

# The Gospel of John

## Chapter 21:1-25

*February 1, 1998*

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

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- Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
- Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
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- **Review and Introduction**

In the previous chapter John records the resurrection and appearance of our Lord to the disciples. In this chapter he continues to give proof of the Sonship of Jesus as evidenced by further appearances. There has historically been some debate about the authenticity of this chapter because some have felt that John ended the book at chapter 20. However, all of the literary style belongs to John and the detail belongs to an eyewitness. If not part of the original work, it at very least was added by John before being given to others. It is possible that the motive for adding the chapter was to address the rumor that spread regarding the immortality of John. All of this is speculation and unnecessary. Therefore, I mention this only to inform but in no way to suggest that the chapter is anything other than authentic.

- **Exposition of John 21:1-25**

*After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself:<sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.<sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.*

- The Sea of Tiberias is also called the Sea of Galilee. Therefore, the Disciples had traveled north, apparently as a group, although this event mentions only seven of them. The Disciples were probably unsure as to what they were to be doing but clearly the Lord was not with them providing each meal, so Peter decides to go fishing and the others follow.

*4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."<sup>6</sup> And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.<sup>7</sup> Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.<sup>8</sup> But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.*

- After an exhausting, unfruitful fishing excursion the Lord appears as a stranger on the shore. Having tried everything they could to catch fish, the Disciples were ready to try anything, even a change as insignificant as which side of the boat they cast the nets. This event immediately reminded them of the last time Jesus provided in the exact same way. Luke records in 5:1-11 that Peter, James and John were fishing partners and had had an unsuccessful day on the Sea of Gennesaret (another name for the Sea of Galilee). The similarity of the events immediately revealed to them that the stranger on the shore was their Lord.
- Of all the things revealed in the Scriptures about Peter, one thing is an understatement, he was zealous. Even though at times his zeal was without knowledge, we see a genuine, sincere man with great love for His Lord setting aside all things

for the joy of being with Him. Peter's "abandon all" zeal is a great encouragement for us to delight in our Lord as well.

*9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."<sup>11</sup> Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.<sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord.<sup>13</sup> Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.<sup>14</sup> This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.*

- Certainly John includes this story to further convince us of the genuine resurrection of Jesus. The Disciples didn't merely see visions of Jesus, they actually conversed and ate a meal with Him. In addition, this event displays the dominion that Jesus has over His creation. Although God made man to have dominion over the creation, we do not yet see it but we do see Jesus exercising His authority over His kingdom (Hebrews 2).
- There are times in the Scriptures where Jesus was immediately recognized in His post resurrection body. Other times the Lord closes the eyes of people so that they cannot see who He is until He later opens their eyes. It is curious to note that the Disciples were afraid to ask "Who are You". John states that they knew it was the Lord but still they were inclined to ask but knew better than to do so. Probably the best explanation is that the Disciples were still in amazement at the very sight of Him and did not want to insult Him by displaying continued disbelief.
- It is possible that the glorified Spiritual body of Jesus had some feature of glory that made His identity questionable. Although this is a possibility, this verse does not necessitate such a position. Paul later addresses the very question of what our bodies will look like and concludes that we will take on a Spiritual body just as Jesus did. This glorified body will still be tangible but yet incorruptible and eternal.

*15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."<sup>16</sup> He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."<sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, 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, "Feed My sheep."<sup>18</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish."<sup>19</sup> This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."*

- The restoration of Peter is a section of Scripture that has been the center of much debate over the centuries. Jesus takes the opportunity to restore and strengthen the great Peter after having denied the Lord three times earlier. While Peter got frustrated with the repeated question, it was good for Peter to declare his love for his Master three times. These verses do not install Peter as the first Pope or as the head of the Disciples. This event occurs because Peter needed to be reconciled to the Lord. Jesus commands Peter three times to "feed My sheep". This command, though not ultimately unique to Peter, is what the leadership of the church should be doing. The leadership should be teaching, admonishing and encouraging the Elect of God until He returns in glory. It appears that verse 18 was a prophetic declaration that Peter would die at the hands of his enemies and church history records that he was crucified upside down in Rome.

*20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"<sup>21</sup> Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?"<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."<sup>23</sup> Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?"*

- Peter is curious to know about the calling of John and Jesus stops his inquiry short by in essence telling Peter that he should not worry about the calling of John but rather should be more concerned with that which he personally had been told to do. The phrase about John obviously started some confusion which John wished to dispel. Jesus was using a hyperbole to get Peter's attention. It was as if Jesus said, "Peter, if my intention was to have John live *forever*, what would that mean to you?—nothing, you should do what I have asked you to do."

*24 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.<sup>25</sup> And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen. NKJV*

- John closes the book with his own hyperbole referring to the eternal effect of the ministry of Christ. Clearly, the world has never seen a more significant event than the advent of our Lord. Certainly one day we will see Him face to face and learn of the things not recorded in the Scriptures.