

## The Man Peter

When Andrew, Peter's brother, led him to YAHSHUA, He looked at him and said, You are Simon son of John. You shall be called Cephas – which translated is Peter (John 1: 42). The life of Peter is pictured as having a sanguine temperament. As such he was warm, optimistic, cheerful and confident. He was born about 1 BC and died 67 A.D. Peter was outspoken and many times he had to "put his foot in his mouth", as it is the case of the person who has a sanguine temperament. He was among the first disciples to be called by YHASHUA. When he recognized YAHSHUA as having come from God, he professed his unworthiness to be in His presence; he fell down at YAHSHUA'S knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"! This had happened after the haul of fish which they had caught at the command of the Lord when having fished all night and had caught nothing. As a fisherman, Peter probably had vulgar language and was gruff in manner and appearance; and in view of the holy presence of YAHSHUA shining the light of His holiness, Peter was forced to see himself for what he was. However without repentance at that time; it would have been more comfortable for him that YAHSHUA would stay away from him.

But Peter had no idea that this first experience with YAHSHUA was the beginning of a new journey, which would change and transform his life. He and the YAHSHUA'S disciples were blessed to have witnessed so many miracles performed by YAHSHUA; he, with John and James, witnessed the Shekinah glory of YAHSHUA at the mount of transfiguration, an experience that was given only to a few. He witnessed the raising of the daughter of Jairus; Peter also experienced walking on the water in a stormy night, when He had seen YAHSHUA walking on the water toward them, even though he feared the storm and almost sank at the weakness of his faith. He was one of the three whom YAHSHUA would take with him in special occasions. Even in His hour of trial, he chose Peter James and John to be closer to Him while He agonized the terror of what He was going to go through, but they just fell asleep leaving YAHSHUA suffering alone.

From the beginning when YAHSHUA predicted His death, Peter was against the idea and taking Him aside began to rebuke Him, "Oh no, Lord! This will never happen to You!" But YAHSHUA rebuked him, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me because you are not thinking about God's concerns, but man's (Matt. 16:21-23); The rebuke Peter applied to YAHSHUA had come straight from Satan; YAHSHUA well knew this and directed his rebuke to Satan, although Peter had been an instrument for Satan, as Judas was to betray YAHSHUA. I believe if YAHSHUA had not prayed for Peter, when Satan had asked to sift him as wheat is sifted, things would have been worse for him. At YAHSHUA's arrest he continue to be an instrument in the hands of Satan when he struck the high priest's servant's and cut of his right ear. YAHSHUA then rebuked him and said, Put the sword into the sheath! The cup which My Father has given Me shall I not drink it (John 18:10-11)?

Peter's devotion for the Lord was only while things were going well. He didn't know himself as well as the Savior knew him. When YAHSHUA told the disciples that they were going to run away from Him at His arrest, he was the first to say, "Even if everyone runs away, I will certainly

not!" but he was the only one who denied YHASHUA, even when he had been warned, "Today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times!" Words just came easily out of his mouth, when he should have been quiet, as it was in the experience at the mount of transfiguration, when he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, This is My beloved Son; I take delight in Him; listen to Him. At that sound of God's voice, he and the disciples fell facedown and were terrified (Matt. 17:5)!

The moment for the test of His devotion to the Lord had arrived, but he had fallen miserably. He would not accept the fact that YAHSHUA had to die, as He had said, and separated himself from Him, by denying that he knew YAHSHUA. Not one time, but three times. He denied the Lord with a curse on himself, swearing with an oath that he didn't know Him (Mark 14:70-72)! What happened to all the miracles he had witnessed, and the belief that YAHSHUA was the Son of God, as he testified? What happened to the experience on the mount of transfiguration, when he heard God's voice and had fallen facedown? What happened to Peter when he should have done as he had said, If I have to die with You, I will never deny You (Mark 14:31)! Sometimes words are of no value when they don't mean from the heart and Peter's is a testimony of that. Words not mingled with faith are vain and meaningless. Peter remained veiled with unbelief concerning the purpose of YAHSHUA'S life on earth. The knowledge of the truth had not yet entered his heart for it to be regenerated. He was not ready for the denial of self, to be able to take up his cross and then follow Him. The miracle of the coin from the fish's mouth to pay for their tax, the resurrection of the Jairus' daughter, the multiplications of bread and the fish, the many other healings he witnessed, the calm of the storm at sea at YAHSHUA'S rebuke and many others supernatural miracles, hadn't touched Peter's heart. According to YAHSHUA, Satan had asked to sift him like wheat, but He said, I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And you, when you have turned back, strengthen you brothers (Luke 22:31). The Lord knew that Peter was going to fall away from following Him for a while, but He also knew that he would come back, to strengthen his brothers.

While in Galilee, as YAHSHUA told them to wait for Him there, after His resurrection, Peter as the leader, said, I am going fishing, and the others responded, We are coming with you; So they went on their wasting of time journey, to discover that all the fish had run away from them. It was daybreak when YAHSHUA appeared to them, without they recognizing Him. Again the Lord commanded them to "Cast the net on the right side of the boat" and the catch was great. At that time YAHSHUA invited them to have breakfast with Him. And when they had finished eating, YAHSHUA had a question to ask Peter. "Peter, do you love Me more than these"? Not only one time, He asked the question, but for the three times he had denied the Lord. Why the question of love? Because love was the link that connected Peter to obedience and devotion to the Lord, YAHSHUA. Peter disconnected himself from the Lord, when he refused to have his feet washed by YAHSHUA and when he denied Him. He had at that moment, no part with Him. But when the Lord looked at him at his last denial, Peter recalled the Lord's words, how He had told him, Before the cock crows today, you will deny Me thrice; He went out and wept bitterly (Luke 22:61-62). He was at the right place when YAHSHUA'S eyes met his to shine the light of His words to him. That was the moment when Peter's veil was finally removed; it only took a

look from YAHSHUA for him to reflect on the truth of his spiritual condition and then he repented.

The sincerity of Peter's love for YAHSHUA came when he had to suffer and die for Him. No longer a fearful and unsecured man, Peter now stands at the day of Pentecost and courageously preached the Gospel according to YAHSHUA'S command. After he healed a crippled man from birth, he confronted the crowd who were filled with wonder and amazement with these words: You men of Israel, why are you so surprised and wondering at this? Why do you keep staring at us, as though by our power or piety we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our forefathers, has glorified His Servant and Son Jesus, Whom you indeed delivered up and denied and rejected and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had determined to let Him go. But you denied and rejected and disowned the Pure and Holy, the Just and Blameless One, and demanded a murderer to be granted to you; but you killed the very Source of life, Whom God raised from the dead, to this we are witnesses (Acts 3:12-15). When he and John were told not to teach at all in or about the name of Jesus, they replied to them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you and obey you rather than God, you must decide, but we cannot help telling what we have seen and heard (Acts 4:18-20).

What a difference we see in the life of Peter after Pentecost! He was empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel and to heal the sick and to defend the truth revealed to him. He was the first to preach at the day of Pentecost; he wrote two letters to the churches and at the end of his life of 67 years old through persecution; he was crucified as YAHSHUA predicted. Historians wrote that he was crucified upside down. He finally understood the price of following YAHSHUA; it was not by denying Him, but by the denial of self!