

John 21:1-14

Part 1

- The risen Lord had already made six appearances recorded in the gospels.
- He has appeared to: (1) Mary Magdalene (2) The other women (3) Peter (4) Cleopas and his friend in Emmaus (5) Ten of the apostles with the exception of Thomas (6) All the apostles including Thomas.
- Some challenge the authenticity of John 21 maintaining it was added by another author or some unknown editor. It is argued that John 20:30-31 was the original ending of the gospel of John.
- There is no real evidence that chapter 21 was added by some unknown editor or writer.
- It is in the oldest Greek manuscripts and should be considered as a genuine part of the original text.
- John 21:25 serves as a second ending to this marvelous gospel.
- It is interesting that one might conclude 1 John 5:13 ends First John, but it does not end the epistle.
- Previous to this John inserts some supplemental material that he deemed important for his readers to know.
- Besides this seventh appearance of Christ, Peter's confession of his love for Jesus, and the prophecy in regard to Peter's death he reveals that he is the author of this gospel. (Jn. 21:20, 24).

The Appearance To The Seven Disciples

Seventh Appearance of Jesus

Jesus Appears at the Sea of Galilee

Longest Account Of Any Resurrection Appearance Of The Lord

Jn. 21:1 After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested *Himself* in this way.

1. The word "manifested" is used with the idea of bodily appearing to different disciples.
 - a. "phaneroo" [fan neh **rah** oh] is used twice in this verse and is found 9 times in this gospel.
 - b. It is used in connection with Jesus' resurrection appearances.
2. "The Sea of Tiberias" was the official name of this lake deriving its name from the city of Tiberias named after the emperor Tiberias. This city was on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.
 - a. This body of water was also known as "the Sea of Galilee." (Matt. 4:18; Jn. 6:1).
 - b. It was also called "Lake Gennesaret." (Lk. 5:1).
 - 1) "limne" [**lim** nay] means "lake."

2) See also ‘the lake’ Lk. 8:22 referring to “the Sea of Galilee.”

c. “The Sea of Galilee” was more like a large lake.

a. It was 13 miles long and at its widest point about 8 miles wide.

b. Both Jesus and the apostles knew this body of water very well.

Identity Of Seven Disciples

Jn. 21:2 Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.

1. Simon Peter, Thomas [Didymus], and Nathaniel are listed first, but there does not appear to be any significance to the order.

a. “Simon Peter” refers to Peter who was also known as “Cephas” [his Aramaic name]. (Jn. 1:42).

Jn. 1:42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

1) “Peter” [petros, **peh** trahs] was his Greek name meaning “a rock, stone.”

2) “Simon” was his Hebrew name.

b. Thomas, one of the twelve, was also with them. (Matt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:15).

1) Thomas is best known for his skepticism about the reports Jesus had been resurrected, but made a great confession after being convinced Jesus had been raised from the dead. (Jn. 20:28).

John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

2) Thomas was a very loyal apostle, and should not be viewed with disdain.

3) He was the one who sincerely responded to Jesus’ statement. (Jn. 14:3-5).

Jn. 14:3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Jn. 14:4 "And you know the way where I am going."

Jn. 14:5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?"

4) He had great courage when facing danger from the hostile Jewish leaders. (Jn. 11:16).

Jn. 11:16 Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him."

c. “Nathanael” was present.

1) Many believe he is one and the same as Bartholomew.

2) Some believe “Nathanael” was his real name and Bartholomew was a name denoting his filial relation with his parents.

d. Here are arguments used to identify with Nathanael.

- 1) John never mentions “Bartholomew” and the Synoptic writers never mention “Nathaniel.”
- 2) In the Synoptic gospels Philip and Bartholomew are mentioned together (Matt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:14), whereas Nathaniel is not mentioned.
- 3) In John’s gospel Phillip and Nathanael are mentioned together. (Jn. 1:45-48).

Jn. 1:45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Jn. 1:46 Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Jn. 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"

Jn. 1:48 Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

- 4) John mentions Nathanael among the apostles at the beginning and at the end of Christ’s ministry. (Jn. 1:45-48; 21:2).
- 5) All the other disciples mentioned in John 1 became apostles - Andrew, Peter, Philip
- 6) None of this is conclusive link to Philip and Nathanael as the same person, but it is very possible.

2. “The sons of Zebedee” [James and John] are also listed among the seven. (Matt. 10:2; Mk. 1:19).

- a. John never uses the names of these apostles, but calls them “the sons of Zebedee.”
- b. These brothers who were apostles are mentioned often in the Synoptic gospels.

3. “Two other of His disciples” are also listed.

- a. John does not reveal their identity.
- b. They may or may not have been apostles.

Peter Says “I Am Going Fishing”

Jn. 21:3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.

- John points out “that night they caught nothing.”
- It was the usual custom for fishermen to fish at night in the Sea of Galilee.

1. Some say these fishermen may be returning to their former occupation and were not waiting for Jesus.

- a. They believe the disciples had abandoned their apostleship and may have been at a loss what to do next.
- b. This view may be partially true. There is no evidence Jesus had given them instructions what to do in Galilee.
- c. These men were fisherman and needed to fish to make a living.

- d. This was their source of income.
 - e. They did not have any known income apart from their income from fishing.
 - f. The apostles were married men, and had a responsibility to provide for themselves and their families. (1 Cor. 9:5; 1 Tim. 5:8).
2. It seems they were waiting on the risen Lord to meet them.
- a. They did not know when the Lord would come to Galilee or what to do in Galilee.
 - b. They had been instructed by the angel and Jesus to meet Him there. (Matt. 26:32; 28:7, 10; Mk. 14:28; 16:7).
 - c. Jesus has also spoken these words during His ministry in regard to His future need of them. (Matt. 16:19; 24:19-23; Lk. 22:32; Jn. 14:26; 15:16, 20, 27; 16:1-3, 13).

Matt. 16:19 "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."

Matt. 24:19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

Matt. 24:20 "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.

Matt. 24:21 "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

Matt. 24:22 "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

Matt. 24:23 "**Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him.**

Lk. 22:32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

Jn. 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Jn. 15:16 "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you

Jn. 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

Jn. 15:26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,

Jn. 15:27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Jn. 16:1 "These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling.

Jn. 16:2 "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.

Jn. 16:3 "These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.

Jn. 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Jesus Stood On The Beach As The Day Was Breaking And Speaks To The Disciples

Jn. 21:4 But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus

Jn. 21:5 So Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No."

Jn. 21:6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch." So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish.

- “Haul” seems to mean “haul into the ship.”
 - Later Peter dragged the net to land. (Jn. 21:11).
 - Christ’s question about the catch expected a negative answer.
1. Jesus was on the beach at dawn, but His disciples do not recognize Him or His voice from about 100 yards away.
 2. Jesus shouts a question knowing the answer to it that they had not caught any fish.
 - a. “Children” is not literal, but a term of affection.
 - b. Jesus had used this language earlier when He addressed His apostles. (Jn. 13:33).
 3. Jesus tells them what to do to “find a catch.”
 - a. He tells them to cast their nets on “the right-hand side of the boat.”
 - b. They evidently had been fishing on the opposite side of the boat.
 4. Not knowing it was Jesus speaking, they follow His instructions.
 5. The reason they followed His instructions may be this.
 - a. The movement of large bodies of fish in the waters of Galilee are frequently visible to one standing on the shore.
 - b. They may have supposed the one on the shore saw the fish on the right side of the boat.
 - c. We cannot be sure this is why they followed the instructions of the stranger on the beach.
 - d. Of course Jesus did not have to see the movement of the fish to know where the fish were.
 - e. The “catch” should probably be regarded as a miracle though the visible explanation does not really change the significance of this amazing event.
 - f. The fact their nets did not break might also be regarded as a miracle. (Jn. 21:11). See Lk. 5:6.

Lk. 5:6 When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break;

John Discerns It Must Be The Lord On The Beach

Jn. 21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped *for work*), and threw himself into the sea.

1. “That disciple whom Jesus loved” is John’s way of describing himself and he exclaimed to Peter “It is the Lord.”

- a. He probably recalled another time when they had caught nothing and Jesus gave them information for a catch. (Lk. 5:4-11).
 - b. He and his brother James were fishing partners with Peter. (Lk. 5:10).
2. Peter put “his outer garment on” and jumped into the lake or sea.
 - a. The task of fishing had led Peter to lay aside his upper garment.
 - b. This is a minor detail and no real significance to this narrative.
 3. He was not nude, but he did not have on his upper outer garment.
 4. He was dressed in his undergarment.
 5. Putting the outer garment back on made it more difficult to swim, but he likely did this out of respect for Jesus.
 6. He recognized Jesus as “the Christ” and “the Son of the living God.” (Matt. 16:17)
 7. He had also called Jesus “the Holy One of God.” (Jn. 6:69).

Other Disciples

Jn. 21:8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net *full* of fish.

Jn. 21:9 So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire *already* laid and fish placed on it, and bread.

1. The other disciples did not swim to shore, but they came to shore “in a little boat.”
2. They were excited, but restrained their emotions until they completed the work involved with the huge catch.
3. They did not have far to row to shore. (Jn. 21:8).
4. Their most difficult task was “dragging the net full of fish.”
5. Once they came to shore they saw “a charcoal fire” burning and fish placed on it and bread.
6. Jesus was not a vegetarian nor were His disciples. (Lk. 24:42,43; Jn. 21:12).

Lk. 24:42 They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish;

Lk. 24:43 and He took it and ate *it* before them.

7. This fact is not, however, the point of this narrative, but it can be deducted from this narrative and other facts recorded about His eating habits and what He taught.

Jesus Speaks

Jn. 21:10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught."

1. This probably means there was a need for additional fish to feed all the men.
2. He would use some of the fish they had caught.

Simon Peter Brings The Net To Land

Jn.21:11 Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

1. The NIV has “climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore.”
2. There are many amazing things about this event, but one was the net was not torn by the 153 large fish.
3. There is no spiritual significance to 153.
 - a. Some have tried to make it represent the Trinity assigning the number 50 to each of them and adding 3 because there are three members of the Trinity.
 - b. Some have signed the number 100 to the Gentiles, 50 to the Jews, and 3 for the Trinity.
 - c. Jerome claimed there were 153 species of fish thus the catch became a symbol of fruitful mission as fishers of men.
 - d. Some note that 153 is the numerical value of the phrase “The church is love” or “the children of God.”
 - e. Some see the number made up of “Simeon, Bar Jonah, Kephas.”
 - f. Some say 153 is a reference to “ICTHYS” (a common early Christian acronym) standing for “Jesus Christ, The Son of God, Savior.” These letters are the English transliteration of the Greek “ichthus” [ik **thoos**] meaning “fish.”
 - 1) Iota [I] is first letter of “iesous” [ee ay **sous**] meaning “Jesus.”
 - 2) Khi [ch, k] is the first letter of “christos” [kree **stahs**] meaning “Christ.”
 - 3) Theta [th] is the first letter of “theos” [**th**eh ahs] meaning “God.”
 - 4) Upsilon [U or Y] is the first letter of “uios” [**w**ee ahs] meaning “Son.”
 - 5) Sigma [s] is the first letter of “soter” [soh **tayr**] meaning “Savior.”
 - g. All of this is non-sense and has zero Biblical support.
 - d. The Bible assigns no significance to 153. It represents a large catch of fish.
4. John earlier taught it took all the disciples to the net full of fish to land.
5. He now records Peter “drew the net to land”
6. The idea *is* likely that Peter organized the hauling of the fish rather than doing it all by himself.

Jesus Provides Breakfast For The Disciples

Jn. 21:12 Jesus said to them, "Come *and* have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord.

Jn. 21:13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave *it* to them, and the fish likewise.

1. These 7 disciples are now fully aware “it was the Lord.”
2. There was no reason to ask if He was the Lord since it was obvious to all of them.
3. It is possible they did not question Him because feared a mild rebuke like the Lord had given Philip. (Jn. 14:8, 9).

Jn. 14:8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

Jn. 14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

4. Jesus had before informed them what to do for a catch after they had fished all night without catching any fish.
5. This reminds one of the earlier event on this same lake or sea. (Lk. 5:1-3, 4-12).

Lk. 5:4 When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

Lk 5:5 Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets."

Lk. 5:6 When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break;

Lk. 5:7 so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.

Lk. 5:8 But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

Lk. 5:9 For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;

Lk. 5:10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."

Lk. 5:11 When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

“The Third Time”

Jn. 21:14 This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

1. Jesus had appeared to them on two consecutive Sundays following His resurrection. (Jn. 20:19-29).
2. This was now “the third time” He appeared to the group of disciples, but this time He only appeared to seven disciples.
3. The others were not present, but there is no blame or praise put on their absence.
4. All the disciples knew Jesus had been raised from the dead and had personally seen the risen Lord.
5. We do not know where the others disciples were except based on the instructions of Jesus we can safely assume they were in Galilee awaiting Jesus.

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