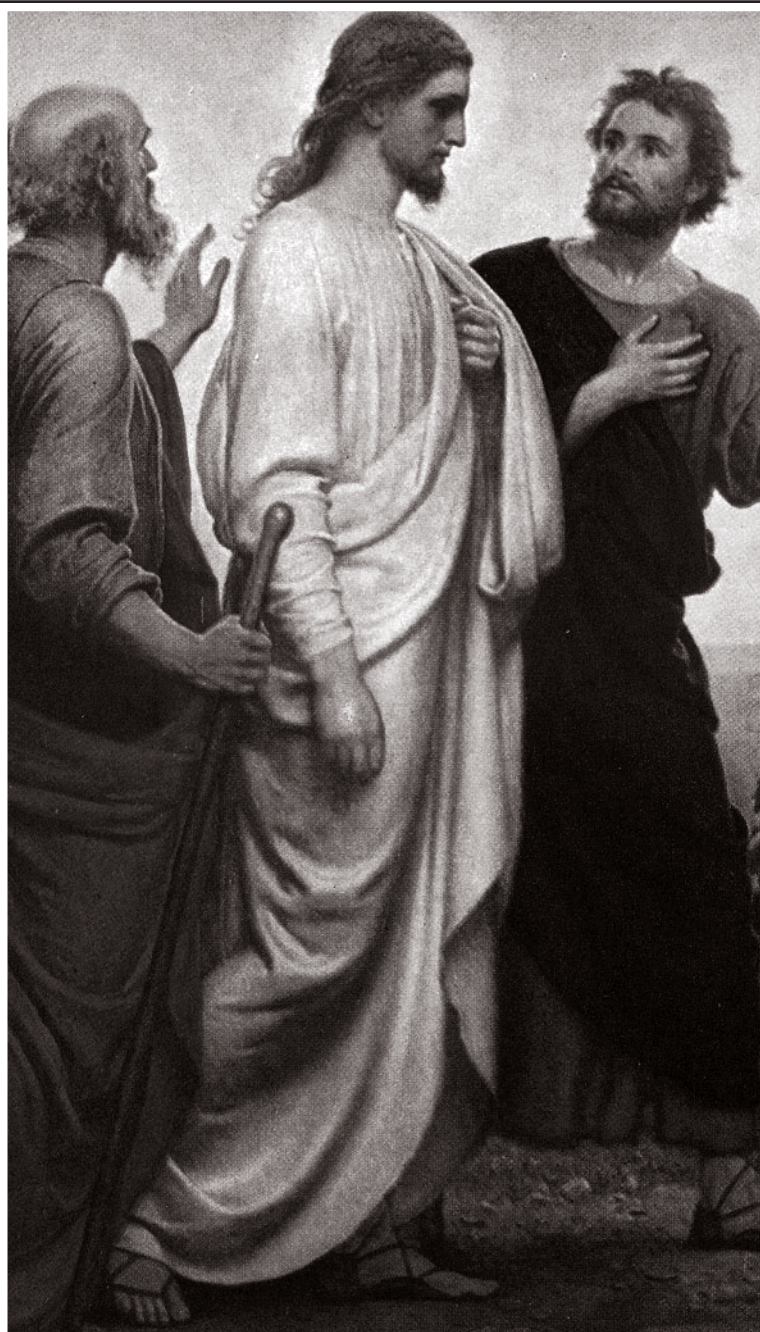


## The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb



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## Chapter Four



### The Apostle Peter

#### After the Crucifixion of Jesus

Even after Jesus died on the cross, he continued to use Peter as an example to the Church. It is good to remember when reviewing Peter's experiences that it was not until 50 days after Jesus's resurrection that the Apostles received the begetting of the holy Spirit at Pentecost. This means that they were not yet "*New Creatures*" with the holy Spirit to help in their understanding of the "*deep things of God.*" *1 Cor. 2:9-11 & II Cor. 5:17*

This lack of spiritual wisdom from above is a good reason why Peter and the other Apostles became confused and disappointed over Jesus' death. "*If Jesus was the Messiah,*" they thought, "*why didn't he bring honor to the nation of Israel? Why didn't he take charge like a General in an army and crush the enemies of Israel? Why didn't Jesus insist on the respect of the Roman and Hebrew leaders? Why didn't he exercise his great power against them and stop them from putting him to death? Was Jesus gone forever?!*" These were very logical questions for the Apostles to ask. So, by his many appearances after his resurrection, Jesus continued to instruct his faithful Apostles as to his true mission at his first advent.

One very important appearing of Jesus to teach such a lesson and raise the hopes of the Apostles was to Peter and Cleopas as they travelled on the road to Emmaus. *Reprint 2800* Peter and Cleopas saw a stranger on the road and invited him to walk with them on their journey. They discussed how disappointed they were in the death of Jesus. But the stranger, who was really their resurrected Lord, explained to them the Scriptures

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in the Old Testament. At last, the prophecies were made clear to them! They were so thrilled at the wisdom of this stranger, that they asked him to share supper with them. When the stranger broke the bread and blessed it, they knew right away it was Jesus their resurrected Lord! *Luke 24:13-35*

This special witness of the resurrection of Jesus, was necessary for Peter to see, for he and the others needed further encouragement to continue to leave all behind and serve only their Master. Disappointment and confusion set into Peter's heart again, and he decided to go back to his fishing business. Many other Apostles followed because they did not yet have the holy Spirit to help them see their spiritual calling and responsibilities. This is when Jesus appeared to Peter again and said three times, "...lovest thou me?" Peter said yes all three times. It must have hurt Peter that the Lord would question his love three times. But Jesus was using this as a gentle correction for the three times Peter denied Jesus. It also brought forth other lessons to Peter about his responsibilities to the *little flock* of Christ. *John 21:3-17 & Reprint 5052*

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Other such appearances of Jesus to his Apostles continued to prepare them for accepting the holy Spirit at Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus' resurrection. The Apostles were all assembled in one place, and the holy Spirit of God filled their hearts with spiritual wisdom and special gifts. One gift of the spirit was being able to speak in many foreign languages so that they could talk clearly and with understanding to anyone about the Gospel truth of Jesus. *Acts 2:1-8 & 11* When Peter received the holy Spirit of God, he was no longer just Simon Peter the man with worldly ambitions, but he was now the Apostle Peter, a *New Creature in Christ*. Being begotten as a New Creature meant that he would begin to develop and grow just like a little baby begins to grow inside of its mother. Peter was growing more and more into the character-likeness of his Lord—thinking and acting more as a spiritual New Creature in Christ.

This help from the holy Spirit of God made it possible for Peter to bring the Gospel to the Jews; preaching the truth in wisdom, love, justice and power. *Acts 2:14, 37, 38 & 41* Not only could the Apostles speak in foreign languages, but the holy Spirit made it possible for them to heal the sick. Peter healed a lame man and many others so that the Jews would become convinced of God's love and truth. *Acts 3:1-10*



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Peter was so filled with God's Spirit that he was not afraid to preach to the religious rulers after being put into prison. He was so firm in his beliefs that they freed him. This was quite a different man from the one who denied the Lord three times. *Acts 4:1-21*

Jesus loved Peter especially because Peter said long ago, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" Jesus said that upon this rock of truth, he would give Peter the keys to preach the Gospel to both the Jews and the Gentiles. *Matthew 16:17-19* And so, Peter opened up the door to the *high calling* not only to his brethren, the Jews who knew God, but also to the Gentiles who did not know God. Acts the 10th Chapter gives the wonderful account of the first gentile convert, Cornelius.

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Peter's faith continued to be an example to the flock. In Acts 12:1-11 we read that he was imprisoned and about to be put to death. But Peter's work was not yet finished, and an angel helped him escape to return to his grieving brethren. It is important to understand that sometimes a Christian escapes severe trials, but sometimes the Lord permits harsh experiences of pain and persecution. Christians learn through experience "...that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." *Rom. 8:28*

Even though Peter was changed by the holy Spirit, and he developed more and more as a New Creature, there were times when his old nature interfered with his work for the Lord. Peter still had a stubborn streak and showed fear and self-will when he tried to uphold an error about the Jewish Law. But the Apostle Paul firmly showed Peter the error of his ways, and Peter took it as a lesson from the Lord. Peter changed and grew again from his mistake. *Gal. 2:7-14* This is a good example of how a Christian should not be stubborn and too proud to change when shown the truth, but should be humble and teachable.

In all his life's experiences, both before and after the holy Spirit, Peter was a very important Apostle. He had the kind of character that the Lord could use to make many lessons clear to Peter and his brethren. We can read what great things Peter learned from his many experiences through his writings in First and Second Peter. Also, it is presumed that Peter wrote the Gospel of Mark using Mark as his secretary. *Reprint 2469:4*

What a firm foundation to the Church was the Apostle Peter! It is commonly believed that he died a sacrificial death. It is traditionally thought that he was sent to die on the cross, but that he asked to be crucified upside-down so that he would not die as did Jesus—feeling unworthy to die the same death.

We should learn much from Peter's life. He was a man of many faults, and yet he loved the Lord so much that he was willing to grow into a wonderful Christian example. And now, since our Lord's return, Peter is in heaven with his heavenly Father, with Jesus, and with all the brethren who have proven faithful unto death! *Rev. 2:10 & 1Thess. 4:16*