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Visions and Revelations

Message 12: The Apostle Peter (3)

Note: This is a lightly edited transcript meant to aid saints in personal and small group fellowship and pursuing.

Dear brothers and sisters, we are coming to another message on visions and revelations in the New Testament age, or the age of grace. We have covered the three great apostles gained by the Lord: the Apostle Peter, the Apostle Paul, and the Apostle John. He used them as patterns for us to know how to abide properly in visions and revelations and eventually, how to become very operative and useful in the hand of God, for God's building, for God's testimony, and for God's household.

Now this morning, we come to the visions of God. This is a vision from the Father and another vision from Christ. Christ gave a vision and the Father gave a vision. Christ asked the question "Who do you think I am?" Peter had the revelation and stood up and said "You are the Christ, you are the Son of the Living God." That was a marvelous heavenly declaration. I think after that whole declaration, there could have been a moment of silence. All the apostles could have been very impressed. How can there be such a clear utterance? Even the Lord Jesus was very happy, joyful, and if I can use the word, buoyant or excited. Some people say the Lord was always godly – he never ran or got very happy or excited. But, when the prodigal son came home, he ran to receive him. So there is a statement that God does have the feeling of joyfulness, or excitement. Also, when the lost sheep was found, they were all joyful together. Here the Lord Jesus became extremely happy so he shouted out, "Simon Barjona, you are blessed!" Why?

Remember when the Lord Jesus saw Peter for the first time, he told Peter "you are Simon, you are the son of John. You shall be called Peter." At that time, Peter didn't see anything exciting. It was a sober, solemn statement made by the Lord, concerning this great apostle. Peter, whether you are able to follow me or not at this time is not the point. The point is you are a son of grace, and in grace, you learned to obey, to listen, and to follow. But this time, the Lord changed his name. The Lord didn't say son of John. The Lord says "Simon! Barjona!" Jonah means dove, which is spirit. You are the son of the Spirit! Who are you? You are Simon, son of the Spirit. Let me tell you, you shall be called Peter.

Two pictures and two statements. Do you realize the difference? One statement is just like when we were saved, or when we were called, it's common. One statement is something that was made alive. Peter was made alive through the revelation from the Father. With this revelation he saw Christ, he saw the teachings of Christ, he saw the declarations of Christ, and he saw the miracles of Christ which allowed him to follow Christ. What he had seen, what he had heard, what he had gone through, at this time, they all become something so real. Then at the same time, Peter says "you are Christ, THE Son of THE living God," then Christ answered "Simon Barjona! You are blessed! This is not unveiled to you by flesh and blood." Then he said "I say also unto you, you

are Peter.” Do you see something very interesting? Here is a beautiful picture. The Lord came in and responded to what God the Father unveiled to Peter.

Let’s come to the outline. The outline says, firstly, you have the revelation given by the Father. What does this revelation reveal? It reveals “who is this man?” The Father unveiled to Peter that this man is THE Christ. This man is THE Son of THE living God. In other words, Christ is the unique one, the unique one to carry out God’s economy. The anointed, the Christ. He is more than just the messiah, just to be peaceful, making a truce between God and man, but positively He is operating in carrying out what God desires. “You are the Christ. More than that, you are also the Son, the unique Son, of the living unique one God.” This is marvelous. So the Lord told him, declared to him, “You are so blessed.”

Then he said “flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in the heavens.” This part is hard to understand because how can flesh and blood give people any kind of revelation? Flesh and blood is flesh and blood! But for some reason, flesh and blood are able to seemingly produce something there. For instance, here I said revelation means what? It’s an unveiling. I see something. For instance, even as a man, as a brother, as a sister, as someone young or old, we all see something with different perspectives, which may affect us. I see knowledge. I see social status. I see success. I see wealth. This is one kind. I see drinking. I see indulgence in gambling. I see an improper life. I have a kind of unhealthy satisfaction in my flesh. Here the Lord says “Simon Barjona, I tell you, this is not revealed by flesh and blood.” Why? Flesh and blood don’t give you the real stuff. “Flesh and blood can bring forth seeming revelations that is attractive and right, but are of no value...” It has no value. You look at it, it seems right, but no, there’s no value. Thus it leads to different perceptions and different acknowledgements.

For instance, the lust of the pleasure of the flesh, causes people to indulge in the sinful world. I don’t understand for instance, why people gamble. I don’t understand. When I see people get drunk, I don’t understand why people get drunk. But some fallen people see it and not only do they see it, they think “that’s it!” So they drink, they gamble, they live an improper life, they are on drugs, and they are doing criminal things. Do you think they have a vision? No. But they do see something. They can tell you, when I’m drunk, I’m so happy. I say how about your headaches? How about your sleeping on the floor? How about the immorality you practice after you get drunk? How about the damage to your liver, the damage to your health? I don’t see that. You know what brothers, flesh and blood can produce attractive things.

The first thing produced is the sinful world. Then secondly, “the vanity of the soul causes people to pursue the material world.” You know, I believe if we have one thousand listening to this message, five hundred listening to this, only one or two may have some experience or still be in the previous category. The majority of us are in the second category. Are we sinful? No, but we’re occupied. We seemingly have a vision. Something caught us. I want to be a professor, even a known professor, I want to be CEO, even a successful CEO, I’m a writer, I want to have

my books written, I want to have my business, I want to have my school, I want... you know brothers, there's a lot of things that are actually all vanity. Eventually, where's the value? But in the process, flesh and blood still can attract you – attract you to get a degree, a better degree, a top university, and to even gain success in a certain field, I tell you brother, this is a world thing.

And thirdly, the noble sentiment. With everyone, even though our spirit's dead, the organ is still there. So, within man, sometimes, there is something noble: I want to know God; I want to understand God. This can produce all kinds of religions. If we're not careful, even our Christian belief can become just a religion that is still void of Christ. For example, I may be a nun, or a Catholic father, or a person serving God, but God only cares for Christ. If you tell the Father, "Father, please show me...", His response would be "Jesus Christ." If you said "Something else," He would say, "Christ." If you asked again, "Something more," then again He would reply "Christ." Should you ask yet again "Please Father, show me more," His response would be "Christ! I only care for Christ! I only care for Christ! I only care for the One who is the Son of the Living God."

None of these can be given to you by flesh and blood. The Lord Jesus commented, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father who is in the heavens". This is very interesting. If you tell the Father, "Oh, Father God, I adore you", He says, "I care for my son." You say, "Oh, Father God, I worship your marvelous work," He says, "Appreciate Christ. I will give you a revelation: with Christ I accomplish my eternal purpose." With Christ everything becomes valuable. With the Son of the Living God everything becomes vital and bears the value of eternity. Thus it is not only valuable, but eternal.

What does "the Christ" mean? "The Christ" means the anointed one, the executor of God's economy. What does "the Son of God" mean? It means He is God. He is what? *God*. When we say "Christ is God," let me ask you, when you think about God, what do you think about? A power? A government? A wisdom? A controlling person? The One that can take care of everything? Or, do you realize, here's One who is self-existing and ever-existing. "I'm God," or, "I'm the Son of Living God" means Christ himself is self-existing and ever-existing. Yet, he incarnated. He became a man. He partook of human nature. More than that, in the Book of Hebrews it says, "He is without father, without mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days, without ending of life" (Heb. 7:3). Why does it say this? Because He is eternal, the self-existing one, the ever-existing one, the eternal life, the One who testifies God.

So, the Father says, "If you want to know who I am—if you want to have a revelation from me—I will not tell you to do this or do that. I will not give you commands to do this, do that. I'll just show you there's a marvelous person: Jesus Christ. He is the Son of the Living God. He is the Christ. As Christ, He carries out God's economy. As the Son of the Living God, He produces all the vitality. How vital is this vitality? Vital enough to uphold the whole universe. This vitality can now become yours. It can handle you, take you, lead you to partake in eternal life." So, when Peter says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God," Jesus was excited. Jesus says,

“Simon Bar-Jonah, you are blessed. Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is the heavens, He has given you this revelation.” In a way, you can say a good picture should stop here. But, no, there’s more. Right after that Christ says, “I also give you a revelation. I say also unto you. God gave you such a marvelous revelation. This revelation makes you so joyful, and makes me so happy. This declaration is so powerful that it becomes the unique revelation in the universe. Even that, I say also to you: I also have a revelation. The Father's revelation is me. My revelation is you. The Father's revelation says ‘I am the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’ My revelation says ‘You, a stone, shall become a precious stone—a valuable stone—for the building up of the church, for the building up of the body of Christ for my satisfaction”.

If we come to see the outline, the Father's revelation given to Peter is too good and too high. Yet Christ’s revelation was still needed, not as a supplement, but as a completion. The first part is Christ, the second part is the church. The first part God does everything, but the second part is Christ does everything. God made Jesus the Christ even before the universe began. He is the engineer. He is the architect. He is the means of creation. He is the One who carries out God's economy all the way to New Jerusalem. But then Christ says, “I am with you. Oh dear apostles, dear disciples, I am with you. Let me tell you, I'm so valuable; you are just as valuable. I am so precious; you are just as precious. Without me you can do nothing. But, when you possess me, your position, your meaning of life, your existence, your operation, your growth, your labor, they can all become so high. So, I say this also to you, in order to make the whole picture complete.”

I will just use this illustration: it's just as if the Father said, “I will give you a good piece of land, and you have the land.” You are happy. You can say, “Look at the river, look at the mountain, look at the field, look at the garden, look at the tree, look at everything! Oh God has given me such a marvelous piece of land of Christ.” Then Christ says, “But, let me tell you, I will give you a house. Just the land is not adequate. The Land is marvelous, beautiful, and from God, but I'll give you a house.” God's revelation is constant and centered on Christ. Our revelation, which Christ gives to us, is centered on how we can have value in Christ, with Christ, for Christ, by bearing Christ, and testifying this very God's economy.

More than that, Jesus said, “I say also”. *Also* means what? God says something, I also say something. This means here is an addition. There is an extending, an expanding, an elevating. Something here which God gave to you can be flat, but I make it richer, I make it more bountiful, I make it more attractive, I make it more valuable, I make it more appreciable, and I make it more realistic in your daily life.

Here I read to you point four from the outline: therefore it is not “perfect” or “complete” to have the Father's revelation alone, knowing only that the Lord is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. In addition to this revelation from the Father, it is necessary to receive the revelation from Christ. The Father's revelation is Christ. Christ’s revelation is the church. The Father’s revelation is Christ. Christ’s revelation is the church. If I can say this, and if you can even follow me: God

only cares for Christ; Christ only cares for the church. When God gives you anything, He gives you Christ. When Christ gives you anything, he gives it to you for the building up of the church.

After that, Christ continued, “You are Peter.” A quick word: the Greek here is “You are *petros*.” *Petros* is a masculine word for rock. This is not *lithos*. Usually “stone” uses the word *lithos*. This is not an ordinary stone, but a specific, valuable stone that matches the rock—the *petra*—that is Christ himself. So, you are Peter, *petros*. I am the rock, *petra*. You are Peter as a name, but I am *petra* as a solid fact: I am a *petra*. It's very interesting: here are three words involved. Who is Peter? A *lithos*, just a piece of stone like all of us. Who are you? A piece of stone. But the Lord likes to say, “Hey, I want to call you Peter. I want to call you *petros*. I want to call you a specific piece of stone with high value.” Why? Because *petros* matches *petra*. This stone matches the rock who is the foundation of everything. It matches the rock. Here Jesus says, “You know Peter, you are Peter. You are Simon, right? I want to call you Peter. When I call you Peter, I say, ‘I see a product. This product's nature is different, its constitution is different, its exhibition is different, its solidness is different, its operation is different. It is no longer just a common stone, but a piece of rock. This rock matches the foundation rock.’” Do you know what this is? This is Peter.

Let me ask you, doesn't the Lord have the same desire for us all? Doesn't the Lord like to say, “You can't just be any piece of stone. I want you to be a precious stone. What do I want? Firstly, I want to choose you: you are my chosen vessel. Secondly, I want to have lordship over you: I want to be your Lord. Thirdly, I want to have My workmanship over you: I want to transform you; I want to work on you. Eventually, I want to give you commitment. ‘Peter, upon this rock I will build the church.’ That has a lot to do with *you*.” So, you see brother, for you to become a valuable person before the Lord, for you to say, “Lord, I dare not call myself *petros* but can I tell You, I just don't like to be a common *lithos*, just like any other stone. I like to be chosen by You. This is on You. I want You to have lordship over me, be my boss, take care of my life, take care of everything I need. Be the real leader, the real king to my life. Then, Lord, please work on me. Transform me. Anything unhealthy, anything healthy, anything proper, anything improper, please put a divine element into it all so that all the negative things can disappear and the positive things can be not just a thing, but a constitution of something divine—something that matches that *petra*.”

So finally, there is a commitment, “You are Peter.” Right? “I will give you something.” We will cover that next message. But tell the Lord, “Lord, please make me Peter. Choose me, own me, transform me. Eventually, Lord, I don't want just to be a brother in the church. I want to be a brother in the church life with heavenly commitment. With heavenly commitment.”

Then after that, the Lord uses a strong word, “Upon this rock, I will build My church. I will.” You know brothers, the Lord rarely uses the word “I will.” It seems the Lord will often declare “I am. I am willing to do. If someone is in need, I will go to help him.” He seemed like He liked to teach, “Blessed are you.” Here He is very strong. “I will.” Unconditional. For instance, there are conditional “I will”s. I will ask the Father; the Father will give you another Comforter. I will.

Then, “I will. If you follow Me, I will ask you to gain man to be fishers of man. I will.” And more than that, He also said, “If you destroy the temple I will! I will, right? In three days, I will raise it up.” But they’re conditional. There is a condition for you to have the Lord. There is a condition for you to work or labor. There is a condition for you to see there is a spiritual body, spiritual temple raised up by the Lord. Even though they crucified Him. There is one “I will” that is unconditional. Unconditional, I WILL! That means, whatever happens, I am going to do it. I will.

So, here, if I can quickly read it over to you it’s good enough. *I will. This is a unique expression in the four gospels. It unconditionally refers to what the Lord desires. Unconditional. This is just what I want. Indicates the Lord’s eternal will, speaks out what the Lord is laying hold of, and what the Lord will work and accomplish unto eternity. Only this, the builded church, can satisfy God.* In other words, let me tell you, 6,000 years I’m doing it. I’m still doing it. I will, whatever happens, I will.

We like to say, “No, no, no, the Lord is doing a lot!” No, the Lord says, “I only do one thing. I will build My church. This is the only, “I will.” A strong “I will.” *“I will” speaks out that Christ is only focused on this one thing.* This is My burden. This is My desire. This is My expectation. This is why I am here. This is even why there is God. Just for this builded up church. Therefore, I will. *Which is what obtained petros and builded church on the rock.* Look at what He has: Has creation, right? He has redemption, right? He has salvation, right? Has incarnation, right? Has the ascension, right? He becomes life-dispensing, right? Eventually, He obtains the New Jerusalem. You can say, “Wow, Lord Jesus. All this so marvelous!” But Lord says, “Do you know why I saved you? Because I will build the church. Do you know why I am with you? Because I will build the church. You know why I will lead you? Because I will build the church. Because I will take care of you? Because I build the church.”

Brother, we Christians like to focus on many things. Oh, I speak in tongues, let’s have a tongue-speaking church. Oh, I have a healing, let’s have a healing church. Oh, I really believe justification by faith, let’s have a church justification by faith. Oh, we really believe you need to be baptized in the water, so let’s have a Baptist church. This, there’s nothing right or wrong. But God never says I will baptize, insist on, forever. God never will say, speak in tongues, keep on speaking. God says, I will build the church. You know why I save you? Build the church. You know why I bless you? Build the church? You know why I attract you to love Me? Build the church. You know why I bless you? Build the church. You know why I am so much with you? Build the church. You know why I give brothers and sisters to surround you? Build the church. You know why sometimes I am so hard on you? Even you cry out! Because I want to build the church.

I want to produce many *petros*. I don’t like all *lithos* only. I like to see a church built up. Eventually you can say, every spiritual experience, every spiritual blessing, every spiritual enjoyment, every spiritual attainment, every spiritual thing, every time you feel that the Lord is

so much with you, you can be proud of, you can be happy with, you can give testimony. Lord says, “No, I’m not for that. I will do all these on you, with only one purpose: so you can be builded up in the church life. This is all what I want. “I will.”

Okay, you know brother, so if you read, if we can go through the outline like this. That eventually, He’s only for this one thing, that I will build the church. You know, sometimes there are religious things, or individual spiritual experiences. They are there. But remember, if you think this is what God wants, you’re wrong. God healed me; therefore, God wants me to heal people. I don’t think it’s improper, wrong. But I say, inadequate. Why? God is not just a healer. If He just wants to heal people, He’ll just tell people not to get sick, that’s all. God wants to gain a builded up church. So, all the spiritual things we have, no matter how precious they are, you can say that it is not exactly what Christ has in His heart. Brother, can we tell the Lord, “Lord I am so thankful God give me revelation, I see Christ. I see the Son of living God. I am also so thankful, Christ say also unto me, I will. This “I will” decide my life.” I will tell the Lord, “Lord, if You will, then let this humble person, a person has been fallen, the person live by grace also declare with you, we will also! You want build the church; we want to build the church. Please bless us with all, multiple, with all blessings with multifarious wisdom. But please, with all the blessings, can we all conclude with, build up the church and not different element?” What a glorious life is this? A life one with God the Father, a life one with God the Son, and when Christ says, “I will” I will say, “Lord, I will too. We will together, we only care for You, Your heart, and Your desire. You don’t give up, we don’t give. You insist, we insist. Be merciful to us.” We bless Him. I stop here.