

1057 Recognizing Jesus, prophesying His resurrection, and meaning of bearing cross
-The image of Jesus (12)
(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

First, let us talk about how Herod tried to see Jesus due to his confusion, and indeed achieved his goal. Secondly, let us take a quick look at the miracle of using five loaves and two fish to feed five thousand men and even have leftovers that filled twelve baskets. We discussed this before and will basically not repeat what was mentioned. Thirdly, we discuss the event when Peter recognized Jesus as Christ. We also discuss an argument between Christian churches and Catholic churches regarding Peter. From the consistency of the Bible, churches are built upon the rock, Jesus, not on Peter. Fourthly, we talk about the prophecy by Jesus regarding His resurrection. Peter didn't not persuade, like what Chinese translation says, but rebuked. Jesus knew that it was from Satan and responded correspondingly. Fifthly, we discuss the issue of bearing the cross daily. This is not referring to the tribulations we look for by ourselves, but those arranged under God's permission. We give an example on this issue, and ask you to make your own judgement.

1. Herod trying to see Jesus due to his confusion

In Luke 9:7-9, it says, "Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was greatly perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen again. Herod said, "I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see Him."

We see that Herod wanted to keep trying to see Jesus not because he wanted to believe Him, but it was indeed due to his confusion. Herod actually saw Him at the time when He was arrested and on trial, as the verses recorded in Luke 23:6-9, "When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time. Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing."

Jesus wouldn't perform a sign for him just because he was a supreme officer. Every time He performed a sign it was for a reason. The Gospel of Matthew is thus recorded in Matthew 14:1-2, "At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus, and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."" The same event is also recorded in Luke 6:14-16, which is basically the summation of the other two.

2. Jesus feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fish

In Luke 9:10-17, it says, "When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called

Bethsaida. But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing. Now the day was ending, and the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place." But He said to them, "You give them something to eat!" And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people." (For there were about five thousand men.) And He said to His disciples, "Have them sit down to eat in groups of about fifty each." They did so, and had them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the people. And they all ate and were satisfied; and the broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, twelve baskets full."

It is revealed in John 6:8-9 where the five loaves and two fish came from, "One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" So, that lad contributed what he had, and couldn't imagine that they would become to so many. The leftover food was even more than the original amount he had. The same miracle is recorded similarly in Matthew 14:13-21, which says, "There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children." Thus, there were five thousand men. In Mark 6:35-44, the same miracle is recorded by saying directly in Mark 6:44, "There were five thousand men who ate the loaves." This miracle is very important, so that it is recorded in all four Gospels. In John 6:6-15, it is added what said in the test of Philip, and described the reactions of the crowd. "So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone." (John 6:15) His response was very different from ordinary people. We discussed this miracle before in [1], and will not repeat the discussion.

3. Recognizing Jesus as Christ

In Luke 9:18-20, it says, "And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the people say that I am?" They answered and said, "John the Baptist, and others say Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again." And He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God.""

Jesus is a person of prayer. He would do the same even in the presence of disciples. No wonder disciples would ask Him about the Lord's prayer, regarding how to pray. (Ref. Luke 11:1-4) The same event is also recorded in Mark 8:27-29. With a little bit more in Matthew 16:13-19, it says, "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and

the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.'"

This is the first time that Jesus admitted that He was the Christ. We can see that He wanted Peter to recognize Him first before He admitted the fact. He knew this clearly, since it is said in Matthew 16:17, "... because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." And "...the rock (G4073) was Christ."(1 Corinthians 10:4) The meaning of Peter in Greek means "the rock" or "a small stone", which is the name that Jesus gave to Simon. Jesus doesn't mean to build up His church on the mortal Peter, the small stone, but the rock Himself, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."(1 Corinthians 3:11) But it is indeed a pun. We need to see things from the consistency of the Bible, which means to let God show us through the Bible what is consistent. The verse in Ephesians 2:19-20 is clear, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone." Thus, the key of the kingdom of heaven is given to the Church, not buildings on earth. In the new heaven and new earth, there is "...the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ..." (Revelation 21:2) Therefore, there is such a unique Church in the eyes of God, the collection of all people who are righteous in faith, not those who attend worship in some buildings on earth. Those exalt Jesus, "...but Christ is all, and in all."(Colossians 3:11) Even though it is clear according to the Bible, there is still an argument between Christian churches and Catholic churches in terms of who is the rock.

4. Prophesying His resurrection

In Luke 9:21-22, it says, "But He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone, saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day.'" We can see that the religious leaders at that time had no idea that Jesus was the Son of Man (Ref. Matthew 16:13), He suffered many things for us, was killed and was raised up on the third day.

In Matthew 16:20-23, it is recorded, "Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ. From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.'"

In Mark 8:30-33 and Matthew 16:20-23, their basic descriptions are about the same. But the former says clearly in Mark 8:32-33, "And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke (G2008) Him. But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked (G2008) Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not

setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.'" So, Peter didn't persuade Him as in the Chinese translation, but rebuked in a not so friendly manner. Although it was from goodwill in the aspect of human Jesus knew that it was the work of Satan. No wonder He rebuked him as well. He gave feedback right away. Peter was just trying to do something good, but he immediately saw things in the aspect of human. This gives us a reminder as well. Be not proud just because we think that we are spiritual, Satan never stops working against us. Particularly, when one tries to live a holy life by consecration to be conformed to the image of Jesus. We must discern and go towards God. We cannot depend upon ourselves and must rely on the Holy Trinity. God will work for sure, and Satan tries to mess us up in the meantime. We observe again here that He took a low profile before His time, and asked not to tell others that He was indeed Christ.

5. Denying oneself and bearing his cross

In Luke 9:23-27 it says, "And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.'" "

Bearing one's cross indeed talks about tribulation, didn't Jesus give up His own life in the cross? Therefore, this also includes the giving up of material life. Didn't the martyrs also do so? As for ordinary people, the situation is different. We need to bear our cross daily which is measured for us in particular to deny ourselves. Don't look for tribulation yourself. Otherwise, "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?"(Luke 9:25) We shouldn't be ashamed because of His words. He has the promise of coming again and it will be glorious at that time. It is unlike what He came for the first time, which was to complete the plan of salvation, nailing to the cross. It looks very shameful in the aspect of human. What happened next is what happened in the Mount of Transfiguration. It is indeed "...some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."(Luke 9:27)

In Matthew 16:24-28, it basically talks about the same thing but mentions this point in Matthew 16:26-27, " ...Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds." Here, it talks about the deeds in faith, because it said clearly in James 2:17, "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself." This is same deeds what are talked about in front of the white throne for judgement. For Christmas, it is the deeds in faith since their names are already in the book of life. (Ref. Revelation 20:11-15) After Abraham considered righteous in God's eyes because of his faith, his faith life to sanctification was up and down just like us, until Hebrews 11:17 is said, "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, ..."

The same thing is basically said in Mark 8:34-38 with what described in Mark 8:38, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Like what we said before, bearing one's cross indeed talks about tribulation, didn't Jesus give up His own life in the cross? Our purpose is to be conformed to the image of Jesus, where tribulation comes for this purpose. It is next to impossible to be conformed to the image of Jesus without any tribulation. Paul is a humble person, and he suffered many tribulations. One who is humble for sure knows what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 8:2 is a fact, "If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know." In theory that is correct too. God is infinite, and we are finite. How can one know everything? We only know what God wants us to know. Please notice that the reverse is not true. We discussed before that we couldn't arbitrarily add equality sign. Jesus is not only humble, but with some other qualities such as those said in Matthew 11:29, "...I am gentle and humble in heart, ..." Being humble is just one aspect of being conformed to the image of Jesus. A person who is conformed to the image of Jesus, he is bound to know what comes from the Holy Spirit, and "...not quench the Spirit."(1 Thessalonians 5:19) Even in the case that there is no stimulation from the Holy Spirit, he will choose the God side according to what he knows. Man has free will, and the Holy Spirit will not force you to select a particular way. One must understand that all the tribulations that are part of bearing your cross are to be the same as those trial that Job encountered, which were arranged by God. Don't look for tribulations initiated by yourself. For example, someone said that his direct boss came not because of qualifications but due to personal acquaintance. In short, the person wasn't qualified in his eyes. Therefore, some of them united to attempt to remove that person but failed. The boss started to take revenge so that all the others except him left. He didn't want to go and had to tolerate all unreasonable demands. He said in his testimony that he learned humility by this way. Until today, I still cannot decide if it is considered looking for troubles himself since they started it. This is because God sometimes uses our environment to achieve what He wants.

This reminds me of what Paul encountered in the shipwreck on his way to Roman. (Ref. Acts 27:13-32) Lord had told him in Acts 27:24, "saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.'" "But as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship and had let down the ship's boat into the sea, on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved." Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it fall away."(Acts 27:30-32) Unless God performed a miracle, there was no reason to believe a ship without sailors couldn't encounter a wreck. From the consistency of the Bible, it couldn't be due to the lacking of faith in Paul's part. He just wanted to be a coworker of God. In other words, the teaching of doing nothing but handing everything over to God is not alright. We need to be a coworker when necessary. In terms of whether he got into troubles by himself, we know deeply what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4:3-4, "...I do not even examine myself. ...but the one who examines me is the Lord." It should be no judgement from ourselves in this case. In particular, they indeed started the tribulations themselves, he could choose the

same as the others' choice to leave, but he chose to stay instead. So, I believe that this is the case the God uses the environment to achieve what He wanted to achieve.

Reference

[1] In "<https://a-christian-voice.com/>," press "On spiritual understanding about life," then press "1037 Healing a thirty-eight years lame and feeding five thousand."