

The Three Peters

Chapter 7 New Testament Audio Lesson #79



Objective: To introduce the author of Peter's epistles and the process of conversion



[Jesus said,] "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."

—Luke 22:31-34

The Peter who wrote the epistles of Peter was the same man of the Gospels and Acts, yet he was different. We can follow his growth throughout the New Testament. Jesus gave Simon, Andrew's brother, the nickname of Cephas or Peter, which means rock or stability, even though Peter was spiritually unstable as well as impulsive. Jesus' nickname was an incentive for him to grow to be solid and stable.

On the night of His arrest, Jesus told Peter that Satan wanted to sift him like wheat, but Jesus had prayed for Peter, that his faith would not fail. Jesus said that when Peter had turned back, he should strengthen his brothers. This statement could imply that Peter had not yet been converted. Perhaps his conversion occurred that same night that he denied Jesus three times as the Lord had predicted.

At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers, Peter told the crowd to repent and be converted. *Converted* literally means to be turned upside down. We are all born upside down. When we are converted, we are turned right side up. It is a complete turnover, to experience something that revolutionizes your life.

Peter, like Moses, learned that he was nobody, that he was somebody God could use, and that God can do wonderful things through somebody who has learned that he is nobody. From the time Jesus named him Rock through the time he wept bitterly after denying Jesus, Peter learned that he was nobody. After the Resurrection, Jesus appeared to Peter and other disciples and He asked Peter three times if he loved Him. When Peter said, "Yes Lord, You know all things, You know I love You," Jesus told him to feed and shepherd His sheep. Peter learned he was somebody that God could and wanted to use.

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit broke out through Peter, because by then Peter knew these spiritual secrets: 1) I am not but He is and He is with me; 2) I cannot but He can and He is with me; 3) It is not what I want but what He wants and He is with me. At Pentecost, 3,000 people were converted. Later, as an old pastor, Peter could look back at his life and say, "I did not but He did."



1. True or False: The man who wrote the epistles of Peter was not the apostle Peter.
2. True or False: Peter's epistles sometimes reveal the old Peter, who was impulsive and unstable.
3. True or False: To be converted means to have a complete turnover.

Choose all answers that apply.

4. Who was Simon?
 - a. Andrew's brother
 - b. The disciple that Jesus nicknamed Peter
 - c. An uneducated fisherman
 - d. All of the above
5. Why does Jesus' nickname for Simon--Cephas or Peter--seem to be a strange choice?
 - a. Simon was a fisherman.
 - b. Simon was steady and dependable every day.
 - c. Simon looked like a rock.
 - d. Simon was not spiritually strong like a rock.
6. Why do you think Jesus gave Peter that nickname?
 - a. To make him feel special
 - b. To make fun of him
 - c. He did not know Simon well yet
 - d. To show that Jesus saw the great potential in him
7. What were the lessons that Peter learned?
 - a. He was a nobody and would always be a nobody.
 - b. He was nobody but he was somebody that God could use.
 - c. He was a nobody, and God cannot use nobodies.
 - d. He was a nobody, and God wanted him to feel badly about himself.

8. In the book of Acts, how was Peter different from when he first met Jesus in the Gospels?
- He had become spiritually and emotionally stable.
 - His emotions overcame him sometimes.
 - He wanted to be the leader and in charge.
 - He did not waver from his purpose or his passion for Jesus.
9. When was Peter converted?
- The night he denied Jesus
 - On the beach with Jesus after His resurrection
 - At Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came
 - We do not know for certain.
10. What does conversion mean?
- We have said a prayer and have been baptized.
 - We are bold in sharing our religion with others.
 - We go to church faithfully.
 - We have been turned right side up spiritually.
11. What is the key theme in Peter's epistles?
- Suffering
 - Love
 - Fruit
 - Salvation
12. Why are Peter's epistles sometimes hard to understand?
- He was a scholar.
 - Peter jumped from one topic to another.
 - Sylvanus made mistakes when he wrote down what Peter said.
 - Peter's handwriting was hard to read.

At Pentecost, Peter encouraged his listeners to repent and be converted. Conversion means having a complete turnover so that you are right side up. It completely revolutionizes your life. Have you repented of your sins and been converted? If not, you can do so right now. Pray this prayer: *“Loving Heavenly Father, I confess that I am separated from You and Your plan for my life. I confess that I am a sinner. I trust Your Son, Jesus Christ, to be my personal Savior. I place my complete trust in His death on the cross for the forgiveness of every one of my sins. Thank You for making me right with You through the finished work on the cross. I now forsake and turn away from all my sins. Right here and now I crown my Savior, Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life, and I surrender my life unconditionally to His control and direction. As I follow Your Son Jesus Christ, bring my life into perfect alignment with the great design You always have willed for my life. Amen.”*



Explain the spiritual secrets Peter had learned by the time of Pentecost in your own words. Have you learned those secrets yourself? If not, ask God to help you understand and put them into practice in your own life.



Thank God for the growth and maturity we see in Peter's life. Thank God for Peter's example and for his strong faith to the very end. Ask God to help you learn the lessons and spiritual secrets that Peter learned. Thank God for what He is going to reveal to you through this study of Peter's epistles.

NOTES



Going Deeper

1. How would you define and apply to your own journey of faith what it means to be converted?

2. How would you define and apply to your own journey of faith the three distinct Peters that we see in the New Testament? _____

3. How would you apply to your own journey of faith the three lessons Peter learned from the time he met Jesus until he went out into the darkness and wept bitterly, when he met with Jesus on the beach (as described in John 21), and when he preached the great sermon on the Day of Pentecost? _____

4. How would you describe and apply to your own journey of faith the four spiritual secrets learned by Peter? _____

5. How did the reality that the Peter who wrote his epistles could not read or write impact his writing style? _____

6. Explain and apply to your own life where this illiterate apostle got the treasure house of inspired wisdom that he shares with us in his letters. _____

7. List and apply to your own life the things that were precious to the old apostle who wrote his letters. _____
