

## PETER *and* John



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Upon the resurrection of Jesus, John recorded, as the last chapter of his testimony of the gospel, an intriguing story of a miraculous catch of fish and the reprimand of the disciple, Peter.

John concluded at the end of his testimony, “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” (John 21:25). Since this is the case, it is very important that 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians pay very close attention to what was selected by God to be eternally recorded for mankind. There is always a bigger picture behind these stories.

Then, what mystery lies hidden in the intriguing story of the miraculous catch and how is it tied to the reprimand of Peter?

**The key** in this story is the absolute importance of **following Christ under all and any circumstances, follow him wherever he goes**. While John begins chapter twenty-one naming five of the seven disciples present, only two: Peter and John, become the focus of the chapter. This is significant as the two disciples reveal two types of ministry within the body of Christ. One claims to love Christ, but does not truly follow him and the other truly loves Christ and follows him wherever he goes.

When Jesus first called Peter and Andrew, he said, “**Follow me.**”

Without hesitation, Peter and Andrew followed Jesus when they were called. “Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, **“Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”** Immediately, they left their nets and **followed Him**” (Matthew 4:18-20).

Peter knew Jesus. “Then he asked them, ‘But who do you say I am?’ Peter replied, **‘You are the Messiah sent from God!’**” (Luke 9:20)

Peter was viewed by the other disciples as a significant leader. After Jesus’ resurrection, “Simon Peter said to them [the six other disciples with him], ‘I am going fishing.’ They said to him, **‘We will also come with you’**” (John 21:2).

Yet, when the times became dire, he caved. It is a well-known story. Peter denied Christ **three times** prior to the crucifixion. Jesus foreknew that Peter would do that and he told him so. After being with Jesus and learning directly from him, having witnessed the healing power of Jesus, listening to Jesus preach on the Sabbath in the synagogue, participating in the feeding of both multitudes, walking on water to be with Jesus, seeing the transfiguration of Jesus, yet in fear, at that crucial moment, he denied Christ three times. Not once or twice, but three times; the number that determines a spiritual matter official. Peter officially disqualified himself from the ministry.

The **third time** that Christ appeared to the disciples was **the day of the miraculous catch of fish**. **On THAT day**, early that morning, the miraculous catch of 153 fish was brought to shore from the turbulent waters. One hundred and fifty-three in Hebrew is the gematria for “sons of God”. They mirror the saints surviving the Great Tribulation and being brought to safety by the work of the ministry in the seven churches of Revelation. There were only seven disciples who were fishing on THAT day.

John, the loved disciple, was the first to recognize Christ on the shore. Peter heard and immediately wrapped an outer garment around himself. He knew that he was not appropriately dressed. Outer garments are symbolic of behaviour. He knew he was lacking, so he quickly covered himself and he jumped in the water, leaving the arduous work of hauling the fish to shore for the other six disciples; **“they followed** in the boat” (John 21:8).

The six disciples did not leave their duties of bringing the fish—the 153 “sons of God” to safety, but followed in the boat. Jesus told Peter to bring some of the fish from the catch. So, he returned to the boat and “dragged the net ashore” (John 21:11). Peter resumed his duty after Christ told him to go back and get fish from the catch. Christ fed them bread and fish mirroring him teaching them God’s word [the bread] and reminding them of the recorded teachings of the prophets [the fish].

Following the meal, **Christ asked Peter three times if he loved him “more than these?”** Peter was adamant that he loved Christ. That pledge of loyalty was the official reinstatement of Peter

back into the ministry. When Christ asked him the third time, Peter responded with indignation. He was offended and said, “**Lord, you know all things**; you know that I love you” (John 21:17). Indeed, Christ knew all things that was why he asked Peter three times if he loved him and to feed his lambs and sheep—the young and mature Christians. Peter, a significant member of the ministry. He was assigned the task of preaching the gospel to the Jews (Galatians 2:7). He, like the religious Jewish leaders over the past two thousand years failed at a crucial moment in time to stand strong in love for God and the Word. A time in the future rests on the near horizon, when the ministry who mirrors Peter will likely be tested again. Christ reinstated him back into the ministry after his resurrection, with the admonition that in his latter days, he will not have the freedom to do as he pleases, but he will suffer as his self-guided will is broken. He will learn to follow Christ as he did at the beginning. Could this be the story of the Jewish people... and the Christians?

Christianity is a national religion that has become an umbrella of many differing doctrines. The ministry of the many churches under this umbrella, all have brazenly taken the power to interpret scriptures and establish doctrines that are contrary to what Jesus taught.

Jesus kept the Sabbath and God’s holy days. He kept and taught God’s ten commandments, expounding on them to include the spirit of the law. Jesus is the same yesterday as he is today and will always be the same, in the future (Hebrews 13:8).

Why do most of the Christian ministry:

- Embrace Sunday worship over Sabbath worship?
- Christianize pagan holidays?
- Fail to keep God’s Holy Days?
- Nail the commandments to the cross?

There is one God—the Creator, one Savior—Jesus Christ and **one theology**. The work of the ministry is to teach the pure word of God—the one theology. A ministry that denies Christ do not follow him—the living Word, but confidently exercise their own power to implement their own will, their own teachings.

Christ said, “I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted” (John 21:18a).

The ministry who do not follow Christ will suffer later, in their latter days—during the Great Tribulation. They will experience a time of painful helplessness, as their self-guided will is broken. “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” (John 21:18b).

They will surrender to the making of a new man through intense suffering like that of martyrdom. Christ admonished Peter. “**Follow me!**” When Peter turned around to John, he saw him **following** them. Peter asked Jesus, “What about John?” Jesus admonished Peter again to concern himself with his own matters and he added, “**You must follow me**” (John 21:22). John

was already following; he hadn't stop following. Clearly, Peter was not following Christ, the Lamb from whom, all of mankind receives eternal life. He paid the price; we are his slaves bought and paid for.

In contrast to Peter, John mirrors the loved ministry who follows Christ wherever he goes. John was first to recognize Christ, when he stood on the shore telling them where to throw their net.

John stayed in the boat helping the others haul the big fish [the saints] to shore [safety]. John was the disciple who leaned on Jesus during the last supper, like:

- the Shulamite woman leaning on her beloved Shepherd  
“Who is this coming up **from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?**” (Song of Solomon 8:5)
- the woman—the church of Genesis 3:16b who will desire her husband
- those who lean on the “tested stone” [Christ] of Isaiah 28:16  
“So, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; **the one who relies on it** will never be stricken with panic.”

John followed Christ wherever he went. He loved the word of God and he kept it. Like the 144,000 of Revelation, John follow Christ. **“They follow the Lamb wherever he goes.** They were **purchased** from among men and offered as first-fruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless” (Revelation 14:4b). **These people did not defile themselves with false religion;** they kept themselves pure (Revelation 14:4a).

The Philadelphia church are a group of people, like the Apostle John. **“You kept my word and have not denied my name... you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial** that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth... Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him **the name of my God, the name of the city of my God** (the New Jerusalem), and **my new name**” (Revelation 3:8b, 10, 12).

After a lifetime of searching, finally, Solomon discovered wisdom and understanding. “When all has been heard, **the conclusion of the matter is this: Fear God [wisdom] and keep His commandments** [understanding], **because this is the WHOLE DUTY OF MAN**” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Many significant roles have been given to men and women in the Bible, in times past, today, and into the future that have glorified God and will glory Him. The kind of death that Peter would suffer, Jesus said, “will glorify God” (John 21:19) because he overcame his weaknesses and developed the strength to stand strong even in his brutal death. He mirrors the success of an end-time ministry who during the Great Tribulation will re-live the spiritual walk of Peter and come out of a time of great distress, a winner—**dedicated followers of Christ.**

*Compiled by Janette Andrejowich*