

John 21

part 2

- John 21:1-14 records Jesus appearing to seven of His disciples in Galilee where they were fishing on “the sea of Tiberias” [Sea of Galilee, Lake Gennesaret]. (Matt. 4:18; Jn. 6:1; Lk. 5:1). The seven disciples were Peter, Thomas, James and John, Nathanael (Bartholomew?), and two unknown disciples
- Jesus was not recognized at first, but after Jesus instructed them how to find a very large catch of fish they discerned it was the Lord. (Jn. 20:7,8).
- He prepared food for these seven fishermen, and they are being prepared for future service.
- Some would serve as apostles, but it is not clear in what way the two unnamed disciples would serve. These two may or may have been apostles.
- Jesus will also use this opportunity to restore Peter to His service.
- He will commission Peter three times to take care of the His sheep.

Jesus Questions Peter’s Love

Jn. 21: 15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs."
Jn. 21:16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep."
Jn. 21:17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of John, 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, "Tend My sheep.

1. Peter had denied the Lord three times after the arrest of Jesus. (Matt. 26:69-75).
2. It is clear He was sorrowful about his denial. (Matt. 26:75).
3. After His resurrection He had appeared to Peter alone and twice when he was with the other apostles. (Lk. 24:33,34, 36-42; Jn. 20:19-29).
4. Jesus is now asking Peter three times to confess his love for Him in the presence of his six friends.
5. This may have been a reproof to Peter for his statement he would never deny Jesus, but did. (Matt. 26:31-33).

Matt. 26:31 Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, '***I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.***'

Matt. 26:32 "But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

Matt. 26:33 But Peter said to Him, "*Even* though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away."

6. Peter is being restored to His place in the Lord’s service.
7. Peter would become a very courageous and effective apostle.

1st Question And Reply

Jn. 21: 15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs."

1. Jesus asked Peter, "Do you **love** [α] Me more than these?"
 - a. The "these" seems to refer to the disciples.
 - b. The question can be understood in three different ways.
 - 1) Do you love Me more than these men love Me?
 - 2) Do you love Me more than you love these men?
 - 3) Do you love Me more than these things? Perhaps referring to his fishing equipment and his life as a fisherman.
 - c. We cannot be sure, but the first possibility seems to make the best sense in light of Matthew 26:33 where he claimed to love Jesus more than the others.
 - d. Peter answered, "Yes, Lord; You know that I **love** [φ] You."
 - 1) Jesus used the verb "agapao" [ah gah **pah** oh] for "love."
 - 2) Peter used the verb "phileo" [fee **leh** oh] for "love" in response to Jesus' question.
- c. Jesus tells him "Tend My lambs."
 - 1) Jesus is referring to His followers present or future.
 - 2) God's people are a flock of lambs or sheep. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).

2nd Question And Reply

Jn. 21:16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep."

1. Again Jesus used "agapao" in asking Peter "do you love Me?" This time He dropped "more than these."
2. Peter answered, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" again using the word "phileo."
3. Jesus responded by saying, "Shepherd My sheep."
 - a. Lit. "Shepherd the little sheep of Me"
 - b. He was to more than feed the Lord's sheep.
 - c. He was to shepherd the Lord's little sheep that included more than feeding them.
 - 1) It also involved protecting them and looking after their various needs.

2) Peter later became an elder [a shepherd] of the church. (1 Pet. 5:1).

3rd Question And Reply

Jn. 21:17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love [φ] Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love [φ] Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You [φ]" Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.

1. A "third time" Jesus asked Peter about his love, but this time Jesus changes His word to "phileo" for "love." He again dropped the words "more than these." No explanation is given.
2. Peter answered, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love you" once again using the word "phileo".
 - a. The words "You know all things" are a recognition of His Deity.
 - b. John made reference to the Omniscient of Jesus in John. 2:25.
 - c. Jesus manifested His Omniscient by foretelling the future with detailed accuracy. (Matt. 24).
3. Jesus said to Peter. "Tend My sheep." Lit. "Feed the little sheep of Me"

Agapao Versus Phileo

1. A study of the word "love" is interesting.
 - a. Jesus used the word "agapao" in His first two questions, and Peter responded with "phileo."
 - b. Jesus changed to "phileo" in His third question, and Peter answered again with "phileo."
2. Most believe that "agapao" love denotes a greater love than "phileo."
 - a. Many believe "agapao" denotes the highest and most perfect kind of love.
 - b. They contend "phileo" denotes a strong affection based on emotion.
 - c. It is affirmed that Peter claimed only an inferior kind of love as compared to the "love" of Jesus' first two questions.
 - d. All of this is questionable as a study of these words reveals.
3. These words are interchangeable
 - a. "agapao" - Lk. 11:43

Lk. 11:43 "Woe to you Pharisees! For you **love [α]** the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places.

b. "phileo" is used in parallel verses. (Matt. 23:6; Lk. 20:46).

Matt. 23:6 "They love [φ] the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues,

Lk. 20:46 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love [φ] respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets,

4. Compare Jn. 3:35a & Jn. 5:20 φ

Jn. 3:35 "The Father loves [α] the Son and has given all things into His hand.

Jn. 5:20 "For the Father loves [φ] the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

5. See - Mk 10:21α; Jn. 11:3 φ, 36 φ

Mk. 10:21 Looking at him [the rich young ruler], Jesus felt a love [α] for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

Jn. 11:3 So the sisters [of Lazarus] sent *word* to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love [φ] is sick."

Jn. 11:36 So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved [φ] him!"

6. It is interesting to compare these verses.

Jn. 19:26 When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved [α] standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

Jn. 21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved [α] 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.

Jn. 20:2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved [φ], and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

Jn.21:20 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved [α] following *them*; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"

7. Here is another interesting comparison.

1 Pet. 2:17 Honor all people, love [α] the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Heb. 13:1 Let love of the brethren continue. Love is from "philadelphia" meaning "brotherly love." "philadelphia" is a form of the word "phileo."

1 Pet 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, "Love" again is from "philadelphia,"

8. John 16:27 used "phileo" of God's love and the disciples love for Jesus.

Jn. 16:27 for the Father Himself loves [φ] you, because you have loved [φ] Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

9. 2 Tim. 3:4 - philotheos [fee lah theh ahs]. It means "God-lovers."

2Tim. 3:4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

10. John 14:24a with 1 Cor. 16:22 φ

Jn. 14:24 "He who does not love [α] Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me

1 Cor. 16:22 If anyone does not love [φ] the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha.

Comments

1. It is not certain one word is stronger than the other.
2. It is not certain they are synonyms.
3. It is not good interpretation to insist "agapao" is a stronger word for love than "phileo."
4. It is probably not best to treat them as different words, that is, to make a distinction between them, in the study of the New Testament.
5. Though they may not be synonyms, it may be best to treat them that way based on our present knowledge of these words.

Jesus Prophecy's Peter's Death

Jn. 21:18 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go."

Jn. 21:19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!"

- "Truly, truly" or "verily, verily" is used several times by Jesus. (Jn. 1:41; 3:3,5, 11; 5:19, 24,25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34,51, 58; 10:1, 7; 13:16, 20, 21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23).
1. Jesus reveals to Peter he would grow old and he would suffer a violent death when he was old. (Jn. 21:18).
 - a. The words "stretch out you hands" may refer to Peter's crucifixion.
 - b. Tradition says Peter was crucified upside down because he did not feel worthy to die the same way Jesus did. Eusebius, who was born between A.D. 260 and 265, reported Peter at his own request was crucified head downward.
 - c. It is believed Peter died in about A.D. 66 or 67 that was a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
 - d. It is not known how old he was, but Jesus indicated he would be old when he died.
 2. Jesus lets Peter know He wants the service of Peter and says "Follow Me."
 3. Peter became a great apostle who fearlessly followed Jesus and proclaimed the gospel.
 4. Peter was the one who was given "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 16:19).

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."

5. He was given the responsibility and privilege of opening the doors of the kingdom to the Jews on Pentecost and opening the doors of the kingdom to the Gentiles at the home of Cornelius.
 - a. See chapters 2 & 10 of Acts.
 - b. Peter was given the privilege of first preaching to the Jews and later to the Gentiles.

Peter Sees John Following Them

Jn. 21:20 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved [α] following *them*; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"

Jn. 21:21 So Peter seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?"

1. Peter sees John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved following them." See Jn. 13:23

Jn. 13:23 There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

2. Peter asks Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man [John]?"
3. Jesus had foretold Peter's violent death and Peter is curious about the future of John.

Jesus Responds To Peter's Question

Jn. 21:22 Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me!"

Jn. 21:23 Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but *only*, "If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you?"

1. Many brethren interpreted Christ's words to mean John would not die, but John says this was not what Jesus was saying.
2. He simply said it was not important for Peter to know what would become of John.
3. Again Jesus said "You follow Me."
4. If tradition is correct, John lived a very long life.
5. He was exiled to the isle of Patmos. (Rev. 1:9).

Rev. 1:9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

6. Many believe this was about A.D. 96, but this date is not absolutely certain. Some scholars believe it was much earlier than that when John was exiled to Patmos or was on Patmos.

Identity Of The Disciple Writing Gospel Of John

Jn. 21:24 This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

- "these things" refers to the whole gospel of John.

- There is no way of knowing the identity of the “we.” “We know that his testimony is true.”
 - They are sure John is the author of this gospel.
1. This statement refers back to John 21:20.

Jn. 21:20 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following *them*; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"

2. John, the son of Zebedee, is the author of this gospel.
3. John also wrote 1,2,3 John and Revelation.

John’s Statement About The “Things Which Jesus Did”

Jn. 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.

1. John stresses that there are “many things Jesus did” that he did not record.
2. John did not record all the things in the gospel Jesus did during His life and ministry.
3. He included some things not recorded by the Synoptic writers, but he also omitted many things recorded by these writers.
4. None of the writers claim to report every things Jesus did during His life and ministry.
5. They did record the teachings of Jesus.
6. Jesus had spent much time teaching His disciples as well as individuals and multitudes.
7. John uses a hyperbole in stressing what Jesus had done.
 - a. Even a small area of the world literally would hold multiplied trillions of books.
 - b. The point John is making is that he had not nearly recorded all Jesus had done, and it would take many books to record and describe all the actions of Jesus.

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