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## John 21, Part III

Who is Girding You?

**John 21:18-19:** *18. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When you were young, you girded thyself, and walked whither you would: but when you shalt be old, you shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither you would not. 19. Now this he spake, signifying <sup>(g4591)</sup> by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me (ASV).*

There is a key word in verse 19, left out of some modern translations. It is the word signifying <sup>(g4591)</sup> which is the Greek word *semaino*, a word indicating a visible sign as an indication of something, or a symbol to make something known. In the Greek O.T. it is used in lieu of *ot* <sup>(h226)</sup>, a word used for the rainbow, as a sign to Noah of the everlasting covenant (Gen 9:12), as also was the rite of circumcision (Gen 17:11) for a sign to Abraham.

Jesus gave such a sign concerning himself: **John 12:32-33:** *32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33. This he said, signifying <sup>(g4591)</sup> what death he should die.* The sign, as do many other signs, has a two-fold meaning. It indicates the death of Jesus on the cross (Mt 20:19) and the idea that by understanding the event, people would be drawn to Jesus. By lifting up the event into the heavens (Isa 55:7-9) allegorically, one can come to the understanding of the love of God for humanity, and also the things that have already happened to us, depicted by the physical display of the results of torture on the body of Jesus.

Similar lessons are conveyed by what Jesus told Peter. You too, will die on a cross. And according to some ancient writers, Peter was martyred about 34 years later. Tradition has it that he requested to be crucified upside down, as he was not worthy to die as did the Savior.

Looking at the event allegorically, the spiritual lesson here has to do with who girds the loins. **1Peter 1:13-15:** *13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (rather, conduct).* Paul states with what the loins (mind) are to be girded: **Ephesians 6:14:** *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...*

Jesus told Peter metaphorically, that when he was young (spiritually immature) that he girded himself with his own understanding and did as he desired. But when he became old (spiritually mature), another, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, would gird him with the way, the truth and the life. The stretching forth of the hands is a metaphor of a person actively seeking God: **Psalms 143:5-6:** *5. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. 6. I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsts after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.* (cf Ps 68:31).

**John 21:20-25:** *20. Then Peter, turning about, sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrays thee? 21. Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord,*

*and what shall this man do? 22. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. 23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? 24. This is the disciple which testifies of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. 25. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*

Verse 20-23 are a perfect example of how two or more can hear or read the same words and yet, come away with a different understanding. Perhaps even John did not understand the words at the time Jesus spoke them. John did outlive the other disciples and tarry until Jesus came. Moreover, writing near the end of his life, Jesus came to him by visions in spirit (Rv 1:10-13) and impressions on the heart, as indicated in his writings.

*This is the disciple which testifies of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.* John, the one that tarried after the other disciples, the disciple Jesus loved, wrote these things. And the things John wrote are particularly valuable to our generation for understanding the cross and the love of God. Amen.