

**RECORD IT !!!**

DCF 020521 John 21:1 – 14 Breakfast by the Sea

**21 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."**

Simon Peter is named first as the leader of disciples. His failures are mentioned in the gospels, to remind us that we all sin – even leaders. But in the end, he dies for God. Tradition tells us that he was crucified upside down, in Rome by Nero. He is with his friends, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two others. There were two unnamed disciples. Sometimes what you do for God will go unnoticed by people – but God values the seeds that you sow.

Peter did not have a perfect life, but good teachers notice mistakes. When I started teaching in 1972, I could do the Maths problems. Pretty quickly, I worked out, and broke down the steps and skills needed to solve a problem. But it took years to know where students will go wrong and the realization that fundamental skills – like tables, are extremely important. Building on the Rock necessitates confession, because it requires spotting our mistakes, and it is vital for our growth and the growth of people we nurture. In confession we shut doors to sin.

Peter was married, and his wife accompanied him in his ministry. **1 Cor 9:5 <sup>5</sup> Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?** He was a fighter, and we are told he was the disciple who cut off the ear of Malchus at the betrayal. **John 18:10 <sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear.** He was rescued from prison by an angel in **Acts 12:7 <sup>7</sup> Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands.**

He had disagreements with Paul, who corrected his stance with the law and political correctness regarding circumcision. **Gal 2:11 <sup>11</sup> Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; <sup>12</sup> for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. <sup>13</sup> And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.**

It is important to see that this ordinary fisherman, turned out to live an extraordinary life – because of Jesus. We are ordinary, but in this life, we can achieve the extraordinary, if we walk with God.

They go fishing. It is what they did. The day is filled with ordinary events, but walking with God, gives us the opportunity to inject the extraordinary. Notice how God uses the everyday,

ordinary, familiar experiences to teach us the spiritual. In my experience as a teacher, father, husband, son, friend, runner, and hobbies like music and woodwork, God has shown me links. Where you are, and what you do, are things that God uses to teach you about Himself.

***John 21:3 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. <sup>4</sup> 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."***

Often, we catch nothing. Sometimes we need to pray for years and years for people to come to God. But in those dry times we need to be alert for the voice of God. Pray for the light to come on people, so they hear the Spirit of God. In the light of the morning, Jesus comes to them and calls them children, but it is not demeaning. It is the equivalent of our use of "boys" or "lads". On one level they were mates. They may have thought He was just someone wanting to buy some fish.

***John 21:6 <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. <sup>9</sup> 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."***

When what you're doing isn't working, try something different. So, they cast their nets on the other side. As soon as the remarkable happened, John knew it was Jesus. Notice the heart of Peter. He does not hesitate and swims to shore. I suppose someone has to bring the boat and fish back. Over and over again we need to spot the hand of God, like John, but how we respond reveals our heart. When we look at creation, at the stars, at our provision, at our trials – we must see the hand of God. God's hand is on our life and He has chosen us and loves us forever. ***John 15:16 ... I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.***

Jesus had the fire and bread ready for breakfast. "All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me." Back in Gen 2, Adam is given authority in the garden, and marriage is defined between a man and a woman. That authority meant that he was to decide, direct, provide and protect those under him. The role of the wife was to stand her man rightly before God. When she helps him do that, she, being covered, also stands rightly before God. When we see Jesus as the husband and the church as the bride, we stand Him rightly as

the Son of God, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and we are covered. Here the disciples understand the covering authority of Jesus – He has already provided the fire and the bread and the fish. Their livelihood is protected. They follow His direction and trust His decisions over their lives.

***John 21: 11*** <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.***

Some things need to happen at least three times to be anchored into our heart. Jesus wants to make sure they knew that He loved them. So He comes and has breakfast with them.

It happened on an ordinary day, in their usual mundane work. They were fishermen and they would have previously experienced days when they caught nothing. There were 7 of them, out going fishing. Right at the beginning, when they had first met Jesus, they had also had a fruitless night, and He had told them to (Luke 5:4) ***Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch.*** At that time, they protested at first, but then they complied, and they caught so many that the nets were breaking and the boats began to sink. Then Jesus said ***Luke 5:10 Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.*** This time the ***net was not broken.*** We pray for that as we pray for the unsaved. So many times, we have dropped seeds, and the net has broken. People, I want you to hunger for the opportunity to preach the gospel, and for souls to be saved. Do not become discouraged. Our purpose on earth is to bring God glory.

Jesus must have looked different, but His mannerisms were recognizable.

But now we come to the intriguing Mathematics in the Bible. I have been a little numbers boy since I was 4 years old. So, the number 153 hit me. Why didn't John say: 'they caught lots of fish' or 'over 100 fish' or 'about 150 fish'? He specifically says 153 fish were caught. There will be many who will dismiss the possibility of the significance of 153 as superstition. But I hold to the fact that God is not just a brilliant Mathematician – He invented Maths. Right back in Genesis 1, He invented numbers when creation was recorded on the first day, and the second day and the third day ... And the numbers were invented BEFORE the sun was created on the 4<sup>th</sup> day. ***Gen 1:16*** <sup>16</sup> ***Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.*** <sup>17</sup> ***God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth,*** <sup>18</sup> ***and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.*** <sup>19</sup> ***So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*** So, while evolution is obviously a lie, I am unsure of the age of

the earth. We define a day as sunrise to sunrise, but if there is no sun for the first 3 days – who knows how old the earth is?

Back to 153. Few would doubt that some numbers are very significant in the Bible. The numbers 7, 10, 12, 40, 144, 70, 3 ½ are repeated often. Here are just two of the interesting facts about 153.

Firstly,  $153 = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + \dots + 17$

We have seen previously that 17 was the key number for the Patriarchs and the very start of the nation of Israel.

Abraham lived 175 years.  $175 = 5 \times 5 \times 7$  and  $5 + 5 + 7 = 17$

Isaac lived 180 years.  $180 = 6 \times 6 \times 5$  and  $6 + 6 + 5 = 17$

Jacob lived 147 years.  $147 = 7 \times 7 \times 3$  and  $7 + 7 + 3 = 17$

Sarah lived 127 years.  $127 = 5^2 + 6^2 + 7^2 + 17 = 25 + 36 + 49 + 17$

Joseph lived 110 years.  $110 = 5^2 + 6^2 + 7^2 = 25 + 36 + 49$

My understanding, supported by many other Scriptures is that the Jewish nation is never rejected or superseded by the church. Jesus says to the Samaritan woman in *John 4:22* <sup>22</sup> *You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.* <sup>23</sup> *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.* <sup>24</sup> *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.* I strongly suspect that the two witnesses in Rev 11 are the church and Israel. Like so much in this last book, as things come to pass, we will revise our understanding.

Secondly,  $17 = 10 + 7$ . 10 represents the law – as in the 10 commandments, and 7 represents the 7 spirits of God. *Is 11:1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.* <sup>2</sup> *The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.* The phrase “the 7 spirits of God” is repeated in Rev 3:1, 4:5, 5:6.

So, while we are moved by the spirit, we must also show our obedience in the flesh. In our salvation we know that we are saved wholly by grace, and all our works cannot achieve salvation. *Eph 2:8* <sup>8</sup> *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,* <sup>9</sup> *not of works, lest anyone should boast.* But the temptation is that from thence on, none of our works matter. That is not correct. In the last chapter of Revelation, Jesus says this: *Rev 22:12* <sup>12</sup> *“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.* Jesus taught this in *Matt 16:27* <sup>27</sup> *For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.* Our works in the lives of people are not one-off projects.

As we walk in the spirit and pray and pray and pray continually for the unsaved, they take years of dedication. **1 Cor 3:14** <sup>11</sup> *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* <sup>12</sup> *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,* <sup>13</sup> *each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.* <sup>14</sup> *If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.* <sup>15</sup> *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.* Do you see the difference? We can give time, money, service and people can miss the foundation. Every kind action of charity must be linked to the foundation of the gospel. If you give money for those devastated by floods, fire and cyclones, our aim is that they give the thanks to God – not you and not a charity. Our good work will be tested by fire, and unless it moves people to God, it is useless.

Weeks and months after this event, the disciples bring the gospel to the unsaved. We cannot do service, for the sake of service. We must build our house on the rock. That rock is the rock of faith. This faith is the relationship, where your spirit is united with His spirit. So, the actions come out of the heart, out of love for God. Everyday we must pray “Lord help me do something for You today.”

If you read the attachments in the homework you will have seen many other bits of interest. Believe it or not I have tried NOT to bombard you with many more facts about 153 that have fascinated me for many years. But God made me the way I am – a person who is intrigued by numbers. It was one day many years ago, I was running down Scott St, and I calculated the number of weeks our daughter Leathy lived. It was exactly 153 weeks. I couldn't believe it – I laughed. It was like God smiling at me, as He still does, and telling me that He had a hand in her going so early to glory. Then in Nov 2016, He brought another little girl into the family, who reminds me so much of Leathy.

**I love Your voice**

**You have led me through the fire**

**And in darkest night You are close like no other**

**I've known You as a Father**

**I've known You as a Friend**

**And I have lived in the goodness of God, yeah**

**And all my life You have been faithful, ohh**

**And all my life You have been so, so good**

**With every breath that I am able**

**Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God, yeah**

Final Hymn: What a friend we have in Jesus OR

**I WILL NEVER EVER LEAVE YOU. Is 40 and 41**

Why do you doubt me, my servant,  
 That your ways are hidden from my eyes,  
 I never faint or grow weary,  
 So stand strong against all those lies.  
 The best of all your plans may crumble,  
 But I give strength to the weak,  
 Though despite your prayers you stumble,  
 My will is the target to seek.

Though it is hard to share your problems,  
 You feel weak and often cast away,  
 Though some tasks may seem im-possible,  
 I am always here to stay.  
 You think there's no hand to hold you,  
 And often forget the help I gave,  
 You're never alone to struggle,  
 For I am always here to save.

Though the world tries hard to own you,  
 You are never ever cast away,  
 Though you fear that I have left you,  
 Don't lose heart I am here to stay.  
 I will never ever leave you,  
 I will never ever leave you,  
 I will never ever leave you,  
 I chose you and love you for ever. X2  
 God chose you and loves you for ever.

## Homework

**153** some clips from Google. It may just have too much Maths to excite some of you:

The many meanings of the number 153 centers around the New Testament event sometimes referred to as the miraculous draught or catch of fishes (John 21:1 - 11). It is only mentioned in the Gospel of John.

Symbolizing abundance, 153 can even represent an overflow blessing from God. The Bible states the disciples marveled at the fact that their net held together even though it contained so many large fish (John 21:11)!

Additionally, the catching of 153 fish happened only after Christ became involved in the work. This is a subtle (or perhaps not so subtle!) reminder that without Christ the disciples' (and any believer's) attempts to accomplish something great on their own will fail, but that with Jesus all things are possible (John 15:5).

Lastly, the 153 fishes is reminiscent of a previously abundant catch Peter, Andrew, James and John experienced when they were first called to follow Christ and become fishers of men (and not food). Given the disciples were trying to go back to their pre-conversion employment when the miracle occurred, it likely reminded them that they now worked for God whose will it still was for them to catch men and not fish.

More speculation regarding the number:

Jerome, the fourth century A.D. Catholic priest and theologian, theorized that the 153 fishes caught by the disciples represented all the species of fish. He then stated its meaning is that there was enough room within the church for all the "races" of man. Augustine also believed that this fish miracle represented all kinds of men being saved by the gospel "net."

### 153 personal blessings

We discover something quite interesting about this number when we look at how many people, in the Gospel accounts, Jesus personally blessed.

The book of Mark records Christ, on three occasions, personally blessed three people. These events were the healing of a man with an unclean spirit (Mark 1:23), healing a man who was deaf (Mark 7:32) and making whole another who was blind (Mark 8:22).

Matthew, however, writes that on 23 occasions Jesus blessed a total of 47 people. Some of those whom he blessed included a leper (Matthew 8:2), a non-Israelite woman and her daughter (Matthew 15:22), Mary Magdalene (Matthew 27:56) and Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57).

Luke writes that on 14 occasions 94 people were blessed. They include the seventy disciples sent out to preach and heal (Luke 10:1), ten lepers cleansed at the same time (Luke 17:12) and Zaccheus (Luke 19:2).

Lastly, the apostle John bears record of eight incidents where nine people were helped by Jesus. Nicodemus (John 3:1), the woman accused of adultery (John 8:11) and Lazarus (John 11) are among those personally touched by the Savior of mankind. All told, the Lord directly blessed 153 people in 48 separate incidents!

In his commentary on Ezekiel 47, Jerome linked the miracle of the 153 fish with the prophet's vision of a river of life flowing out from the Temple in the Messianic Era. According to Ezekiel's prophecy, the river will flow into the Dead Sea, turning the salt water fresh:

And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to Eneglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many. (Ezekiel 47:10)

Jerome believed that the miraculous represented the apostles bringing all nations into the kingdom. After all, the disciples were to be fishers of men: "The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind" (Matthew 13:47). In that day, "Their fish will be according to their kinds ... very many" (Ezekiel 47:10).

### **Do the 153 fish in John 21 count for anything?**

May 3, 2019 by Ian Paul

1. The catch of fish tells us of the salvation of humanity, but humanity cannot be saved without keeping the 10 commandments. But, on account of the fall, we cannot even keep the commandments without the help of grace and the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the number 7 signifies holiness, since God blessed the 7th day and made it holy (Gen 2:3). But 10 plus 7 equals 17, and if all the numbers from 1 to 17 are added together (1+2+3...+17), they equal 153. Hence, the 153 fish signify that all the elect are to be saved by the gift of grace (7) and the following of the commandments (10). (St Augustine, *Commentary on John*, 72.8)

2. 153 consists of 100 (the great number of gentiles to be saved), plus 50 (the smaller number of Jews to be saved), plus 3 (the Trinity who saves all) (St Cyril; this kind of reading is very similar to that of his brother Methodius in reading the number 1260 in Rev 12). Others follow St. Cyril, but modify this as follows: 100 (the multitude of married lay faithful in the Church), plus 50 (the many faithful who commit themselves later in life to continence either living as widows or living with their spouse in a brother-sister relationship), plus 3 (the precious few who commit their whole lives to celibacy as virgins) equals 153 (the whole Church taken together as a single body).

3. It was thought at that time that there were only 153 species of fish in all the world. Hence, the disciples caught 153 fish, signifying that people of every class and time would be saved through the Gospel. (St Jerome, *Comm. Ez.* 47.6-12).



4. Pythagoras was associated with catches of fish, and he had calculated that 153 is the denominator of the closest known fraction to the square root of 3 ( $265/153$ ), and this was also the ratio of a fish shape drawn between two overlapping circles which are centred on each other's circumference. This shape is therefore known as the *vesica piscis* or the mandorla and the ratio was called by Pythagoras the 'measure of the fish'. If the two circles represent God and humanity, then the overlap represents Jesus as God incarnate, along with his followers, whose sign becomes the sign of the fish.

5. The square root of 153 is 12.369, which is the number of lunar months in a solar year, and it therefore points to the moon which waxes and wanes, which is visible one minute and hides itself another. Just as the moon can hide itself, in Isaiah 8 the Lord spoke of hiding his face from Israel and binding up his testimony among the disciples. The fish and the number 153 are for signs and symbols. "Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion" (Isaiah 8:11-18).

**7**      **There are not very many large numbers** mentioned in the New Testament: this is one; Luke mentions that there are 276 people who are saved from the shipwreck in Acts 27.37; and the number of beast in Rev 13.18 is 666. It is striking mathematically that all three of these are 'triangular' numbers, as several of our theories note, which is a much more important thing in a world where you primarily count using physical objects, rather than in our world where numbers are more like abstract concepts. In fact, the word in the New Testament for 'to calculate' (*psephizo*) derives from the word for 'pebble' (*psephos*).