

**1139 Do you love Me and Bible verses cannot be equated casually - John(21)1-25
(Verses refer to those in NASB95 unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)**

First, let us look at the scene of Jesus appearing by the Sea of Tiberias and see how He opened their eyes so that they could know His resurrected spirit body. Although this spirit body was not restricted by matter, it could eat food like normal people. Second, during this appearance, Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love Me?" The meaning is very clear according to the Bible, but it has become a controversial topic. We will talk about its true meaning from Jesus' viewpoint and discuss some different views. Finally, we described the prophecy of how Peter would die and why the Bible verses cannot be equated casually.

1. Jesus' third appearance to His disciples after His resurrection at the Sea of Tiberias

"After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way. Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing. But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. So Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch." So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish. So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught." Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead."(John 21:1-14)

Those involved in this appearance were the five apostles - Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, and John, plus two disciples with unknown names, so they had at least professional fishermen among them, but they caught nothing that night until Jesus told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat. We emphasize that the names of two disciples are unknown since the Bible thinks their names aren't important so they are not recorded.

We saw Jesus standing on the shore, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. So Jesus' spiritual body was different. He had to actively let people see that it was Him, and only then could people see it was Him. In the case of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, their eyes were opened by breaking bread (see Luke 24:13-31), and this time

their eyes were opened by something similar to what happened before at the Lake of Gennesaret. Because they did what Jesus said at that time, they caught a lot of fish, and the net was about to break, so they left everything and followed Jesus. (See Luke 5:1-11) So John immediately realized that it was the Lord, and when Peter heard that it was the Lord, he immediately took action, and the other disciples were busy pulling in the fish. We have shared before that "immediately" is very important. Once we know it is the Lord's will, we must do it immediately. We will not elaborate on it here.

Although it is only recorded here, "Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." ...(John 21:12) and "So when they had finished breakfast, ..." (John 21:15), but "they" should include Jesus Himself, because He wanted them to believe that it was He who was resurrected. Although Jesus' spirit body was not restricted by matter, it could eat food like normal people. The Gospel of Luke records this very clearly, "And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them." (Luke 24:38-43) Therefore, Jesus' spirit body can eat food like a normal person.

Here we can also see one thing. Although Jesus told them that they could touch Him to confirm that it was indeed Him, they believed when they saw Him. The Bible does not say that they had to touch Him before they would believe. It is only said: While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement. This is the same reason as "5. Thomas believed in Jesus without probing Him and the Gospel of John was written for having life" in "1138 Resurrection and Spirit, and Thomas without probing Lord – John(20)1-31," which only says that "Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? ..." (John 20:29)

2. The true meaning of Jesus asking Peter three times: "Do you love me?"

"So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love (G25, agapao, God's love, verb) Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love (G5368, phileo, human love) You." He said to him, "Tend (G1006) 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 (G5368) You." He said to him, "Shepherd (G4156) My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love (G5368) Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love (G5368) Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (G5368) You." Jesus said to him, "Tend (G1006) My sheep." (John 21:15-17)

We have previously shared this topic on YouTube on 9/20/20, but it was not posted online at that time. This discussion is based on the topicwise Bible study at that time, and has been reorganized and expanded. From these scriptures, we see that sometimes we have to look at

the original text. For example, in Greek, different words are used to distinguish different kinds of love, while the Chinese and English translations all use the word love. For people like me who do not understand the original text, you can use reference books such as the Strong's Concordance to read the original text. In the Concordance, it is easy to find all the scriptures containing a certain word. By reading those scriptures, you can see more accurately how the word is used in the Bible. This way, you can sometimes see translation errors and have an accurate view.

Let us first look at why Peter answered Jesus three times with human love. Didn't he already have the Holy Spirit living in him? Because after Jesus' resurrection, "...He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22) Jesus would not lie, Peter must have already had the Holy Spirit at that time, especially "...because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:5) He should have known what God's love was at that time, so how could he only know human love? This situation is similar to "from the moment of believing, the Holy Spirit dwells in us", but we cannot immediately reach the standard and be conformed to the image of Jesus (see Romans 8:29), because at the beginning it is only a seed and it takes time to grow. Likewise, what Peter received at that time was a seed, which would not be manifested until the coming of the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (see Acts 2:1-11), so he could only respond with human love at that time.

Here we have to emphasize that the Bible does not directly tell us why Peter answered Jesus three times with human love, but we can use the logic above to deduce the reason. This is just like the Bible has never used the term Trinity, but the Bible has this concept. Under the principle of believing that "what God tells us through the Bible is consistent" and "do not discount the words of the Bible", we will find how the words of the Bible are in line with logical principles.

The second thing to look at is why Jesus asked Peter using God's love the first two times and used human love the third time. Some people said, isn't this Jesus lowering the standard to match Peter's answer? This is a wrong idea because Jesus never lowered His standards. Others say that Jesus came to Peter because Peter had denied Him three times (see Matthew 26:69-75), and He wanted to help Peter stand firm again, because He once said, "but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." (Luke 22:32) So He asked Peter three times, which seems reasonable, but the Bible never says this. This is just looking at things from a human perspective and is human speculation.

So what does the Bible say? Let us look at Jesus' words together. In God's love, we can tend (G1006) the lambs and shepherd (G4156) the sheep. In human love, we can only tend (G1006) the sheep. We also see that the lambs need to be tended and fed, "But solid food is for the mature, ..." (Hebrews 5:14) We also see Peter's response to shepherding, "shepherd (G4156) the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the

flock."(1 Peter 5:2-3) Peter is an elder. He has the burden to shepherd God's flock and be an example to them, a right example, not a wrong example.

3. The prophecy of how Peter would die and Bible verses cannot be equated casually

"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!" Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" So Peter seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!" Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?" This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written."(John 21:18-25)

In the beginning of these verses, there was a clear prophecy about how Peter would die to glorify God. When Peter was curious about John's end, Jesus told him not to be curious and meddle in other people's affairs, but to mind his own business of "following me."

Finally, we see that Bible verses cannot be equated casually. Christians believe that both the Old and New Testaments are inspired by God, so looking at things from the perspective of the Bible is looking at things from God's perspective. In other words, looking at things from the perspective of the Bible is a sufficient condition for looking at things from God's perspective. But because God is infinite and the words of the Bible are finite, the infinite cannot be equal to the finite, and it is clearly stated here that not everything is recorded in the Bible. In other words, seeing things from the perspective of the Bible is not a necessary condition for seeing things from the perspective of God, which means that seeing things from the perspective of God is greater than, but not equal to, seeing things from the perspective of the Bible. For two statements to be equal, there must be sufficient and necessary conditions, so the Bible's perspective and God's perspective cannot be equated. The Bible contains too many statements that are only true under sufficient or necessary conditions, thus we will not go into detail. So be very careful when reading the Bible, and don't accidentally draw an equal sign where it shouldn't be drawn, as this will create a God that is not the God described in the Bible!