

**210321 Jesus Prayed for Peter 38/11 March 21, 2021**  
**Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"**

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Dear Friends,

Literally, from Genesis to Revelation, Scripture contains multiple accounts of God answering the prayers of His people, always with good things that blessed them. If God did not answer our prayers, given such a repetitive account in Scripture, He would be deceitful beyond words. And Scripture affirms that our God is faithful and true, so much so that [Re 3:14](#); [19:11](#) attribute these two qualities to His name. [Tit 1:2](#) leaves no doubt; He "...cannot lie." So when Scripture reports multiple accounts of God literally answering the prayers of His people, we must believe the record. Further, as in [Lu 11](#), when extended lessons in the gospel accounts of Jesus' life and teachings, along with other passages, teach us regarding God's caring love for His people that elevates Him far above earthly parents who respond to the needs of their children, even if inconvenienced by a midnight appeal, we are further obligated in faith to believe God and His record of Himself in Scripture.

Jesus' teachings in our study passage for the week is rich in its instructive content. We need this reminder. We need to believe this reminder! Peter was not always the stalwart and faithful man he aspired to be. Jesus did not tell Peter that He would respond because of Peter's faithfulness. He rather encouraged Peter with the powerful words, "I have prayed for thee." Apply Jesus' words to you. To your life. To your life through the last year! We need this encouraging reminder today. Do not dismiss it. Believe it! Embrace it. Cling to it! And remember it as you go to Him in your prayers.

Lord bless,  
Joe Holder

**Jesus Prayed for Peter**

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. ([Lu 22:31-32](#))

Of the twelve disciples who followed Jesus from the beginning of His public ministry, Peter would not likely be the leading candidate for stable reliability. Perhaps this quality in Peter explains Jesus' encouraging reminder to Peter, "I have prayed for thee." Generally, Bible students agree that Jesus' prayer for Peter related to a specific occasion in Peter's future ministry, his going to the Gentile house of Cornelius and preaching to them. A study of this episode in [Ac 10](#) is highly instructive. Knowing that his potential audience was a Gentile house, Peter struggled. Only after the Lord powerfully reminded Peter three times, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." ([Ac 10:15b](#)) Peter eventually understood. In the vision, Jesus was not teaching Peter about clean and unclean animals for his diet. He was enlightening Peter; Gentiles are no longer "Unclean" because they were born of Gentile parents. If God cleanses a person from his sins, his earthly parentage is of no significance to the gospel.

I fear for the spiritual health and balance of those dear people who ignore Scripture and believe that God does not—by their wrested interpretation of Scripture, cannot—answer prayer. I wonder. If we were able to have asked Peter shortly after he completed his spiritual assignment in [Ac 10](#) at Cornelius' house, "Peter, do you believe God answers prayer?" how would Peter have answered our question? Jesus prayed for Peter. Did the Father answer Jesus' prayer? Did Jesus' prayer make a difference—change anything—in Peter's life, especially in his outlook regarding Gentiles and the gospel? Did Peter's immediate confession indicate any change at all in his attitude toward Gentiles and the gospel?

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. ([Ac 10:34-35](#))

Study Peter's confession in his explanation of the experience to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem Church. ([Ac 11](#))

And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. ([Ac 11:15-18](#))

Did the Father answer Jesus' prayer for Peter? Did Peter experience a notable, powerful "Conversion" in his attitude toward Gentiles and the gospel? Indeed he did. Thus, we rightly conclude that Jesus prayed to the Father for Peter, and the Father answered His prayer, affirmed by Peter's experience and explanation to the Jerusalem Church. ([Ac 10](#); [11](#)) Was Peter's "Conversion" for which Jesus prayed at all related to Jesus' prayer? Or merely coincidental to His prayer?

Based on the incident in [Ac 15](#), Peter's [Ac 10](#), "House of Cornelius" experience, the Book of Galatians, and other New Testament lessons, we may rightly conclude that many Jewish believers in the first century church believed strongly in Jesus, but they also held to a hybrid idea that non-Jewish converts to the faith must become Jewish proselytes, in effect become a Jew in the sense of Old Testament Judaism, before they could become a legitimate New Testament Christian. As clearly as the New Testament makes this errant point, it is sadly common to this day for sincere, though naïve believers to hold that a new convert must first be exposed to the legalities of Moses' Law as part of their conversion process. "Put them under the law before you tell them about Jesus" is a common idea, no more Biblical than what the "Judaizers" told the Galatians, prompting Paul's fierce rebuke in that letter.

Peter's "Conversion" in our study passage likely related to the specific incident with the house of Cornelius. Often the idea of conversion in Scripture relates to a frequent experience in our spiritual growth and maturing, not exclusively to an initial one-time event. Even Peter's conversion experience in this instance had nothing to do with his initial "Conversion" to Jesus at all, but to his spiritual growth and insight into a more accurate understanding of Jesus and the gospel. The idea that "Conversion" in Scripture always refers to one's initial spiritual experience is not at all correct.

Reflect on your personal spiritual journey. How many times has something happened in your life, wholly unexpected, but a powerful blessing that added to your spiritual insight and maturity? Was that not a true "Conversion"? And how many of those experiences might well have been because Jesus prayed for you? Both He and the Holy Spirit make intercession for us. ([Ro 8:26](#), the Holy Spirit intercedes; and [Ro 8:27](#), Jesus intercedes) How many things in our lives surprise and bless us that may well have been the result of both Jesus and the Holy Spirit interceding for us?

In Peter's case, the Jews quite comfortably viewed themselves as God's favored nation, and all non-Jewish people as somehow unclean and inferior. The worst form of prejudice is self-righteous prejudice. Even Peter carried some of that attitude with him until Jesus took him to Cornelius and showed him what His power and grace can do. A man's race, language, or culture is wholly immaterial to God's love and grace, as well as to the "Gracious" outcome of His work.

Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Notice the second person pronouns in this quote. The King James translators knew first century Greek language well. That language contained word forms for both singular and plural second person pronouns. In our modern English,

regardless whether we refer to one person or many, our one form of the second person pronoun is “You.” To communicate the language nuance of first century Greek to their readers, the KJV translators consistently adopted a simple method to pass that information to us. If the underlying Greek second person pronoun in the text was plural, the translators used “You,” “Ye,” or “Your” pronoun forms. If the underlying pronoun was singular, the translators used “Thee,” “Thou,” “Thy,” or “Thine” in the KJV text. Apply this rule to our study passage.

1. Satan hath desired to have **you**. “You” is plural. No doubt, Satan wanted to thwart Peter’s faith, but Jesus tells Peter in this sentence that Satan is actually after all of the disciples, not Peter only.
2. ...that he may sift **you** as wheat. “You” is plural. Satan would have celebrated, had he been able to dwarf New Testament Christianity to Jews only, little more than another sect of Old Testament Judaism.
3. But I have prayed for thee. Jesus here changed to the singular pronoun. “Peter, I have prayed uniquely for you to be my vehicle to reveal to my followers that my gospel and my grace are not restricted to any one race, nation, or culture. The “Favored nation” idea of the Old Testament time is ended. Now “...**in every nation** he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” “Peter, you will be my disciple who first comes to experience and to understand this truth. When you come to know it, you are to share it with the others. This is my new and better way for my people from now till I come back at the last day.”
4. ...that thy faith fail not. “Thy” is singular, referring to Peter only. “Peter, don’t ignore my guiding hand. When I show you this truth, believe what you see.”
5. ...and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. “Thou” and “Thy” are singular, referring to Peter alone. “Peter, this realization will be a life-changing moment for you. Do not keep it to yourself as a private conviction. Explain what I taught you to your brothers. All my preachers, my whole church, needs to understand this truth.”

You see, this question, “Does God really respond to our prayers and alter the outcome of our experience because of our prayers?” is far more important than a single prayer that you or I might pray. If God doesn’t respond to prayer at all, we must apply the idea to Jesus’ own prayers, as well as to ours! If God doesn’t respond to prayer, He didn’t respond to Jesus’ prayer for Peter in this passage. And he didn’t respond to Jesus’ prayer in the Garden. Can we honestly live with the consequences of such an idea? No thank you! Not for me.

A logical—and Biblical—observation regarding the occasional idea that God does not really answer prayer, for in so doing He would change. We act as we do, including responding to others whom we love, to help them, because of our nature, because of who we are. If a friend or loved-one asked us to do something to help them, and we refused, we would contradict our claimed love for them, as well as our thoughtful nature. **To not respond** itself becomes the “Change.” I suggest this logic applies as well to God. Given His repeated revelations and promises of response to our prayers in Scripture, should He refuse to respond to our prayers for righteous outcomes, His refusal itself would contradict His loving and righteous nature. That would indeed imply that He changed. But if He faithfully-to-His-righteous-and-loving-nature responds to our prayers in a righteous and loving manner, He doesn’t change. He remains true to His character in the answering of our prayer. Every passage, including those we have studied, and many more that tell us He does answer the prayers of His people, assures us of His responsive and caring love for His people.

Elder Joe Holder