



First and Second Peter Lesson 1 2Q 2017 Introduction to the Study Guide

Read third paragraph, “Besides Peter’s warnings about...” What does it mean that Jesus took our **sins** in His body when He died on the cross?

The lesson references 1Pet 2:24:

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

What does this mean? Our sins in his body? Does this mean a record of our sins, so every theft, murder, adulterous act, lie, evil deed were tattooed to Jesus body? Does it mean that trillions and trillions of bad deeds were physically punished in Jesus body? Do you think it is possible for all the hundreds of trillions of sins of the billions and billions of people to be adequately punished in one human body over the course of less than 24 hours? For those who think so, then why is it—if the sins of all humans could be adequately punished in one person in under 24 hours that it is taught the wicked will suffering many days or eternally to pay for their sins?

The Greek word translated “sins” according to Strong’s Lexicon:

ἁμαρτία [*hamartia* /ham·ar·tee·ah/] n f. From 264; TDNT 1:267; TDNTA 44; GK 281; **174 occurrences; AV translates as “sin” 172 times, “sinful” once, and “offense” once. 1** equivalent to 264. 1a to be without a share in. 1b to miss the mark. 1c to err, be mistaken. 1d to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honour, to do or go wrong. 1e to wander from the law of God, violate God’s law, sin. **2** that which is done wrong, sin, an offence, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act. **3** collectively, the complex or aggregate of sins committed either by a single person or by many.¹

So we have a choice when translating this word, we can translate it as “sins” or “sin.”

What is the difference between Jesus bearing our “sin” and bearing our “sins”? Sin connotes the condition of sinfulness, whereas sins connotes bad deeds. Why do you think the translators chose “sins”?

Could it be because they have accepted the lie that God’s law functions no differently than human law, rules imposed which require imposed punishment? And this results in seeing sin as acts rather than a state of being? And if we see sins as acts, needing punishment, which is level four and below thinking, then we interpret the cross as God punishing His Son to fulfill the law, pay the penalty and create a

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



legal loophole which we sinners, who in that view deserve punishment can slip through. Thus, subtle legal distortions like this get brought into the translations.

If sin is primarily acts, legal wrongs, breaking imposed law, then what would Jesus say to Nicodemus about what is required to be saved?

“Unless a man have his sins punished and the legal debt paid he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”

To which Nicodemus would have replied, “How can a man be executed for sin and still enter heaven?”

And Jesus would have said, “By having someone else killed in your place and claiming to be legally accounted as righteous, even though you are still just as wicked.”

And this is the corrupt gospel taught to our students, who then become pastors and professors and keep perpetuating the lie.

But if sin is a state of being out of harmony from that which God constructed life to operate upon, which results in destructive actions, what would Jesus tell Nicodemus? Exactly what He did, “Unless a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”

The paragraph also said that Jesus’ death brought nothing less than freedom from eternal death caused by sin. This is absolutely true—but why does Jesus’ death free from eternal death? Why does sin result in death and how did Jesus’ death fix the problem so we don’t have to die? In the legal model it is because death is the punishment from God and Jesus took our punishment, so God doesn’t have to punish anyone else. The problem is God, who gets fixed by Jesus’ death.

In the healing reality it is because the sinful condition is one that is out of harmony with how life is built by God to operate and therefore is terminal and Jesus cured the condition. All who trust Him partake of the divine nature and are reborn, renewed, recreated, etc. and are restored into harmony with God’s design for life and will live eternally.

1Peter 2:24 from *The Remedy*:

He took upon himself our sinfulness (our terminal condition) and in his own person carried it upon the cross so that we could be freed from sin and live the right way—loving God and others more than ourselves. You have been healed by the Remedy procured by his painful ordeal.

Read the next paragraph, “Peter says that Jesus not only died...” The lesson says that Jesus will return to usher in the judgment of God, and they reference 2Peter 3:10-12, which states:



But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

So what are they saying the judgment of God is? They are saying God's judgment is inflicted destruction. They are teaching that God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering, destruction and death and they call it God's judgment.

They note that God will destroy all sin and cleanse the earth with fire, referencing 2Pet 3:7:

By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

What are the lesson authors missing that cause them to describe Peter's writings in such a way as to make God the source of pain, suffering and death?

They are missing the truth of God as Creator and His laws as design laws.

Most people, who view things through how human governments work, imposed laws with imposed penalties, read Peter and think God is inflicting this as a punishment that would not otherwise be received. How do you hear it and is there Biblical evidence to support a different view?

Before we give the evidence to answer those questions, here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church regarding God's judgments:

"I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way;

"They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproveth, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and,



he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

What is God's judgment at the end of time? Setting people free—this is design law, when the life giver lets go what happens? Only the immature, those still on milk, those who have not understood God's law but instead cling to Satan's false view of God's law teach God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death as a punishment for sin.

Consider Revelation 20:14:

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

So death and the grave are thrown into the lake of fire and they are killed/destroyed there. How does one destroy death?

Adolf Hitler gassed and burned millions of people, was Hitler destroying death? Are we saying that God acts like Hitler, yet when God does it, it is not bringing death but bringing life and destroying death?

Can you kill death by killing people? How would one destroy death? What destroys death? Is it not life that destroy death?

Now the Bible says that by Jesus' death he destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light. (2Tim 1:10) How? How was Jesus' death able to destroy death, and how is this related to destroying death at the end of time?

Would it be helpful to understand the basis of life and what is the cause of death?

This is the problem with the legal/penal view. In that view, having accepted the false law construct, the proponents wrongly believe that death is an inflicted punishment to fulfill the requirements of the law. In other words, in that view death isn't the natural outcome of sin, but the legal infliction from God.

What does these quotations say about God's law and the basis of life?

Jesus, the express image of the Father's person, the effulgence of His glory; the **self-denying Redeemer**, throughout His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of **the character of the law of God**. In His life it is made manifest that **heaven-born love, Christlike principles, underlie the laws of eternal rectitude**. . . . {RC 68.6}

Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as the **great law of life** will exist unchanged in Paradise restored.--Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 48-51. {RC 68.7}



Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary **it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven**; that the love which "seeketh not her own" **has its source in the heart of God**; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that **it is the glory of our God to give**. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. **In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the **Father's life flows out to all**; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete**, representing the character of the great Giver, **the law of life**. {DA 21.2}

What is the basis of life? What is the law upon which God's government operates? What kind of law is this? And if life is built to operate upon this principle, what is the result of choosing to break it? Why?

So what would be needed if someone did break it? A legal payment or restoring to design?

Thus Jesus took our sinful, terminal state upon Himself and fixed it.

What then of the fire in the end and how does this fire destroy death?

Isaiah 33:14,15 The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil...

Where does this love, this principle of giving originate? In God, and flows out from God and it is God's glory, and what does God's glory look like? Fire:

The Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.

¹⁰ **A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.** Dan 7:9,10



So who lives in the consuming fire? The righteous—how is this? Because the fire is God's life-giving glory!

This is the fire that destroys sin—what is sin made out of? Matter? No, at its root sin is made out of lies and selfishness. What destroys lies? Truth, and what destroys selfishness, love. And what is the basis of life, truth and love. When the Spirit fell at Pentecost, they saw two streams of fire, truth and love.

Are we starting to penetrate the veil of lies, primarily over God's law, that has obscured our understanding of reality and has causes billions to teach God is the source of inflicted suffering and death, when in reality God is the source of life and death only results from deviating from God and His design laws upon which life is constructed?

What about the suffering of the wicked in the end in the eternal fire? What causes greater suffering, physical or mental anguish? For Jesus what was His greatest suffering crucifixion weekend? What about the wicked in the end?

What happens to those solidified in lies and selfishness when they are bathed in infinite truth and love?

So consider this historical description written in the Signs of the Time April 14, 1898:

"We read of chains of darkness for the transgressor of God's law. We read of the worm that dieth not, and of the fire that is not quenched. Thus is **REPRESENTED** the experience of every one who has permitted himself to be grafted into the stock of Satan, who has cherished sinful attributes. When it is too late, **HE WILL SEE** that sin is the transgression of God's law. **HE WILL REALIZE** that because of transgression, his soul is cut off from God, and that God's wrath abides on him. **THIS is a fire unquenchable**, and **BY IT** every unrepentant sinner will be destroyed. Satan strives constantly to lead men into sin, and he who is willing to be led, who refuses to forsake his sins, and despises forgiveness and grace, will suffer the result of his course" (ST, April 14, 1898 par. 13).

What is being described? What is the fire according to this author? The fires of truth and love, which penetrate the lies and distortion and the suffering is the suffering that reality, that their own condition brings upon them when they can no longer hide from the truth of what they have done to themselves! It is not a physical fire, it is the fire of God's life giving glory! Sin kills, God is the source of life!

Here is another quote, what do you think?

This case [Pharaoh] is placed on record for our benefit. Just what took place in Pharaoh's heart will take place in every soul that neglects to cherish the light and walk promptly in its rays. **God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence.** When a person once neglects to heed the invitations, reproofs, and warnings of the Spirit of God, his



conscience becomes seared, and the next time he is admonished, it will be more difficult to yield obedience than before. And thus with every repetition. Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved. – {5T 120.1}

What is being described, an infliction, or a natural result? What kind of law is at work? Design law!

We want all to understand how the soul is destroyed. **It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved.** He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. Oh what a harvest of sinful indulgences is preparing for the sickle! – {5T 120.2}

Again, what kind of law is described?

Then what about where Peter says the elements will melt in the fervent heat? Isn't this a fire of combustion?

Absolutely! The question is when does the fire of combustion occur—while the wicked are still alive, or after the fires of love and truth have occurred and after they are already dead and the fires of combustion are the fires which recreate the physical matter back to its sinless perfection?

In the OT sacrificial system—when did they ever burn animals alive? Never, only after the animals were dead did the bodies get burned. Yes, there will be a physical fire, but only after all the wicked have died. And what is the cause of the death of the wicked? Their own voluntary choice surrender their lives. When they come into the full unveiled glory of God and can no longer hide from truth and love, they find the reality of their condition so awful that they choose to surrender their lives rather than live in God's presence. As Scripture says, "They called to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne...'" Rev 6:16

Or as EGW puts it:

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. **He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love.** He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And **all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes.** {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. The principles of the divine government are in



perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies." **God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited. He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character.** He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided. **Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?** {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become **fixed in their characters.** Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no;** years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; **but they have never trained the mind to love purity;** they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction,** that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. **Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable.

This is design law, this is reality, this is not an infliction by God, but something God has been using His power to delay, hold at bay, prevent, cure and heal. But those who refuse healing, who have solidified themselves in such a state God will not use His power to keep them alive in a tormented and tortured situation. He respects their freewill choice to pass from existence, and they voluntarily die.



As we study the book of Peter, let us be diligent to view what Peter wrote through the lens of God's design law, and reject the false human impose law concept which puts God in the role of cosmic executioner and source of pain and death.

The Person of Peter

SABBATH

When you think of Peter what comes to mind? Do you find that Peter is a person who encourages you? What in Peter's life do you find encouraging?

Did you notice Peter seems to be impulsive?

- He blurts out answers—some good “you are the Christ” some not so good, “Far be it from you to go and die”
- He jumps out of the boat and swims to shore
- He says things that make no sense, “lets build some tents for you and Moses and Elijah”
- He asks Jesus if he can walk on water with Him
- He denies knowing Jesus
- He runs to the tomb
- He pulls back from associating with uncircumcised

Peter had a heart that wanted to do good, but often allowed the impulse of the moment to lead to actions without first thinking it through, considering, and reasoning it out—and with a heart unconverted many of his actions were not helpful. He even occasionally struggled with this same issue after conversion—remember when Paul had to confront him?

What was the root impulse, with which Peter struggled, that caused him to come up short? Where is it most effectively exposed for us to see?

In the upper room, Jesus tells the disciples that they would all run away and what does Peter say? “Not me!” Was Peter lying? In other words, was Peter planning on running away, but telling Jesus he wouldn't? Or did Peter mean what he said and was speaking his honest intentions?

So, Peter was not lying, he honestly intended to not run... so then, could Jesus trust him? What did Jesus tell him? Before the rooster crows you will deny me 3 times.

What is going on here?

Did Peter love Jesus? Yes...**but he still loved himself more!** This is the problem, when there was no pressure on self he declared his love and loyalty to Jesus. But when his own life was threatened, having not died to self, he denied Jesus to protect self. So Jesus said to him in the upper room:



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

What is the lesson here?

Prior to that night, had Peter gone on missionary journeys for Christ? Had Peter been used to perform miracles? Had Peter professed Jesus as Lord and Savior? Yet, he was still unconverted—because what is conversion? It is not a vocal acknowledgement of Jesus; it is not a legal adjustment for those who have claimed the blood. Conversion is an actual change of heart, where we surrender our survival drive and our lives into Jesus' hands, we die to self and are willing to give our lives for others. We love God and others more than the need to protect ourselves. And this is only possible because of what Jesus accomplished as a human 2000 years ago.

Peter represents beautifully the life of us all, the struggle of us all and the possibility for us all, to, despite coming up short, experience genuine change of heart and reconciliation with God.

Do you notice the contrast with Judas—what is the difference between Peter and Judas? Peter surrendered self and Judas did not. Why? Peter really did love Jesus and valued Jesus' character and methods of truth and love. Judas found Jesus' methods weak and detestable and didn't want to be like Jesus. but wanted to use Jesus for his own agenda.

The last paragraph states “Most important, Peter knew what it was to make mistakes, to be forgiven, and to move forward in faith and humility.”

What do you understand this to mean?

What was the forgiveness Peter so desperately needed? Was it a legal pardon in the courts of heaven? Or was Peter distraught because he had betrayed someone important to him, and **Peter was afraid** that Jesus' might reject him, might hold his betrayal against him, might not want Peter on the team any more? **So Peter needed to know** that Jesus personally forgave him. It was not a legal forgiveness Peter needed, but a personal, relational forgiveness that Peter needed.

Why? Because one of the natural results of sin is internal fear, condemnation and shame—this is what sin does. And this causes us to falsely believe that others, if they knew of our sins, would not be able to like us, value us, cherish us, or want to be associated with us. That others would hold our wrongs against us—much more so when the wrong was a betrayal of trust. So, part of the healing and restoration to righteousness is to experience God's forgiveness. And this forgiveness is freely extended from God to all sinners.



What happens if someone doesn't get "forgiven"? What is the problem for a person who doesn't experience forgiveness? What happens in the heart, mind and character of the sinner who remains in a state of unforgiveness?

Think about those who crucified Christ—did Jesus forgive them? Yes, did they receive it? No, and what happened to them? Did they have more or less fear? Did they have more or less peace, more or less compassion, more or less love and joy?

Unremedied sin in the life destroys the character and incites fear and increased selfishness.

Forgiveness is not a legal issue, but a relational issue!

SUNDAY

The last paragraph states "Whatever his faults, and they are many, Peter was a spiritual man who was ready to follow the Lord, regardless of the cost."

What does this mean? What does it mean to be spiritual?

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 1Cor 2:14,15

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷ the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. Rom 8:6-8

What does this mean? Why is the mind of the sinful man death and the mind controlled by the Spirit life? What is the basis of life? God's law of love, which we partake from the Spirit.

But the sinful man doesn't submit to God's law, what does this mean?

So what does it mean to be spiritual? It means to be reborn from a life of fear and selfishness to a life of trust and love, in which one practices the principles of truth, love and liberty—the methods of God as enabled by the Spirit.

Do we see that Peter became such a person? Yes!

Was Peter right on every point of doctrine? No! Paul had to correct him, yet he was still a spiritual man—how do we know? Because he responded to truth, he accepted correction when the correction was in harmony with the truth and Peter was not. In other words, Peter after conversion did not



suddenly become omniscient and know all realities, but had a heart that loved God and God's principles and thus was open to being corrected.

The unconverted man isn't willing to step back, allow the Spirit of truth and love to enlighten, bring to conviction and then willingly choose to apply what the Spirit has revealed.

This is true today—are we “saved” by getting the right doctrines? Are we saved by obeying the right rituals? Are we saved by trusting Jesus and experiencing a change in heart motive so that we follow where He leads, value His methods and choose His principles?

Much of Christianity, because of accepting the false law lens, has fallen into the trap of believing that salvation is dependent upon getting the definitions right, the doctrines right, the rituals right, the behaviors right, rather than getting the heart right!

But it has always been about transforming the heart, healing the inner being back into God's original ideal. When Christ returns there will be millions saved who have errors in their understanding of Bible facts, who disagree on various interpretations of Scripture, but none will be saved who harbor selfishness and lies while rejecting love and a hunger for truth.

Turn to **WEDNESDAY's** lesson and read third paragraph, “As we know, Christian history is soiled...” thoughts?

What does it mean to compromise crucial truths? The lesson points to Revelation 14:12: “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.”

What are they saying are the important truths that cannot be compromised?

Are they saying doctrines, rituals, worship days, dress, diet, style of music?

What are the crucial truths that cannot be compromised? Is it not the truth of God's character of love and truth and His design law for life—His methods of running His universe?

So, could someone who worships on the right day, eats the right food, baptized in the right way, but because they view God's law as imposed, and that justice requires punishment, use such methods on their fellow human beings? In other words, seek to control human governments to enforce their religious views? And if the doctrines, say baptism, or day of worship, were Biblically sound, what would it mean if the methods of enforcement were not God's methods?

Is it about right doctrines or participating in reality as God constructed it, which eventually will lead to right doctrines?



The bottom pink section asks, “How can we learn to forgive those who have greatly disappointed us, as Peter disappointed Jesus here?”

Is there a difference between forgiving someone and trusting someone? What is the difference?

What helps you to forgive?

- Is it fear that if you don't God won't forgive you?
- Is it obligation, God said we must so I do?
- Is it love for the person, you genuinely want to see them transformed?
- Is it realization that sin destroys the sinner and you don't have to hold a grudge they are destroying themselves, so you can forgive and feel compassion for them?

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read MT 16:13-17, this is where Jesus asks them who people say He is, and then who they think He is and Peter replies with “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Did this public declaration, confession that Jesus is the Savior, mean Peter experienced salvation at that moment? Are people saved by making this declaration?

Jesus rightly responded that this awareness wasn't from Peter's own intelligence or database, but from insight provided to Peter from the Holy Spirit.

But, for salvation this awareness that Jesus is the Savior requires a response, a choice of the soul to surrender to Jesus, to align with Jesus, the mere acknowledgement of the fact doesn't result in salvation—don't the devils acknowledge this fact?

And did the acknowledgement of the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, mean the disciples then understood God's character, methods, the problem of sin, what Jesus was there to accomplish? Or, despite recognizing Jesus as Messiah, they still didn't understand what was wrong that sin caused that Jesus was here to fix?

How many Christians today are in the same boat, they recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, but still don't understand why He came, what the problem that sin caused that Jesus came to fix, and how Jesus did fix it?

Read next paragraph, which is a quote from *The Desire of Ages* p. 415: “The disciples still expected Christ...” thoughts?

Why? Was the truth of what the Savior was to accomplish kept from them by God? Or, was there truth revealed all through the OT that taught Christ was to come and suffer and die in order to resolve the sin problem?



What about:

- the sacrificial system—who did all the sacrificial animals point toward?
- Abraham and Isaac and Mt. Moriah
- Isaiah 53
- Ps 22:16-18: they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Was there evidence in Scripture that was sufficient to teach that Jesus would have to suffer and die?

Then why did they not consider this possibility? Because of their traditions, because of what they were taught in church school, sermons, because of the accepted orthodoxy of their religious system. They were told false meanings to the Scripture and the symbolic system that obscured their ability to comprehend the truth of Christ's mission.

Do we struggle with similar problems today?

TUESDAY

What would you do if you were on a boat and saw someone walking out to you on the water? And it was someone you knew—would your first response be to ask to walk out to them on the water?

Read fourth and fifth paragraph, “The usual lesson of the story...” What do you think of the question, “Could not Jesus have kept Peter afloat regardless of Peter's fear?”

If we are talking only about physical issues of gravity and water, then the answer is yes, but is something more going on? What?

Is there an object lesson here?

It wasn't about the physical contact, it was about the reaching out from the heart for something that one cannot provide for themselves.

Why didn't Peter simply turn and swim back to the boat? He could swim because he jumped out of the boat and swam to shore in another place, why didn't he just do that? He was in “deep water” at night, with waves and wind and it was evidently more than he believed he could handle.

Have you ever been in circumstance in life in which you felt overwhelmed and about to drown—did you reach out with your heart to Jesus?

Is this a metaphor for our ability to heal our hearts from fear and selfishness?



THURSDAY

The lesson points out that Peter was a leader in the early church. How do you respond to those who say that the church was built upon Peter?

How about simply agreeing with them by quoting Ephesians 2:19-22:

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.** ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

So, yes, the church is built on Peter, along with the other Apostles, with Jesus as the chief cornerstone.

The lesson points out that Peter was influenced by Judaizers and pulled back association with uncircumcised Gentiles until Paul confronted him. What lessons do we learn from this?

Are there lessons in regard to how we relate to those with the special gifts of the Spirit, including the gift of prophecy?

If someone is gifted with the gifts of the Spirit are they infallible? If they are not infallible can and will they get some things wrong? Did Peter get this wrong? Does that mean Peter was not inspired? Does that mean we should not value what he wrote in Scripture?

Should we surrender our judgment to another human, including a prophet or apostle? Romans 14:5 Paul says every person should be fully persuaded in their own mind—so is it okay to disagree with someone, even an apostle of the Lord, as long as one does it based on principles of God's kingdom, in harmony with God's methods of truth and love? Did Paul do this? Would you have been able to stand up to Peter? What about EGW?

Are there things written in Scripture and the writings of EGW that are very appropriate for the people of that time, but are not applicable to us today?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Korean and Polish Translations: A publisher in Korea has contracted to translate *Could It Be This Simple?* (CIBTS) into Korean, and a publisher in Poland has contracted to translate *The God-Shaped Brain* (GSB) into Polish. We will let you know when these are available. Currently CIBTS is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and GSB is available in English and Korean.

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event “The Struggle Is Real” at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcsummit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

AUGUST 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings’ new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God’s transforming power of love.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

September 15,16 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Church in the Valley, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada.

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.