

Sunday March 21st 2010
'.....What's in a Name?'

1). The quotation that forms the title for our study today comes from William Shakespeare's play 'Romeo and Juliet'. The words are spoken by Juliet as she ponders the fact that her love, Romeo, has the name of Montague, the sworn enemies of her family the Capulets. She says, "*What's in a name? that which we call a rose By any other name would smell as sweet;*" – her thought being that it is the quality of the person that counts not the name by which that person is known.

a). And although her observation about a rose smelling as sweet no matter what we call it may be true, what we are looking at here is the wisdom of Man and not the wisdom of God.

b). And as far as the economy of God is concerned a person's name can have a tremendously significant importance as it will speak volumes about that person from God's perspective.

c). We will of course remember the name change of the father of faith – Ge 17:5 *Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.*

Abram = honored father

Abraham = father of a great multitude

d). And what we find here with respect to Abram/Abraham is that his name change speaks prophetically of God's plans for him – Abram, who is now to be called the father of a great multitude, at this point in his life is old, he has no children and his wife is barren, but in his name is the promise of God in response to Abraham's faithful obedience - Ge 22:17 *"blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

2). And we would also remember the name change given to Jacob - Ge 32:28 *And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."*

Jacob = Lit. heel grabber – supplanter

Israel = He who will rule with God

a). And again here we would see the prophetic significance of this name change.

b). The man himself, Jacob, now to be called Israel, will in that Day himself rule with God, and the nation that bears his name will likewise do the same -
Ho 6:2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

3). So as we look at the name changes that are given to Abram and Jacob we see the plan of God writ large in the names that they are given, Abraham and Israel. However, none of us have had God change our name, but there is an overcomers' promise that speaks of a new name in - *Re 2:17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."*

a). Stone = Greek – ‘psephos’ = a pebble (as worn smooth by handling), i.e. (by implication, of use as a counter or ballot) a verdict (of acquittal) or ticket (of admission);

b). Name = Greek – ‘onoma’ = a "name" (literally or figuratively) (authority, character):--called, (+ sur-)name(-d).

c). And so what do we see here? We see the one who overcomes given a white stone pointing to a verdict of acquittal or a ticket of admission with a name written on the stone that no one understands with absolute clarity apart from the person receiving it. And this new name has to do with the authority given to that person based on their character, that which has distinguished them in the race of faith; that which God has seen in that person from the foundation of the world in the same way that He saw Abraham in Abram and Israel in Jacob.

d). In that Day, if we should receive a white stone it will be perfectly clear to us why we have been given that particular name. Not only that but it seems likely that this new name will be the name we are to be known by, it is what we will be named, during the time of the Millennial Kingdom. It will be our given name, our surname.

e). And if we go to the scriptures we can find a particular example for this that I hope will give us great encouragement.

4). *Joh 1:41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).*

a). In our scripture here in John we see the Lord Himself upon His first meeting with Simon giving him the Aramaic name, ‘Cephas’ which the Holy Spirit then translates for us as ‘A Stone’.

b). We might hear echoes of our Revelation 2:17 scripture here as the name ‘Cephas’ is given to Simon as a descriptive title of what his character will ultimately be.

c). The word ‘stone’ used by the Holy Spirit to translate ‘Cephas’ is from the Greek word ‘Petros’.

d). Petros = a large but detached fragment of rock

e). And the word is used here metaphorically to describe Peter as a man who will be seen as a rock because of his firmness and steadfastness in the faith.

f). The name Peter is the English spelling of the Greek word Petros.

g). Simon is then destined to become the rock man.

h). And all of the Gospels make reference to the Lord naming Simon, Peter

i). Mt 10:2 *Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter,*

j). Mr 3:16 *Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;*

k). Lu 6:14 *Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew;*

l). It would not be unreasonable for us then to see the name Simon Peter as denoting two parts of his being that are in constant conflict with each other, the man of the flesh and the man of the spirit.

m). And from the life of Simon Peter recorded in the scriptures it is not hard to see the constant tension between these two.

n). Simon is ultimately to be Peter, but there is a process to go through in order to get there - Ro 1:16 ¶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

5). So let's look at a few incidents from the life of Simon Peter that will help us piece this together and also give us some encouragement in our own race of faith. Ro 7:22 *For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

6). And to begin we can see the call to Simon Peter to follow Christ –

Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 18 ¶ And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the*

sea; for they were fishermen. 19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

a). There is of course a very clear focus to the events here. Jesus is now beginning to preach and to say, 'Repent for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand'.

b). John the Baptist has been imprisoned and his message to prepare the people for the coming of Messiah is over and as a result Jesus Himself takes up the same message, but it would be clear from this point onwards that the establishment of His Kingdom would now be for a time yet future, hence He recruits those who will prepare the way for a people other than Israel to receive the Kingdom of the Heavens.

c). Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother hear the voice of the Lord and immediately follow Him, with the promise that He will make them fishers of men. They would have a part in the responsibility for the dragnet being cast into the sea to collect some of every kind in readiness for their appearance in the wedding hall. But probably at the time of their calling neither Simon nor Andrew knew what was to be involved in fulfilling it.

d). This is very similar to our own experience as we have heard the Lord's voice calling us to follow Him in order to receive the Kingdom of the Heavens.

e). *Re 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

f). And our ability to hear His voice and to choose to open the door, is by God's design, a result of the work of the disciples who became Apostles.

g). Then in a parallel function to being fishers of men the Lord has afforded us the privilege of working with those already caught in the dragnet, through the preaching and the teaching of the word of the Kingdom, something that we are all involved in, with a view to the salvation of the soul at the Judgment Seat. And I suspect that none of us who heard His voice understood what it would mean for us either.

7). Let's move on to an incident when the steadfastness of Peter results in something quite extraordinary - *Mt 14:22 ¶ Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. 23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. 24 But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. 25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.*

26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." 29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" 31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

a). Peter is the only person that scripture records, apart from Jesus, who walked on water. This was a moment of extraordinary faith and courage as his trust was completely in the Lord and not on the circumstances that surrounded him. However, as he takes his first steps he then saw ‘that the wind was boisterous’ and as a result ‘he was afraid and began to sink. And as a result the Lord rebukes him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’

b). So what did Peter doubt? Not that he could walk on water, because that was something he was never able to do, but rather his doubt had to do with the Lord and His ability to sustain him in the midst of the storm.

c). This is why we are admonished in - Heb 12:1 ¶ *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking[from this world] unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

d). The very nature of our Christian walk, as we have now come to understand it, takes us in a direction that we have never gone before that at times feels as insubstantial as walking on water. However, this is a journey that the Lord has made and we can walk as He did also if we will have faith in His ability to sustain us.

e). We are not immune though to ‘the sin that so easily ensnares us’, the sin of unbelief. And as a consequence it is our common experience to have times of extraordinary faith and then the next moment to be looking at our circumstances and all that is going on around us and then begin to sink in a sea of helplessness and even hopelessness, just as we see with Peter.

f). Through the action of the Lord we are of course already saved, even if we sink, but how sad in that Day to have the Lord say to us, ‘Why did you doubt?’

g). Col 1:23 *if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

8). And so to an event that we have spent much time on in recent weeks –
 Mt 16:13 ¶ *When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" 14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter,[Petros] and on this rock[Petra] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ. 21 ¶ From that time Jesus began to show to 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 the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" 23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

a). It is the revelation that Simon Peter has here of ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’, that is brought forth from above, that is the basis for the Lord naming him ‘Rock’ – the rock man, for this will be the foundation on which Peter’s steadfastness will eventually be built.

b). And here in v18 Jesus uses two words for ‘rock’ – ‘Petros’ and ‘Petra’

c). Petra = the massive living rock

d). The massive living rock, the Petra, on which His church is to be built is Christ in His Deity as Heir of the coming Kingdom, just as we see acknowledged here by Peter through a work of the Holy Spirit. Peter on the other hand is a fragment of that living rock in the same way as scripture describes us as living stones - 1Pe 2:5 *you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

e). It may not be surprising that the scripture that speaks of this is found in 1 Peter.

f). Hand in hand with the revelation that Peter receives here is the fact that the Christ must first suffer and then enter into His glory which is exactly what we find the Lord beginning to show His disciples in v21, the very thing that He points out to the two on the road to Emmaus that they had missed.

g). And it is in v22 that the Rock with the revelation then took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him concerning this, *saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"*. Which in turn gives rise to the Lord's rebuke of *"Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

h). In this incident we see perfectly the tension within Simon Peter. In one moment he has spiritual revelation that is off the charts with regards to its significance and in the next he is given over entirely to his flesh.

i). And how many of us, having had this same revelation still find ourselves taking the Lord aside to rebuke Him in the sense of being more mindful of the things of men than the things of God?

i). But before we may get too down hearted by this let us remember that the Lord gave Simon the name Petros in full prior knowledge of the events in his life including this one; just as He is in full prior knowledge of our own impersonations of Satan.

9). Then in an incident where we find Simon Peter referencing the same revelation we find the rock faith in the midst of adversity - Joh 6:61 *When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? 63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 64 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. 65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." 66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

a). And again as we view these two incidents at Caesarea Philippi and Capernaum we see both the ascendancy of the man of faith and the man of flesh. The tension between the two is strikingly obvious. And would I think be descriptive of our own experience.

10). It is on the night of the Last Supper though that we see Simon Peter at his lowest point - Mt 26:33 *Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." 34 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me*

three times." 35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.

a). At first glance there appears to be steadfastness here and courage, but this is Simon Peter's flesh speaking, and once again he is not hearing what is being said by the Lord. Again he is not being mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.

b). And this continues on later in the evening - Joh 18:10 *Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. 11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"*

c). All of which brings us to the High Priest's house - Lu 22:59 *Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly.*

d). The seemingly steadfast, courageous rock, Peter, denies any association with the Lord three times, and it is upon the third denial that the rooster crows and the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And as the eyes of the Lord search his heart he remembers the word of the Lord and filled with devastating remorse he leaves the lighted courtyard and goes into the darkness outside.

e). This is the same Simon Peter who healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead and cast out demons, who had the revelation of Christ's Deity and Kingdom, who was with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration.

f). Yet here it seems, in this one moment Simon Peter came face to face with the depravity of his own heart, and perhaps saw that which he had never seen in himself before.

g). And this is a place he had to come to.

11). And this is followed by a process of restoration after the Lord's resurrection - Joh 21:15 ¶ *So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. 18*

"Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." 20 ¶ Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."

a). The Lord asks Peter 3 times if Peter loves Him; once comparing Peter's love with that of the other disciples and twice in relation to just Peter. And Peter responds 3 times that the Lord knows he loves Him. Much is missing however in the English translation.

b). *Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [agape] Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love [phileo] You."* Agape = a love of complete devotion, of self sacrifice and surrendering devotion. Phileo = a love of personal attachment and friendly affection. Here we may see the humility of Peter who doesn't begin to compare himself with the other disciples.

c). *He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [agape] Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love [phileo] You."* Here we may see again the Lord testing him. Whereas, from his experiences on the night of the Lord's betrayal Peter would not want to compare himself with the others, what would he do when given the opportunity to speak only with regards to himself? And Peter of course can only give the same response.

d). *He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [phileo] Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love [phileo] Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love [phileo] You."*

The third time Jesus questions Peter He uses the word Phileo and in using this word He asks with a sharp directness whether Peter has any real affection for Him at all. This is why Peter is grieved by the Lord's use of Phileo. Peter's response remains the same.

e). The shocking realization that Peter has had is that from the outset he has only ever had a personal attachment and friendly affection towards the Lord, never the kind of self-sacrificing, surrendering devotion that the Lord requires.

f). And I am sure that if we search our own hearts we will find that our love for the Lord is much closer to that which Peter expresses than that which the Lord requires of us. And how would we know? Through our actions, through our words,

through our thought life - Joh 14:21 *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.*

12). Then we see connected with the Lord's question regarding Peter's love the opportunity for him to give the kind of self-sacrificing devotion that the Lord requires – 'feed My lambs', 'tend My sheep', 'feed My sheep'.

Feed = Greek – 'bosko' = to pasture; by extension to, fodder; reflexively, to graze:--feed, keep.

Tend = Greek – 'poimaino' = to tend as a shepherd of (figuratively, supervisor):--feed (cattle), rule.

a). And in these commands that the Lord gives to Peter perhaps we can hear an echo of an earlier encounter - Lu 12:40 *"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."* 41 ¶ *Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?"* 42 *And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?"* 43 *"Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes."* 44 *"Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has."*

b). Peter then is to feed and shepherd the Lord's lambs into their maturity, from lambs to sheep, in preparation for the Lord's return. It will then be in the self-sacrifice necessary to properly prepare the sheep of His pasture for the return of their Lord that Peter can now demonstrate his agape love for the Lord.

c). Then as a consequence of his faithfulness in this Peter will be that rock of immovable steadfastness even to the point of suffering a martyr's death on the cross - 19 *This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."* 20 ¶ *Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"* 21 *Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?"* 22 *Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."*

d). And finally the Lord makes clear that Simon Peter's path in following the Lord is his own and he is not to concern himself with what others appear to be doing or not doing – 'You follow Me'.

13). And as we follow Simon Peter into the Book of Acts we find this - Ac 1:15 ¶ *And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said,*

a). Ac 2:14 ¶ *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.*

b). Ac 4:8 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel:*

c). It is Peter, the rock, who stands up in the midst of the disciples in order to lead the fledgling church. It is Peter, the rock, who preaches the first Kingdom message of the Church. It is Peter, the rock, who speaks with boldness to the same rulers and elders who had crucified the Lord.

d). It is Peter, the rock, who first takes the message of the Kingdom to the Gentiles - Ac 10:44 ¶ *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"*

e). And it is Peter, the rock, who is given to write 2 epistles concerning the salvation of the soul.

b). It is at the beginning of the second of these epistles with the knowledge of his impending death - 2Pe 1:13 *Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.*

That he describes himself as follows.

c). 2Pe 1:1 ¶ *Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,*

d). He is Simon, the rock man, first and foremost a bondservant and then an apostle of Jesus Christ.

e). Bondservant = Greek - 'doulos' = the most abject and servile term for a slave.

f). It is from the verb 'deo' = to bind, hence 'bondservant' – the word denotes a person whose own will is swallowed up in the will of another to the total disregard of his own interests.

g). What a long way Simon has come to now be Peter.

14). So what about the name to be written on our white stone? Are we prepared to become what it says?