts? Consider the following verses which describe the darker side of our human nature:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"  
Jeremiah 17:9, KJV

"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."  
Matthew 15:19-20, KJV

From the previous verses found in the Gospel of Luke, it is quite evident that Jesus knew what was in Peter's heart. He knew that Peter's faith was rather weak, even though dear Peter tried very hard to convey the exact opposite to his fellow Disciples. Consider the following facts. Who was it who declared Jesus the Christ? It was Peter. Who was it who tried to walk on the waters of the Galilee with the Lord? It was Peter:

"And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me

come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"  
Matthew 14:25-31, KJV

Following their final united celebration of the Feast of the Passover, also known as the Last Supper, the Lord led His followers to the Garden of Gethsemane. On the way there, He once again revealed to them the facts concerning His coming betrayal, Crucifixion and Resurrection. Again, who was it who said that he would never deny the Lord, even if all of the others abandoned Him, and that he would even be willing to die with the Lord? It was Peter:

"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder."  
Matthew 26:30-36, KJV

So the battle between pride and true faith was raging in Peter's heart. Because the Lord had indicated that Peter would be the leader of the small band of Apostles following His Departure from the Earth, it isn't difficult to imagine that Peter probably tried very hard to live up to the Lord's expectations, and to fulfill the role which had been given to him, by trying to be an example of faith, loyalty, and perseverance to the other Disciples; but, it is obvious from the way the events of that night unraveled, that Peter tried to convey more faith than he obviously had. Perhaps he had a presumptuous kind of faith.

In fact, I would daresay that the fact that Peter struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear, was another indication that Peter was still relying upon his fleshly wisdom and strength, and that he still did not understand that Jesus had to die. Perhaps Peter viewed his actions as the ultimate demonstration of his love, devotion and loyalty to the Lord, by trying to prevent His arrest and ultimate Crucifixion, but Peter had it all wrong. Instead of helping to fulfill God's Will, he was standing in the way of it. You may recall that earlier, Jesus in fact had to rebuke Peter for this very same reason, as we see here:

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter

took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."  
Matthew 16:21-23, KJV

Imagine; Peter standing there and harshly chiding the Lord. He must have been totally shocked, not to mention humbled, when Jesus turned around and rebuked him; even referring to him as Satan, which, as I have mentioned before, in the original Greek and Hebrew, actually means "adversary". At that point in time, Peter was in fact acting as an adversary to God's Perfect Will, and His Plan of Salvation. Peter's problem was that he was still seeing things the way that men see them, and not the way that God sees them. He was trying to understand them with his mind, and he was not spiritually in-tune to what God was doing, even after being with Jesus for some three years. As Paul would write some time later:

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."  
Romans 8:14, KJV

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."  
1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?"  
Romans 11:33-34, KJV

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."  
1 Corinthians 2:16, KJV

Many centuries earlier, the Lord inspired the Prophet Isaiah to also write:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."  
Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

It is also quite possible that Peter's actions in the Garden of Gethsemane were the result of a mixture of loyalty, pride and fear. Like all of us, Peter was a weak human, and Jesus knew that he was afraid for his flesh, and that Peter would eventually betray Him, rather than risk losing his own life. Crucifixion was not an easy way to die! As the Apostle Paul would write some years later:

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:"  
Ephesians 5:29, KJV

In trying to save Jesus from His persecutors in the Garden of Gethsemane, it is possible that Peter and the others were

attempting to save their own lives as well. Considering the suddenness of the assault against Jesus, they could not possibly know if they might be taken and crucified right along with Him. It was the middle of night; they had just awakened from sleep; and they were probably in a general state of confusion. The very fact that they were even asleep is an indication to me that they didn't have the slightest clue regarding what was going to happen that night; even though Jesus had already told them plainly. Put yourself in their position for a moment. If you knew that a terrible event was going to occur that night, would you have been able to sleep? I think not; so that leads me to believe that they just didn't understand; even though Jesus had already told them several times. You may recall that following His Resurrection, Jesus said to Cleopas and the other Disciple who were traveling on the road to Emmaus:

". . . O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:"  
Luke 24:25b, KJV

But returning to the dark events which occurred that night in Gethsemane, the Lord, knowing what was probably going on in their hearts and minds, intervened between His enemies and His Disciples, and said:

". . . I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none."  
John 18:8-9, KJV

In that very moment, Jesus fulfilled something which He had said to them earlier in John chapter ten. He said:

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."  
John 10:10-15, KJV

That night, Judas was clearly the thief, the hireling and the destroyer, while Jesus was the shepherd who willingly laid down His life, not only to save the rest of the fold, but to save us as well. Incidentally, you might find it interesting to know that when the previous prophecy says "have I lost none", what it actually means is that none of the other Disciples were taken and killed along with Jesus. That word "lost" is derived from the Greek word "apollumi", which means to destroy, to kill, or to put to death. Some of you may recognize it as the very same root from which the name "Apollyon", or "the Destroyer", is derived in the Book of Revelation:

"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."  
Revelation 9:11, KJV

So one thing is for certain; Apollyon the Destroyer was indeed at work behind the scenes, that dark night in the Garden of Gethsemane! As Jesus also said as His enemies encompassed Him about:

". . . Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."  
Luke 22:52b-53, KJV

While we Christians today often speak and write freely about living our lives for the Lord, denying the desires of our flesh, and laying down our lives daily in a symbolic sense, -- please refer to the article entitled "Are You Crucified With Christ?" and similar articles regarding discipleship -- the truth of the matter is that the vast majority of us have never lived up to the example of the First Century Disciples, many of whom paid for their faith with their very lives. Most of us have never suffered life-threatening persecution. In most cases, it has been limited to a small bit of verbal harassment or ostracism by our peers, unless, of course, one happens to be a missionary in a foreign land, where our Christian faith is not tolerated, and even hated. It is commonly believed that all of the first Apostles, save for John and Judas Iscariot, died martyr's deaths. They not only died daily to their personal desires, as the Lord commanded them to do, but they paid the ultimate price of surrendering their Earthly lives as a final witness of their faith. Consider the following verses:

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."  
Luke 9:23-24, KJV

"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."  
John 15:20-21, KJV

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."  
Matthew 24:9, KJV

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."  
2 Timothy 3:12, KJV

Please refer to such articles as "Civil Disobedience And Christian Persecution" for more information concerning this topic. It is for this reason then, that the Apostles' lives

had to be spared that night, according to prophecy, so that they could fulfill the job which God had given them to do. Their most important work hadn't really begun yet, and would not really begin until Christ returned to Heaven, and they received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost while in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. God simply would not allow any of them to be cut off before their time; and thus, Jesus was taken alone that night.

Returning to the Apostle Peter, the main point I wish to emphasize regarding him, is that he was no less human than the rest of us. He definitely had his pride; and we can't overlook the possibility that his pride may have prevented him from being completely honest with himself. Perhaps Peter even had an inflated image of himself as "the leader" of the band of Apostles. If that was the case, then it is easy to see how his betrayal of the Lord was a necessary event in his life, and in reality, an essential step in his spiritual growth; because it not only greatly humbled him, but it revealed to him his own humanness, as well as his need to depend utterly on the Lord for his faith and spiritual strength. I am once again reminded of verses such as the following:

"The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility."  
Proverbs 15:33, KJV

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."  
Proverbs 16:18, KJV

"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility."  
Proverbs 18:12, KJV

So as I have pointed out before, God's way up, is often down first; down to self; down to pride; down to vanity. It is only when we come to the end of ourselves, and honestly see what little nothings we are, that the Light of Christ can truly begin to shine through us. As long as self is in the way, we remain utterly useless to God; because in our pride, we want all of the credit for everything. We want to be the center of attention. Our lives are self-centered, and not truly Christ-centered.

Allow me to also point out that Peter did not backslide alone. We are told that after Peter had cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest, and after Jesus had turned Himself over to the authorities, all of His Disciples fled from the Garden of Gethsemane. They all wanted to save their own skins. Even after three years of being with the Messiah, and seeing all of the wonderful miracles which He had performed, and knowing who He was, no one was willing to defend Him after that. Their faith just flew out the window:

"But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled."  
Matthew 26:56, KJV

But, as we have already seen, this was a foreordained part

of God's Plan. Not only did this sad incident contribute to their humility, but it saved their lives, so that they could go on to fulfill God's destiny for each one of them. As I explain in some of my other articles, not only did Peter betray the Lord, but after the betrayal, we are told that he returned to his old life as a fisherman; possibly because he no longer felt worthy to be a Disciple of the Lord. Imagine if you were in Peter's shoes. How would you feel? Like him, you would probably feel greatly condemned. You might even feel that God no longer loves you, and that you are utterly useless to Him. Perhaps you might even fear His imminent judgments on your life for being such a failure. We don't know exactly what went on in Peter's mind and heart, but we do know that he wept bitterly because of his weakness:

"And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly."  
Matthew 26:75, KJV

In spite of his outward denial, we know that Peter was fighting hard to persevere in his faith. Remember that it was also Peter and John who followed the Lord to the palace of Caiaphas the night of His mock trial; and it was also Peter and John who ran to the empty tomb following the Lord's Resurrection; so Peter must have really had a lot of inner turmoil going on in his heart. He wanted to believe, and maintain his faith, but he was finding it very difficult to do so. There was a major battle occurring between his mind and his heart.

Sadly, being as Peter was viewed as the Elder Disciple, the Apostle John tells us that all of the others followed his poor example and went right along fishing with him. Exactly where did they go fishing? The Scriptures tell us that it was at the Sea of Tiberias, which was the Roman name which had been given to the Sea of Galilee by King Herod, who ruled over Galilee. In other words, the indication here, is that the Apostles were so scared, that they fled Jerusalem entirely, and returned to the safer hills of the north, far away from the power center of the Scribes and the Pharisees, and their Roman persecutors:

"After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing."  
John 21:1-3, KJV

Notice that the Disciples caught absolutely nothing that dark night, (and it must have seemed dark to them in more ways than one), because God does not bless disobedience. I daresay that He wanted them to feel the full weight of their sin and unbelief. He must have been dealing very heavily with each one of them that night. But, the darkest hour is right before dawn; and John tells us that it was the very next morning, that the Resurrected Jesus appeared on the shore of the Galilee, with a fire already made, and fish and



loaves prepared for the Disciples. It is later in that same chapter, that Jesus has the well-known "Feed my lambs" talk with Peter, as we see here:

"This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."  
John 21:14-17, KJV

Perhaps it was after this heart-to-heart, to-the-point talk with the Lord, that Peter's faith began to be restored; and he was converted as Jesus had prophesied. He obviously began to realize that Jesus had not given up on him, as Satan had undoubtedly tried to convince him; and thus began Peter's journey to become the man that God truly wanted him to be. Peter's tears of bitterness were transformed into tears of joy and hope, but it took a bit of personal introspection, honesty, and humility, before that transformation could begin in earnest.

Allow me to share another interesting point with you. While this is pure speculation on my part, it seems to me that the Lord's appearance at the Lake of Tiberias occurred before the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem when the Apostles received the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Chronologically-speaking, it does not make sense to me that the Disciples would receive the powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit, speak in foreign tongues, win thousands of converts to the Lord, and then end up in a dismal backslidden state in Galilee where they spend a fruitless night at their old jobs as fishermen. Why is this point important? If my speculation is correct, it highlights a very important lesson, and actually hints at one of the ways in which the Lord seems to operate; and that is this: When we backslide and get off-track in our walk with the Lord, sometimes, it seems that He leads us back to the point where we first went astray, in order to learn the lessons that we missed due to our detour. Perhaps some of you have experienced this in your own lives.

The Scriptures do offer some support for my speculation. You will notice that in the previous verses, we are told that this is the third time that Jesus appeared to His Disciples. In the previous chapter, we are told that the Lord appeared to them on the evening of the first day of the week, which was also the day of His Resurrection. In other words, it was that same Sunday evening. We are also told that He appeared a second time eight days later:

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you . . . And after

eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."  
John 20:19, 26, KJV

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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PETER : FAITH TRIED IN THE FIRE! : PART 2

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Jesus Appears To The Apostles A Second Time, Jesus Appears For Forty Days Prior To His Ascension, Return To Jerusalem, Apostles' Tests Of Faith, Purging Dross, More Humbler Peter, Our Common Fiery Trials, Loving Rebuke, Additional Resources

I concluded the first part of this article by sharing with you the verses from the Gospel of John where Jesus appears to the Apostles for the second time. Allow me to share those verses with you again:

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you . . . And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."  
John 20:19, 26, KJV

There are two important points which are lacking in these verses. First, there is no mention of the Lord's Ascension to Heaven, and second, there is no mention that this is the last time that He saw His Disciples. In fact, in reading the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we discover that the Lord appeared to His Disciples for a period of forty days following His Resurrection; and that the last time that the Apostles see Him, it occurs on the Mount of Olives, just outside of Jerusalem; and that it is there that He ascends to Heaven. Furthermore, all of these events occur before the Day of Pentecost when the Disciples receive the Holy Spirit and become a mighty witness, which is described in chapter two:

"To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they

should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me . . . And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey."

Acts 1:3-4, 9-12, KJV

So putting all of these descriptive verses together, it appears that the Disciples fled northward to Galilee after the Lord's Crucifixion, in order to save their lives, where they must have remained in a backslidden state, until the Lord had "the talk" with Peter in John chapter twenty-one. My guess is that it was at that time, that they understood that they had left the job unfinished, and so they returned south towards Jerusalem, which is how we find them bidding the Lord farewell on the Mount of Olives. As I point out in other articles, notice that the Lord's final instructions to them, is to return to Jerusalem, where they must wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit, which occurs in chapter two.

From all of the events I have shared in this article, it becomes evident that the Apostles underwent some major tests of their faith. God had to purge out the dross from their lives, before He could even begin to use them in a major way. He had to bring them to the end of themselves, and make plain to them their weak, sinful condition, in order to make sure that they would give credit to Whom credit is due. The Lord had to mold them in the fires of personal trials and tribulation. I would daresay that Peter's trials may have been heavier than those of the others, because he had been chosen by the Lord to lead the young flock. Once Peter had his self-confidence, pride and cockiness knocked out of him through his own sins and self-serving blunders, we see an amazing transformation in his life, as is revealed in some of the things he wrote in his Epistles. For example, please consider the following verses:

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"  
1 Peter 5:5-6, KJV

What a marked change from the proud man who claimed that he would never deny the Lord, and that he would even be willing to go all the way to the Cross with Him. Peter had been through the school of hard knocks. He had endured the fiery trials of faith, which mold men into the vessels that God truly wants them to be. As a result, Peter was able to use his personal experiences to humbly encourage others who were going through similar trials. In other parts of this same Epistle Peter also writes:

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if

need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

1 Peter 1:6-9, KJV

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."

1 Peter 4:12-14, KJV

Before concluding this article, allow me to share a few more verses with you regarding this same topic:

"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Job 23:10, KJV

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."

Zechariah 13:9, KJV

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

James 1:2-4, KJV

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

1 Corinthians 10:13, KJV

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Revelation 3:18, KJV

So if you find yourself in the midst of God's refining fires, please don't despair. God never allows anything to happen to us unless it is for our own good, and everything He does, is always done in love, as we see here:

"Open rebuke is better than secret love."

Proverbs 27:5, KJV

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

Hebrews 12:6, KJV

Finally, please remember this precious promise, which is one of our favorites:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Romans 8:28, KJV

With these verses I will bring this article to a close. I hope that you have found it informative, and I pray that it has been a blessing and an inspiration in your life.

If you have enjoyed reading this article, please consider sharing its URL with your online friends. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would also very much appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly! For additional info, you may want to refer to the list of resources below which were also mentioned in this article, or which are related to the topics which were discussed in this article. All of them are likewise located on the Endtime Prophecy Net web server:

Are You Crucified With Christ?  
Civil Disobedience And Christian Persecution  
So You Really Think You Are So Humble?  
The Battle is Not Yours Alone!  
The Lord Will Lift You Up!

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