

## A Clean Slate

Common synonyms for a *second chance* include another opportunity, another shot, a second try, a clean slate or fresh start. This is the weekend of the Masters Tournament (the Green Jacket) and a common term when playing golf is to grant a *mulligan*, implying a chance to correct a bad shot – a do-over. For Peter the *Resurrection/Firstfruits* was an epic difference maker. In scanning the literature on second chances the following alternatives emerge: (1) Another chance or one more chance; (2) Do-over: implying a chance to correct a mistake or restart a task; (3) Redemption or clean slate: emphasizing a transformative journey or a fresh beginning; and (4) Retrial or Rebirth: often used for personal or significant life restart. For Peter it was surely a rebirth/clean slate.

[This year the *Feast of Firstfruits* (of the barley harvest) coincided with Resurrection Sunday. In my 4-25-20 message entitled *Know the Truth* I shared that in modern Jewish Translations of the *Torah*, *Lev. 23:11* has been altered to conveniently match the modern Jewish interpretation the day of *Firstfruits*. In Hebrew: *יֵאָמֵר אֶת־הַעֹמֶר לְפָנֵי יְהוָה לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם מִמִּחֶרֶת הַשַּׁבָּת יִנְסָפוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים: לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם מִמִּחֶרֶת הַשַּׁבָּת יִנְסָפוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים: Let's look at the Bible-Ort (Orthodox, *Artscroll*), JPS 1917, KJV, TLV and the RVA's translation of the Hebrew word *Shabbat*: "Then he shall wave the sheaf before Adonai for your acceptance; on the morrow after the shabbat the priest shall wave it" (Literal). "He shall wave it in the motions prescribed for a wave offering to God, so that it will be acceptable for you. The priest shall make this wave offering on the day after the first day of the [Passover] holiday" (Bible.Ort). "And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it" (JPS 1917). "And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it" (KJV). "He is to wave the omer before Adonai, to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the Shabbat, the kohen is to wave it" (TLV) "El cual mecerá el omer delante de Jehová, para que seáis aceptos: el siguiente día del sábado lo mecerá el sacerdote" (RVA).*

If the day of the offering is the day after the first *Day of Unleavened Bread* [*Nisan 15* called *Pesach* in modern Jewry], then the day of firstfruits is fixed in the Jewish calendar on *Nisan 16* and consequently *Shavuot* is always on *Sivan 6*. The Hebrew clearly states that the day of *firstfruits* is the day *after the Shabbat* (see the Hebrew in the previous paragraph which I colored Red which says *Ha-Shabbat*) during the week (the seven days) of the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, then the date varies year-by-year depending on the start of the Sacred New Year on the current Jewish calendar and requires counting (or some simple math) to determine. This year the 50 days, or *seven complete Shabbatot* from last Sunday (*Nisan 18*) will be on *Sivan 8* (5-24-26) not *Sivan 6*, when *Kol Simcha* will celebrate *Shavuot*.]

For the apostle Peter this *Resurrection/Firstfruits* was an epic difference maker and the *start of a clean slate*. Three days earlier he had pledged "Master, I'll lay down my life for You!" (*John 13:37*) but: "Yeshua answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Amen, amen I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times!" (*John 13:37*). Peter then went on to deny *Yeshua* three times while making a spectacle of himself: "60But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" And immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 61And the Lord turned and looked straight at (beheld) Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, 'Before the rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.' 62And Peter went out and wept bitterly' (*Luke 22:60-62*).

I cannot fathom how Peter felt at the moment when *Yeshua turned and looked straight at him*? Not only did he realize his failure but he also experienced the eyes of the Master looking straight at him at the very moment of his realization of utter failure! We also experience *Yeshua's* look at the moment we let Him down and betray Him. Peter began his repentance immediately upon experiencing *Yeshua's Look of Love*, but if we do not see His eyes at that moment, *we do not*. While the earth held *Yeshua* for the predicted three days and three nights, I can only imagine the heartache and emptiness inside Peter's soul. There was no consolation in the small talk of remembering His prophetic utterances while He was alive for the eleven were fearful, astonished and numb while they hid behind closed doors frightful of the Judean leaders. It was not until the evening (sunset) of that first day of the week (*John 20:19*) that the resurrected *Yeshua* stood in the midst of them and said *Shalom Alechem*.

When we mess up; and when we who know better than to go ahead and sin and ruin our lives, that is when the *resurrection kicks in*, and we are given *another chance*. *Yeshua* is the *Lord of the Second Chance*. This is what Peter and the disciples experienced. The same power is available to us today. Rabbi, is *Yeshua* really the *Lord of a second chance*? How often can we sin and be forgiven? Seventy times seven? Yes Virginia, seventy times seven! (See *Matt. 18*) Peter was devastated by his sin and guilt as I would be. But notice the *first message* of the Resurrection to Peter: *“7But go, tell His disciples and Peter; ‘He is going before you to the Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you’”* (*Mark 16: 7-8*). Go tell Peter? Peter is singled out. Evidently *Yeshua IS NOT* going to reject him because the fact is that He is not angry at all. Amazing! *Yeshua* sends word to the disciples that He is coming to see them in the Galil and singles Peter the traitor out saying in effect *Peter, I want to see you!*

Today, post the resurrection, we can *choose to forgive* our debtors and be ourselves equivalently forgiven. That is the *Power of the Resurrection* – a *Second Chance* to get it right. Are you ready to do this? As for me, I am taking full advantage of my second chances. Let us pray... *Shabbat Shalom!*