

John 21:1-14: After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, & he revealed himself in this way. ² Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, & two others of his disciples were together. ³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out & got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. ⁴ Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." ⁶ He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, & you will find some." So they cast it, & now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. ⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, & threw himself into the sea. ⁸ The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. ⁹ When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, & bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard & hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come & have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came & took the bread & gave it to them, & so with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Intro: In our text today, Jesus meets His disciples at the Sea of Galilee; **My trip to Israel:** Jesus did about 80% of His earthly ministry there: called His disciples; walked on water; cast out demons; calmed the winds & storm; fed the 5,000; preached the sermon on the mount; & met with His disciples after His resurrection from the dead!

We gather here again today to be reminded of the most important events that have ever occurred or will ever occur in the history of the world. Jesus & what He did, will never change. Last Resurrection Day Sunday, we studied John 20:19-31: Jesus Christ, the God-Man & Son of God, gives us peace, power, pardon, & purpose like no one else can because He died on that cross & rose up from the dead so that all who repent & believe in Him shall have everlasting life! Today we continue in John's Gospel & see Jesus' third revelation of Himself to His disciples.

GOSPEL! Jesus reveals Himself as the resurrected God-Man Who is LORD over all, calls all peoples to Himself, & serves His people with love & humility, so trust & obey Him, join His mission, & enjoy Him & His love.

1. Jesus Reveals Himself Again

John 21:1: After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, & he revealed himself in this way. (**V.14:** This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.)

a. The first revelation: John 20:19-21: On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came & stood among them & said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands & his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

b. The second revelation: John 20:26-29: Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, & Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came & stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, & see my hands; & put out your hand, & place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord & my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen yet & have believed."

c. Jesus Christ rose from the dead: Pastor: Biblical Evidence: 1) Jesus' death & resurrection was prophesied hundreds of years in advance (Isaiah 53)

2) Jesus predicted His death & resurrection (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; John 2:18-22) (Lord, Liar, Lunatic?)

3) Jesus died on the cross (Matt. 27:45-54; Mark 15:33-39; Luke 23:44-48; John 19:28-42)

4) Jesus appeared physically alive three days after his death (John 20:17; John 20:20-28; Luke 24:36-43)

5) Jesus' resurrection convinced His family & those closest to Him to worship Him as God (Acts 1:14; 12:17;

15:12–21; 21:18; 1 Cor. 15:7, Gal. 2:9; James 1:1; Jude 1). **Thomas:** “My Lord and My God!”

6) Jesus’ resurrection was confirmed by His most bitter enemies, like Saul/Paul.

Circumstantial Evidence: 1) The transformation of the disciples from cowards to men that no longer feared death & died as martyrs; the disciples stayed loyal to their risen Messiah in the face of great suffering & persecution.

2) The day of worship changed from Saturday to Sunday in honor of Jesus’ resurrection & in contrast to thousands of years of observance according to one of the 10 Commandments.

3) The object of worship became Jesus the God-Man.

4) Women discovered the empty tomb according to the Scriptures, & if the story were fabricated they would not have been included since they could not legally testify as witnesses.

5) Early church preaching continually emphasized the fact of Jesus’ resurrection as the central truth of Christian faith, & this truth was preached in the very city & area where Jesus rose from the dead.

6) The tomb where Jesus was buried was not enshrined like so many religious leaders in that day for the simple fact He was not there but rather had risen from the dead.

7) Growth of the church can only be explained by the fact of the resurrection of Jesus as its cause.

8) The earliest Jewish arguments against Christianity admit the empty tomb. In Matthew 28:11-15, there is a reference made to the Jew's attempt to refute Christianity by saying that the disciples stole the body. This is significant because it shows that the Jews did not deny the empty tomb. Instead, their "stolen body" theory admitted the significant truth that the tomb was in fact empty.

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2. Eight Men Are Gathered Together

John 21:2: Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, & two others of his disciples were together.

Chad Bird: Whether intended or not, it’s kind of a cool fact that here you have eight people & eight is the number of new creation & eight is what the resurrection is all about. [John 1-2: next day 3 times, wedding of Cana – 7th day]

a. John had just mentioned the day Jesus arose, & he used “eight days” to refer to that day a second time:

- **John 20:19:** On the evening of that day, the first day of the week

- **John 20:26:** Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them.

b. The significance of the eighth day in the Bible: The day of resurrection & new creation: **Gen 1:31-2:3:** And God saw everything that he had made, & behold, it was very good. And there was evening & there was morning, the sixth day.^{2:1} Thus the heavens & the earth were finished, & all the host of them.² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, & he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.³ So God blessed the seventh day & made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

- **Chad Bird:** He's crucified on the sixth day, a Friday, & then Jesus is laid to rest in the tomb on the seventh day. And He spends that morning, & He spends that evening, that Sabbath day, resting in the tomb. Then, on Easter morning, the day of the resurrection, He emerges victorious over death from that tomb. And that is the eighth day. That's the beginning of the eighth & eternal day that knows no end . . . It's a day that continues into all eternity. It's the day of the new creation. It's the day of the kingdom of God. It's a day Christ, having become one of us, having lived the perfect life to keep God's law in our stead, having taken into Himself all of our sins & death & uncleanness & shame, [He] is the One Who pays the price for that. And then, as He's laying in the tomb, resting on the seventh day, on the Sabbath day, the Creator become one of us, the New Adam Who has taken all of the old Adam & the old Eve's death into Himself – when He emerges from that tomb, after the seventh day, then the seventh day finally comes to an end, & the eighth day arrives. We see this already hinted at in the Old Testament because there were eight people on the ark, & the ark & the flood connected with it is symbolic of baptism. And in baptism we are buried & resurrected with Christ . . . It's already hinted at too in the fact that on the eighth day,

male Israelite boys were circumcised in the Old Testament. [And circumcision ultimately points to the death of Christ ("the circumcision of Christ" in Col. 2:11) & our death with Him & resurrection to newness of life] . . . So in the . . . creation account, in circumcision, in the account of the flood, all of these together tell us what the symbolism of the eighth day is – it's the eternal day, it's the day of Christ's resurrection, it's a day that never ends.

- **Nick Batzig:** In Numbers 29:35 we read of the Feast of Tabernacles: “**On the eighth day** you shall have a sacred assembly. You shall do no customary work.” The Feast of Tabernacles was a reminder to the Israelites of God coming & dwelling with them in the wilderness. Israel lived in tents. In His redeeming mercy, God graciously came & dwelt with His people. In order to do so, He became like His people. The Israelites lived in tents, so God lived in a Tent. This was all a prefiguration of the incarnation. The Apostle John tells us, “The Word became flesh & tabernacled among us” (John 1:14). The purpose of the incarnation was to restore the lost presence of God to His chosen people. In order for this to occur, the incarnation was necessary; but – & this should be carefully noted – reconciliation was only possible through the sin-removing, substitutionary death of Jesus. In order for God to dwell with His people their sins need to be atoned for & His wrath needs to be satisfied. This is what Christ accomplished in His death. The incarnation (tabernacling) made this possible. Interestingly, as Augustine noted, Jesus finished this necessary work & then rested in the tomb on the Old Covenant Sabbath. Then, on the first day of the week (i.e. the eighth day), He rose & His presence was forever guaranteed to believers. The restored presence of God is seen in the manifestation of the two angels, sitting one at the head & the other at the feet where the body of Jesus lay, just as the two Cherubim sat over the Ark of the Covenant where the presence of God appeared when the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the mercy seat. In the resurrection of Jesus on the first day (i.e. the eighth day), the glory of God’s presence is made manifest to His people. Jesus brings about the new creation through His incarnation, death, & resurrection & so fulfills the Feast of Tabernacles.

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3. The Disciples Fish At Night & Catch Nothing, Jesus Appears In The Morning & They Catch Everything!

John 21:3-4: Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out & got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. ⁴ Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

a. The disciples had sinned, but not by fishing: Matt 26:32: after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee

b. Mercy in pain: Calvin: God often tries believers, that He may lead them the more highly to value His blessing.

c. Night symbolizes unbelief, sin, & futility in John’s Gospel: John 3:1-2: Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night

- **John 9:4:** We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

- **John 11:10:** But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.

- **John 13:30:** So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

- **John 21:3:** They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

d. Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness Who rises with healing in His wings (Malachi 4:2): Just like when He rose from the dead early in the morning, Jesus appears on the shore in the morning but the disciples don’t recognize Him: **V. 4:** Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore [**John 9:5:** I am the light of the world.]

4. Jesus Takes Dominion Over The Fish Of The Sea & Grants A Miraculous Catch Of Fish

John 21:5-7: Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." ⁶ He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, & you will find some." So they cast it, & now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. ⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

a. Jesus asks them a question: V. 5: Children, do you have any fish? [become like children; let the children come]

b. Jesus calls them to cast the net on the other side of the boat: V. 6: He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, & you will find some." [Spurgeon: "No" & "It is the Lord!" - only words disciples speak]

c. They obey & the catch of fish is so great, they can't haul it in: V. 6: So they cast it, & now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. [Blessing does come through obedience; God works through means] - **Genesis 1:28:** And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." [Jesus is the last Adam; Jesus is the second man! & He is God! Creation obeys Him!]

d. John realizes it is Jesus: V. 7: That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" - **Charles Spurgeon Sermon:** 1) Who Was The First To See Him; 2) Those Who First Get At Jesus Christ

e. Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing: Donnelly: In the Gospels, the disciples never caught fish without Jesus' help - **John 15:5:** . . . apart from Me you can do nothing.

f. Jesus makes His disciples fishers of men: Luke 5:3-11: Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down & taught the people from the boat. ⁴ And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep & let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night & took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, & their nets were breaking. ⁷ They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come & help them. And they came & filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." ⁹ For he & all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, ¹⁰ & so also were James & John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "**Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.**" ¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything & followed him.

g. They would catch men from all nations: Chad Bird: Throughout the O.T., fish, great sea creatures, the sea & raging rivers were all emblematic of the Gentile world. For instance, deliverance from "the waters" is deliverance from "foreigners" (Ps. 144:7). The thundering of the Gentiles is like the thundering & roaring of the seas (Isa. 17:12). Gentile kingdoms and their rulers were likened to great oceanic creatures like . . . Rahab (Ps. 89:10, Job 26:12). Even in the N.T., John echoes this imagery when he says "the waters" are "the peoples & multitudes & nations & languages" (Rev. 17:15). The most well-known use of this imagery is the story of Jonah. When the prophet flees from God's "face," where does he go? To the sea, with Gentile sailors, where he ends up being swallowed by the icon of Gentile rulers, namely, a big fish. When he is cast into the raging sea, Jonah undergoes a sort of watery exile. Yet, just as God chose Babylon to "swallow" Israel in exile & release the nation later, so God appointed a fish to swallow Jonah & spit him out later (1:17). Thus, throughout the O.T., Gentiles were destroyed at the sea (Egypt), conquered after Israel crossed a river (the Jordan), & the creatures of the sea were likened to these nations & their kings. It comes as no surprise, then, that fish were never placed upon the Israelite altar as food. But all that was about to change. Twelve New Fishing Patriarchs: When Jesus called his disciples, his choice of several fishermen – & the context in which they were called – was not by chance. They let down their nets into the deep & caught so many fish that their nets were breaking. Jesus told them not to fear. From now on they would be "catching men" (Luke 5:11). In Matthew, Jesus calls them "fishers of men" (4:19). These new 12 patriarchs, the apostles, would not be conquering Gentile nations with the sword as did Israelite tribes of old, but would be fishing for Gentiles in the "seas" of the nations, using the net of the Gospel (cf. Matt. 28:18-20). In fact, significantly, Jesus called these disciples at the Sea of Galilee. And in that context of Matthew 5, Galilee is explicitly called "Galilee of the Gentiles" (5:15). The sea from which they fished, the deeps into which they let down their nets, & the fish they caught were all weighty with significance: Gentiles were about to be the object of God's special saving concern. They were being brought, together with Jews, into the kingdom of God.

h. Jesus has called us to be fishers of men from all nations too: The Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20

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5. Peter Makes A Beeline For Jesus

John 21:7: When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, & threw himself into the sea.

a. Peter is naked & becomes clothed: He was stripped down for work but puts his garments on to flee to Christ.

b. Flee to Jesus Who is the lover of your soul: Like the men who removed the roof; Like the Syro-phoenician; Like the woman with the alabaster flask; Like the widow & her mite; Like Paul: **John 16:20-22:** Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep & lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. ²¹ When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²² So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again & your hearts will rejoice, & no one will take your joy from you.

6. Jesus Is Cooking Breakfast By A Charcoal Fire

John 21:8-9: The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. ⁹ When they got out on land, they saw **a charcoal fire** in place, with fish laid out on it, & bread.

- **John 18:17-18:** The servant girl at the door said to Peter, "You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸ Now the servants & officers had made **a charcoal fire**, because it was cold, & they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself. [Mercy of Jesus!]

7. Jesus Serves His Disciples A Meal

John 21:10-14: Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard & hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come & have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came & took the bread & gave it to them, & so with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus was **revealed** to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

a. What about the 153 fish?: Ezekiel 47:1: Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, & behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.

- **John 7:38:** Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

- **Ezekiel 47:12:** And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, & their leaves for healing.

- **Revelation 22:1-3:** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God & of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God & of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

Ezekiel 47:10: Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to En-eglain it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea.

D. A. Carson: Each Hebrew & Greek letter stands for a number, so every Greek or Hebrew word has a numerical value. Based on this discipline, called "gematria," J. A. Emerton has noted that in Hebrew "En" is the word for "spring", while "Gedi" yields the number 17 & "Eglaim" the number 153. Indeed, the two numbers are related:

153 is the triangular number of 17. Thus the number represents the places where, in the time of the fulfillment of messianic hopes, Gospel fishermen are to spread their nets. [It may just show there were a lot of fish!]

b. Jesus loves & serves His children: Vs. 12, 13: "Come & have breakfast." . . . Jesus came & took the bread & gave it to them, & so with the fish. [Matt 4:19: Come, I'll make fishers of men; Matt 11:28: Come to Me all who labor] - **Matt 20:28:** the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, & to give his life as a ransom for many. [John 6:11] - **Psalm 23:1-2, 5-6:** The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters . . . ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies . . . goodness/mercy!

c. Jesus came to save sinners from all nations: Chad Bird: When Jesus consumed fish, he was visually enacting the Gentiles' incorporation into the kingdom. They were, quite literally, entering the body of Christ. Indeed, after Jesus's resurrection, when he appears to his disciples, he asks them a strange question, "Do you have anything here to eat?" (Luke 24:41). Of all the things to ask on such a momentous occasion! But it was actually quite fitting. They gave him a piece of broiled fish. He ate it & then told them that everything in the Old Testament had now been fulfilled. Then he added that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name "to all nations" (24:47). Notice the progression: resurrection, eating fish, the OT fulfilled, & the Gentiles now to hear the message of the kingdom. In other words, God had now added fish to his diet . . . All of this is the best of news for us. For we who once were separated from the Lord of the covenant, alienated from Israel, far-off Gentiles, have been brought near to God by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:12-13). The Lord's promise to Abraham that his Seed would be a blessing to all nations has come true in the Seed born of Mary (Genesis 12). We who once swam in the darkness of sin & death have been caught by the net of the Gospel. Christ thereby consumed us, made us part of his body, incorporated us into himself.

d. Jesus: the risen Lord: V. 12: Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. - **V. 14:** This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. - **John 11:25-26:** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection & the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, & everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Edward Donnelly: They've come out from the night into the dawn; They've moved from the water to the land; From frustration to fulfillment; From work to rest; From hunger to fullness; From being alone to being with Jesus!

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Christ Jesus Came To God Reveal
He Is The God-Man Risen Still
He's King Of All, Our King Ideal
Rules Over Every Fish And Eel
And Caused Poor Peter's Nets To Fill
Not Burst Or Tear But Over Spill
So Then He Knew It's Christ For Real
And Jumped Into The Sea With Zeal
For Christ He Swam Like Hungry Seal
"It Is The Lord!" Oh Joy Surreal
Apart From Christ They Cannot Reel
One Fish To Shore Or Even Heal
The Charcoal Fire Reminders Chill
For He Denied The Lord, Unreal

But For This Sin And Ours There's Still
A Way To Be Forgiven, Thrill
For Jesus Died Upon That Hill
And Bore God's Wrath Of Fury Zeal
Then Rose Alive The Bruised Heel
Would Crush The Serpent's Head With Skill
Now The Third Time He'll Reveal
He Is The LORD! Alive And Will
Serve Them Bread, Love With A Meal
Just Like God Gave Manna Real
May We All Now Serve Him With Zeal
And Bow And Trust Before Him Kneel
For He's Our All! Oh Make Us Feel!
Deep Joy In Him God Did Reveal!

8. "That's My King!" by S. M. Lockridge

Jesus is the King of life & death; He's the King of the sea & of fish & of the nations & of everything! King of kings!