

# **Bible Study September 27, 2023**

## **JOHN 21 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)**

### **Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish**

***<sup>1</sup> Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.***

***<sup>4</sup> Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.***

***<sup>5</sup> He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"***

***"No," they answered.***

***<sup>6</sup> He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.***

***<sup>7</sup> Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.***

Only John ("the disciple Jesus loved") recognized Jesus in the dim morning light, undoubtedly because Jesus had performed a similar miracle earlier (Luke 5:1-11).

***<sup>8</sup> The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. <sup>9</sup> When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.***

***<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." <sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.***

### **Jesus Reinstates Peter**

***<sup>15</sup> When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"***

***"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."***

**Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”**

**<sup>16</sup> Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”**

**He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”**

**Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”**

**<sup>17</sup> The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”**

**Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”**

**Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.**

In this beach scene, Jesus led Peter through an experience that would remove the cloud of his denial. Peter had denied Jesus three times. Three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved him. When Peter answered yes, Jesus told him to feed his sheep. It is one thing to say you love Jesus, but the real test is your willingness to serve him. Peter had repented, and here Jesus was asking him to commit his life to him. Peter’s life changed when he finally realized who Jesus was. His occupation changed from fisherman to evangelist; his identity changed from impetuous to “rock” (see the note on 1:42); and his relationship to Jesus changed—he was forgiven, and he finally understood the significance of Jesus’ words about his death and resurrection.

Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him. The first time, Jesus said, “Do you love [Greek agape: volitional, self-sacrificial love] me more than these?” The second time, Jesus focused on Peter alone and still used the word translated into Greek as agape. The third time, Jesus used the word translated into Greek as phileo (signifying affection, affinity, or brotherly love) and asked, in effect, “Are you even my friend?” Each time Peter responded with the word translated into Greek as phileo. Jesus doesn’t settle for quick, superficial answers. He has a way of getting to the heart of the matter. Peter had to face his true feelings and motives when Jesus confronted him. How would you respond if Jesus asked you, “Do you love me? Do you really love me? Are you even my friend?”

**<sup>18</sup> Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” <sup>19</sup> Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”**

Jesus predicted Peter’s death by crucifixion. Tradition indicates that Peter was crucified for his faith—upside down because he did not feel worthy of dying as his Lord did. Despite what Peter’s future held, Jesus told Peter to follow him. We may be uncertain and fearful about the future. But if we know God is in control, we can confidently follow Jesus.

**<sup>20</sup> Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) <sup>21</sup> When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”**

***22 Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.”***

Peter asked Jesus how John would die. Jesus replied that Peter should not concern himself with that. We tend to compare our lives to the lives of others, whether to rationalize our own level of devotion to Christ or to question God’s justice. Jesus responds to us as he did to Peter: “What is that to you? As for you, follow me.”

***23 Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”***

Early church history reports that after John spent several years as an exile on the island of Patmos, he returned to Ephesus, where he died as an old man near the end of the first century.

***24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.***

***25 Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.***

This chapter tells how Jesus commissioned Peter. Perhaps Peter needed special encouragement after his denial—he may have felt completely worthless. John 21:1-14 sets the scene for Jesus’ conversation with Peter.

John’s stated purpose for writing his Gospel was to show that Jesus was the Son of God (20:31). He clearly and systematically presented the evidence for Jesus’ claims. When evidence is presented in the courtroom, those who hear it must make a choice. Likewise, those who read the Gospel of John must also make a choice—is Jesus the Son of God or isn’t he? You are the jury. The evidence has been clearly presented. You must decide. Read John’s Gospel and believe!