

A. John 21:1-25 – Jesus’ third appearance to the disciples, especially for Peter

1. John 21:1a – *After these things...* The events of this chapter detail the disciples’ third encounter with Christ after His resurrection. In this encounter, Christ addressed the issue of their potential return to the **mundane** things of life rather than to full involvement in what He had called them to do.
 - a. This chapter seems to be somewhat of an epilogue to the book. It **answers** important questions that might otherwise remain unclear. In this chapter, John answered the question about the restoration of Peter, who was a very important figure in the infant church. John also quelled a myth about him not dying before Christ’s return.
 - b. A disciple of Christ can lose his or her focus. Many who have given themselves to fulltime service have returned to their former lives when things got hard. This chapter shows that God does not give up on disciples who lose their focus. Rather he **pursues** them and “calls” them again, so to speak. Romans 11:29
2. John 21:1b – *... Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way .* Here’s how Jesus **revealed** Himself to His disciples for a third time in the Gospel of John. There were seven disciples involved in this event.
 - a. In Matthew 28:7 Jesus promised to **meet** the disciples in Galilee saying, “ *Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.*”
 - b. John is the only Gospel writer who referred to the Sea of Galilee as the Sea of Tiberias. This name was more commonly used in the latter half of the first century AD, which adds credence to a **late** dating of the book of John (circa AD 95).
3. John 21:2 – *Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.* Although there were seven disciples who saw Jesus on this occasion, we know the **identity** of only five.
4. John 21:3 – *Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will also come with you.” They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing .* Note that Peter decided to go fishing **after** Jesus told the disciples in John 20:21, in his first post-resurrection appearance, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”
 - a. Sadly, even after Jesus had called Peter away from his former life, he went **back** to fishing. Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:17
 - b. The other disciples followed Peter’s **example**. They all got into a boat and fished all night. But these seasoned fishermen did not catch one fish all night long.
5. John 21:4 – *But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus .* First thing in the morning, as the sun was coming up, the disciples saw a man on the shore, whom they did not recognize. They were unaware that the **light** of the world, Jesus Christ, was standing on the beach.
6. John 21:5 – *So Jesus said to them, “Children, you do not have any fish, do you?” They answered Him, “No.”* Jesus called out to them from the shore. He called them **children** and He asked them a common question.
7. John 21:6 – *And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch.”* So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. Even though they did not yet recognize Jesus, for some reason they **obeyed** His command and ended up catching a miraculously large amount of fish.
8. John 21:7a – *Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the **Lord** .”* John referred to himself as the disciple Jesus loved, when he realized that it was Jesus standing there on the shore and told Peter.
9. John 21:7b – *... 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 .* Without hesitation, Peter abandoned everyone, **jumped** into the water and swam to shore.
10. John 21:8 – *But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net **full** of fish.* There were so many fish that instead of trying to put them into the boat the simply drug the full net ashore.

11. John 21:9 – *So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread* . So, when they arrived at the bank, they saw that the “man” who had beckoned to them was **cooking** fish on a charcoal fire.
- The only other time a **charcoal** fire is mentioned in the Bible is the night Peter denied Jesus. This detail was likely included as a reminder of the occasion of Peter’s greatest failure. John 18:18
 - Jesus also had bread there for them. This was a kind gesture for men who had worked all night long. Instead of reprimanding the disciples for going back to fishing, Jesus **fed** them a hearty meal. This reminds us of 1 Kings 19 where the angel fed Elijah when he was discouraged and then sent him on another mission.
12. John 21:10 – *Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have now caught.”* In his desire to please the Lord, Peter spontaneously and singlehandedly **drag** ashore the full net of fish. It’s interesting that although Jesus was already cooking fish, He asked the disciples to bring some of the fish they caught.
13. John 21:11 – *Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn* . Peter singlehandedly pulled the net in. There were a 153 fish in all, and they were all big. If each fish weighed just three pounds (1.5Kg), the entire **catch** would have weighed nearly 500 pounds (230Kg).
14. John 21:12 – *Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.”* None of the disciples ventured to question Him, “Who are You?” knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus invited them to come and enjoy a hot meal. Jesus **blessed** them in this way. John 1:39, 7:37
- After Jesus’ resurrection, He was not **easily** recognized. Mary Magdalene recognized Him when He said her name, and the disciples on the road to Emmaus recognized Him when he prayed and broke bread for a meal. Mark 16:12; Luke 24:30-31, 35; John 20:16
 - While they were eating, no one asked Him who He was. This is interesting. Even though they knew He was Jesus, after the resurrection everyone showed greater **respect** for Him. They were probably more aware of His deity and more fully conscious of the incredible sacrifice He made for mankind’s sin.
15. John 21:13 – *Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise.* True to His nature, Jesus lovingly **served** them. Matthew 20:27-28, John 13:12-16, Philippians 2:4
16. John 12:14 – *This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.* Jesus’ third manifestation to the disciples was significant on several levels. **Peter** was the focus. Although Jesus appeared to individuals after the resurrection, this was the third time He appeared to His disciples as a group. John 20:19-29
- In John 1:41 Peter’s first response to being told Jesus was Messiah was to go see Him. Here in John 21:7 he again went immediately to **see** Jesus.
 - Earlier in Luke 5:1-11, Peter received a **call** to follow the Lord after a miraculous catch of fish. Here again in John 21:1-11, Christ called him to follow Him after a miraculous catch.
 - In John 18:18, Peter’s failure in Christ’s service was as he stood by a charcoal fire. Here, in John 21:9 Peter’s restoration to service was once again by a charcoal **fire**.
 - In John 6:68, after a meal that included fish and bread, Peter confessed Jesus as the source of eternal life. Here in John 21:9-12, Peter was once again in the presence of the resurrected Christ, eating fish and bread. Eating together symbolizes **fellowship**. Revelation 3:20
 - Conclusion: This meal and Peter’s recommissioning by the Lord indicated Peter’s public **restoration** to fellowship and service.