

1082 Prophecy about Peter would deny Jesus three times and love of God- Jesus (34)
(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

First, we saw that Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him three times. Although Peter and the disciples were willing to die with Jesus, they became weak when things came to pass, and the sheep were scattered and fled in all directions. But the Lord has really prayed for Peter so that he would not lose faith and that he would be able to strengthen his brothers after he repented and turned around. Second, from Peter's reaction, we saw Peter's personality at that time, which was that he wanted to solve the problem immediately regardless of the consequences. Third, we look at how Peter denied the Lord three times and repented. Finally, we look at what the Bible says about a related verse, which states that Jesus asked Peter three times 'do you love me?' Here we see what the Bible says about these verses and briefly discuss two controversial explanations.

1. Prophecy that Peter would deny the Lord three times

"“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” But he said to Him, “Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!” And He said, “I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.””(Luke 22:31-34)

We first see that Peter really has this desire to die with the Lord. We can see this from the following verses. "At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets." Then all the disciples left Him and fled. Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. But Peter was following Him at a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and entered in, and sat down with the officers to see the outcome."(Matthew 26:55-58)

When Jesus was arrested, all the disciples left him and fled, except for Peter and John. Peter was waiting in the courtyard for the outcome. The details are very clear in the Gospel of John, "Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in. Then the slave-girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself."(John 18:15-18)

The high priest judged the Lord inside, so we can also see from these verses that John should have entered inside and saw the process of judgment. Peter did not go in and stayed in the courtyard to warm himself by the fire. Later we will talk about how this prophecy of

Peter denying the Lord three times was fulfilled, and we will know why only John was in front of the cross in the end. We know that the disciple was John because the scripture says that Jesus entrusted Mary to John. "When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household."(John 19:26-27)

The Gospel of Mark records the same thing and says that after resurrection, He will first go to Galilee to meet them. "And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, because it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." But Peter said to Him, "Even though all may fall away, yet I will not." And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times." But Peter kept saying insistently, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all were saying the same thing also."(Mark 14:27-31)

Although all the disciples were willing to die with Jesus, they became weak because they had to pay the price of death. The sheep were scattered and fled in all directions. Even to the extent that "A young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they seized him. But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked."(Mark 14:51-52) The Bible does not say who this young man is. Some people guess it, but this is just a guess at most. There will be no real conclusion logically, so it is better not to guess. Another point is that the Lord knew in advance that He would die, and He was a perfect human being with free will like the disciples. From the scattering of the disciples, we can also see how difficult it was for Him to do so from a human perspective. Ah! But He willingly chose to obey God and was crucified for us.

The same thing is recorded in Matthew 26:31-35. It is also mentioned in the Gospel of John, "Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times."(John 13:36-38) All four gospels mention this matter, which shows the importance of this matter. In addition, the Gospel of John guarantees that even though Christians will die once, they will be resurrected and ascended to heaven after death. Because the Lord died for us, was resurrected and ascended to heaven, we will all follow him later. We have seen that John's Gospel was written last of the four Gospels and often adds things not written in the first three Gospels.

Finally, we see that this is an example of "...Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat."(Luke 22:31) Yes, Peter indeed fell so much to the extent that he denied the Lord three times, but the Lord really prayed for him so that he would not lose his faith. After he repented and turned around, he strengthened his brothers. This is obvious since it indeed is what Peter did after his repentance and thus recovery.

2. Peter's reaction

"And He said to them, "When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" They said, "No, nothing." And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'And He was numbered with transgressors'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment." They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough.""(Luke 22:35-38)

The first paragraph refers to the past event, "These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; ...Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support."(Matthew 10:5-10) The situation is now different. Here in the paragraph, Jesus predicted that He would be numbered with the criminals. Because He also said that things related to me will definitely come true, He implicitly predicted what He would encounter in the human world. In these verses, Jesus obviously did not mean a material sword. How could two material swords be enough? The sword refers to a spiritual sword. The sword is the sword of the Spirit, because the scripture says, "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ...And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."(Ephesians 6:11 -17) We have shared before that only the sword of the Holy Spirit is the offensive weapon in the full armor, and the rest are defensive.

We can see from another incident Peter's personality at that time, which was that he wanted to solve the problem immediately regardless of the consequences. When Jesus was betrayed and arrested, the situation was like this. "When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him."(Luke 22:49-51) Although the Gospel of Luke only says that there was one man, we know that that man was Peter, because later scriptures added, "One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, ..." (John 18:26) It can be seen that Peter was reckless, but he saw Jesus mercifully performed a miracle, which allowed Peter not to face the consequences of his impulsive behavior.

3. How did Peter deny the Lord three times?

"Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." A little later, another saw him and said, "You are one of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" After about an

hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly."(Luke 22:54-62)

The circumstances of Peter's three denials of the Lord are clearly stated in the Gospel of Luke. The same thing is recorded in Mark 14:66-72 and Matthew 26:69-75. The latter also said that different servant-girls asked him in the first two times, and "...the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away."(Matthew 26:73) No wonder the Gospel of Luke says that he was a Galilean. After Peter denied the Lord three times, he saw the Lord turning around to look at him. He immediately remembered the Lord's prophecy. He regretted what he had done and went out to weep bitterly. In the era of the New Testament, it is "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."(1 John 1:9) Seeing that Peter is still the head of the apostles, isn't this sentence the best portrayal of him? Even he still was in the era of the Old Testament since Jesus wasn't dead and resurrected yet, all his sins were washed away by his repentance at that time! Here we see Peter really going out in repentance and finally only John was at the cross.

4. Why did Jesus ask Peter three times 'do you love me?'

Let's look at some related scriptures, that is, Jesus asked Peter three times do you love me? We've shared this before, but here it is hopefully a little clearer. The scripture says, "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead. So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love (agapao, G25, verb) Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love (G25) Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love (G5368, phileo) Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep."(John 21:14-17)

Some people say that Peter denied the Lord three times, so after the resurrection, the Lord asked him three times 'do you love me' to build Peter up. Although I thought this way before, I found the problem is that the Bible never said that! So, what does the Bible say? Let's see what Jesus said. In both the first and second times, Jesus used God's love (G25). When Jesus used the love of God, He told Peter, "Tend My lambs" and "Shepherd My sheep," so it must be tended and shepherded with the love of God. The third time Jesus was different, He used human love (G5368, phileo). At this time He said: "Tend My sheep." Therefore, using human love can only be tended, not shepherded. How can a person pastor if he or she does not have the love of God? By the way, there are many kinds of love in the

original text, but the Chinese and English translations both use the same word 'love.' It is impossible to distinguish which kind of love it is. In this case, you have to read the original Greek text to distinguish it. For people like me who don't understand the original text, they can only use reference books such as the Strong's Concordance.

Because Peter used the word love G5368 (phileo) in his three answers, and Jesus used the same love (G3268) the third time, some people say that Jesus lowered His standards to match Peter's. This is not true because Jesus is one of the Trinity and is faithful. He never lowers His standards. Someone may say that David lied to Achish, because the scripture clearly states, "The number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months. ...Now Achish said, "Where have you made a raid today?" And David said, "Against the Negev of Judah and against the Negev of the Jerahmeelites and against the Negev of the Kenites." David did not leave a man or a woman alive to bring to Gath, ..." (1 Samuel 27:7-12) God did not hold him accountable for lying. Doesn't the law say: "You shall not ...lie to one another?" (Leviticus 19:11) Although God did not tell him to lie, didn't this mean that God had lowered His standards? No, David had to lie to the Gentiles about worldly things to save his own life.

Can we just say we can lie at unbelievers then? No, this is just a special case, because God looks at the heart and does not want people to stick to the Law to commit suicide. He values David's life more, so in the case of Bathsheba, God took away David's death penalty (see Samuel (2 Chronicles 12:13), we will not be in the same condition as him in earthly things. Moreover, God has absolute sovereignty, just like "...does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?" (Romans 9:21) In spiritual matters, the book of Revelation clearly says, "...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10)

In the book of Romans, it says, "...the love of God (G26, noun) has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit..." (Romans 5:5) At that time, Peter had not yet been filled with the Holy Spirit, because the filling of the Holy Spirit had to wait until Pentecost (see Acts 2:1-4). So at that time, he only knew human love. No wonder all three times he answered with human love. We previously discussed this issue in detail in "200920 Let's talk again about reading the Bible from God's perspective" on YouTube in Chinese. Those who are interested can find some discussions there. Now that the Holy Spirit is indwelling Christians, we can all preach according to the requirements of the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:18-20). Because the Triune God has absolute sovereignty, the "...one and the same Spirit works all these things (gifts), distributing to each one individually just as He wills." (1 Corinthians 12:11) We should tend and shepherd according to the gifts we have been given.