

The Third Appearance of Christ Joseph Herrin (04-26-08)

John 21:14

This is now the third time that Yahshua appeared to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

I have been pondering this Scripture for the past couple days, ever since the Lord brought it to my attention in an unusual way. I have been camping the past month, first in West Georgia, and now on the Southeast coast of Georgia on Jekyll Island. I will be returning to Macon tomorrow. As those who have been receiving these mailings know, the Lord has used this time to give me much understanding of the ministry of coming days, and one of the methods He has used has been parables that have been observed through various events and incidents that I have encountered. I have written of a number of these parables, and they are posted on the new ParablesBlog site that I recently began. (<http://parablesblog.blogspot.com/>)

Following are the circumstances that led me to focus upon this passage. Before I left Macon to go to Jekyll Island I purchased a Georgia fishing license, and I brought along a fishing pole and some tackle. The first week here I did not attempt to fish due to the fact that I was fasting, and I didn't want to keep any fish that I would not eat. After the first week I made a few attempts at fishing, but I was stymied in various ways. My pole was rigged for fresh water, and I did not have the proper tackle. I only had ten pound test line on the reel, and due to the ocean currents it is necessary to use a lot of weight when fishing salt water. This resulted in my line breaking repeatedly, until it snapped right at the reel after having cast out into the surf. I decided at this point that the Lord must not want me to fish, at least not at that time.

I was not angry at my inability to fish. I have learned to accept daily events as ordered by the Lord. Instead I prayed and I said, "Lord, if you desire for me to be able to fish then I pray that you will supply that which is necessary for me to rig my pole properly." My money on hand was low, so I knew it would be necessary for the Lord to manifest His supply in order for me to fish. I had seen Him supply miraculously on many occasions in the past, so I did not doubt that He would do so if He intended for me to fish.

It was on the next day after Randy and I had biked around the Island, something I had been doing every day to aid my health (it being about a 14

mile round trip), that I took a nap and when I got up I found that Randy had been to the store and he had put heavier line on my reel and had purchased a salt water rig (leader, weight, and hook). He also had purchased some bait shrimp. He asked me if I wanted to go fishing. In my heart I thanked the Lord and off we went to the fishing pier.

Randy collected oysters and used a basket to try to catch some crabs while I fished. In a short time we had enough fish for a meal, having caught several nice whiting, and we took them back to camp. I told Randy that I would clean the fish if he would start a fire. I intended to wrap the fish in foil and lay them on the hot coals. I had never done this before, but it worked fine and the fish was tender and delicious when we had finished cooking them.

Later that night I returned to my camper/van and I checked my e-mail. A brother in Christ had e-mailed me and had asked me for any insight I could give him regarding the number 153 in Scripture. He said that the Lord had impressed this number upon him in a very definite way some years before, but he did not fully understand its meaning. He said that he knew that it occurred in only one place in Scripture, and this was when the Lord appeared to the disciples after His resurrection and He told them to cast their net into the sea, and when they did they brought up 153 great fish. Following is the account from the Gospel of John.

John 21:1-14

After these things Yahshua manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples. 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. But when the day was now breaking, Yahshua stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Yahshua. Yahshua therefore said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find a catch." They cast therefore, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. That disciple therefore whom Yahshua loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." And 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. But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits away, dragging the net full of

fish. And so when they got out upon the land, they saw a fire of coals already laid, and fish placed on it, and bread. Yahshua said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught." 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. Yahshua said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. Yahshua came and took the bread, and gave them, and the fish likewise. This is now the third time that Yahshua was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

The Holy Spirit arrested my attention as I read this, for I considered how unusual it was that I had just cooked fish over coals, even as Yahshua was recorded as doing in this passage. I felt that the Spirit of Christ had a message in this for me, and I began to ponder what it was.

I have shared previously, that all of the works and miracles of Christ serve as parables. In the writing *Parables* (<http://www.heart4god.ws/id592.htm>), it is shown that there are many different types of parables in Scripture, beginning with the first book of the Bible and continuing to the end of Revelation. The children of God should be mindful therefore that when they read of an event in Scripture, and specific details are provided, having been inspired by the Holy Spirit, that there is truth to be gleaned from the account.

John was inspired to be very specific in His gospel, even to recording the number of fish that were caught in the net, and the distance they were from the shore. He described Peter's lack of dress while working, the fact that John recognized Yahshua and had to inform Peter, and that Peter cast himself into the sea. John mentioned the type of fire Yahshua was cooking over, and the time of day and that the meal the disciples shared with Yahshua was breakfast.

All of these details are significant, and those with eyes to see will be able to glean many truths as they unravel the parable here. I will simply focus upon those things that I have understood as they relate to the ministry of coming days.

The Holy Spirit inspired men to record very precise events of the life of Christ, and Christ Himself was perfectly yielded to the Father in all that He did. No activity was ever wasted, or simply performed at whim. All that Christ did was to serve as a perfect revelation of God and His work among mankind. We should therefore understand that it was with great deliberateness that Yahweh

chose every appearance of Christ before His disciples after the time of His resurrection. These events serve to provide truth on many levels, including a prophecy of the works to be accomplished among the saints prior to their ascension at the great harvest resurrection to occur just prior to the Millennial reign of Christ.

Consider for a moment that the question of the identity of Christ is mentioned prominently in all of His appearances after the resurrection. It seems that there was some question as to who was appearing before them, for it is mentioned that none dared ask Him who He was, for they knew it was Christ. Is this not strange? If the disciples knew it was Christ, then why even mention that none dared ask who He was? I believe these words serve as a prophecy of that which is to come, for each of Christ's appearances to His disciples after the resurrection stands for a specific way in which He would appear to His disciples in the next 2,000 years, and there would be some question as to whether it was truly Christ appearing in this way.

Let me remind you that before I went camping, the last writing I sent out was on the sign given in the constellation Bootes (<http://www.heart4god.ws/id655.htm>). This sign speaks of Yahshua coming to perform a very specific work of removing flesh from His children. It will be a work of fiery purification to prepare a Bride for His coming as Bridegroom. I believe it is also this same work that is depicted in the form of a parable in the Scripture passage on the 153 fish. John relates that this is the third, and final appearing of Christ before His ascension. The number three is a number denoting completeness. E.W. Bullinger, in his book *Number in Scripture* shares the following:

Three, therefore, stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire.

All things that are specially complete are stamped with this number three.

At the end of the age, the Lord will bring His body to maturity. He must have a Bride without spot or blemish prepared for the return of the Bridegroom. What is therefore depicted is a final appearing of the Lord to make complete all that has been lacking in this preparation of the Bride. We will see this further as we consider some of the symbols in this parable.

The first disciples that the Lord called were Peter and his brother Andrew, and

James and his brother John. All four of these men worked together as partners in the business of fishing (Luke 5:10). Yahshua appeared to them while they were working on their nets and called them to follow Him, for He would make them “fishers of men.” Previously these men had sought to catch fish, but now they would devote their lives to catching men. The fish therefore became a symbol for man. If a person is a fisher of men, then is it not obvious that one serves as a symbol for the other?

This symbol of the fish has even come to serve as a common symbol for Christianity. It was reportedly used as a secret sign among the early church in days of persecution to identify those who were followers of Christ. The individual letters of the Greek word for fish, Ichthus, became an acrostic for the words Iesous Christos THEou Uiou Soter, which rendered into English is Jesus Christ God’s Son Savior. This, however, is a man-made acrostic, and I will stick with that which is Biblical in this account.

In John’s account the disciples, at the Lord’s instruction, cast their nets on the right side of the boat and bring up 153 fish. The right side is indicative of the righteous. In the parable of the sheep and the goats, the sheep are separated onto the right, and the goats go to the left. This haul of fish therefore signifies those who are righteous, the elect and chosen of God.

The number 153 is itself filled with revelation. The number 153 is related in many ways to the number 17. 153 is divisible by 17, being the product of 17 and 9. If you add up each of the numbers between 1 and 17, their total comes to 153. 17 is a number of perfection, being the sum of two perfect numbers, 10 and 7. 10 is a number denoting ordinal perfection and 7 is a number denoting divine perfection. When summed together they stand for that which is perfect both numerically and divinely.

Consider now the parable of the 153 great fish that were caught. Earlier in the ministry of Christ the disciples pulled a great number of fish up in their nets, but their nets began to break and their boats began to sink. Undoubtedly many of the fish escaped or were lost. At the end of Christ’s ministry the disciples pulled up a great catch of fish once more at the Lord’s command, but this time the nets did not break and no fish were lost. I believe this to be a symbol representing the fact that even as Christ did not lose any of those that the Father gave to Him, that His disciples would not lose that which was given to them.

The fish, of course represent men. The number 153 therefore has great bearing upon the men that the disciples were to catch. Being related to 17, which in turn is related to 10 and 7, I believe this number prophetically shows that the disciples would be fishers of men until the full number (10 - ordinal perfection) appointed by the Father (7 - divine perfection) should be saved. This truth is seen in many other places in Scripture. We are told that God has chosen His elect from before the foundations of the earth. He knows those who are His, and He calls them forth by name. So even as the number 153 is very precise, not being a general figure, this parable indicates that Yahshua will appoint His disciples to fish for men until the exact number determined to be saved should be accomplished.

There is another significant way in which this number relates to the elect of God. The Greek word for fishes used in this passage by John is related to the number 153. Gematria is the study of the relationship between words and numbers. In some languages letters also serve as numbers. For example, most English speaking people are familiar with Roman numerals. The Letter I is the equivalent of the number One; V the equivalent of Five; X the equivalent of Ten; C the equivalent of One Hundred, and so forth. In a similar way, each of the letters of the Greek alphabet are also numbers. When the Greek word Icthus used by John is rendered as a number its value is 1224 (8 times 153).

Eight is a number representing new beginnings, or the new creation man. Thus, these fish are a symbol of those pulled from the sea of humanity destined to be new creations in Christ. Remarkably, there are numerous other titles for the elect of God that also are multiples of 153. The phrase "Sons of God" in the Hebrew Old Testament is "Beni Ha Elohim" whose value is exactly 153. In the Greek of the New Testament the phrase "Joint Heirs" has the value 1071 (153 times 7). The expression "the creation of God" is 1224 (153 times 8), the words translated "the net" have the exact same value, 1224.

When pondering this parable I considered how it might relate to the ministry of coming days. I was immediately mindful of the fact that the Lord in this appearance has laid fish upon the coals. Fire is the ultimate purifier. I recently wrote of the following Scripture, and its application to this coming work of Christ among His people.

Luke 12:49

"I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!"

This is also related to the following words of John the Baptist.

Matthew 3:11

As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

The Lord did not show me these things until after I had cleaned the fish and placed them over the hot coals to cook. In a recent writing, *Joseph - Preparing the Body for Burial*, (<http://parablesblog.blogspot.com/>) I noted that it was the work of the Joseph Company to minister in coming days as they guide the elect through days of fiery trial. I believe the Spirit has used this event as one more testimony during my days of camping to speak of the work to come.

I noted that it was on my eleventh day camping on Jekyll Island that we caught the fish, cleaned and cooked them over the coals. Eleven is a number pertaining specifically to Joseph, as he was the eleventh son of Jacob, and he lived to be 110 years old. The Lord prevented me from catching fish until this day, for I believe He wanted this to be a further witness and testimony of the quickly approaching ministry appointed to a Joseph Company who have themselves surrendered themselves to fiery trials intended to bring forth purity in their lives.

Some further details that are significant are found in the fish I caught and prepared. Randy and I caught and cooked three fish. As mentioned earlier, three speaks of that which is complete, and it is a work that will bring the Bride to complete readiness for the Bridegroom that will be accomplished through the fiery work ahead. As mentioned the fish were whiting, and the color white is indicative of the Bride who has made herself ready. The first thing I did in preparing the fish was to cut off their heads. I have written much of what this symbolizes in various writings, including *The Remnant Bride*. Cutting off the head symbolizes having no head of one's own, but taking Christ as Head in all things. In *The Remnant Bride* I wrote of the fact that this was a characteristic the Vashti lacked. She was therefore removed from her position as queen, and Esther replaced her. The foremost matter addressed in selecting a new Bride for King Ahasuerus was to find one who would live for the King's will and pleasure. This will also be a characteristic of those who will be included in the Bride of Christ.

I will mention once again that there was some question about the identity of

Yahshua in John's account. Peter did not recognize it was the Lord until John told him. I believe this also speaks prophetically to the truth that many will question that which will come to the church in days ahead. Some will observe the Lord with fish laid in the coals and will not immediately recognize that it is Him. Many will question whether the Lord could actually be the One who is subjecting His people to the fiery trials that are quickly coming upon the earth.

Please pray for Randy and I as we return to Middle Georgia. I really do desire your prayers, more than you can know. I have seen the Lord move mightily when the saints began to pray. Please pray for the Lord's direction to be manifested to Randy and I. Pray for His provision to be loosed, and for doors of ministry to be opened. Please also pray that we might bear a special anointing to accomplish all that we are called unto.

I have much anticipation for those things the Lord will perform in coming days. What a glorious thing it will be to observe the Bride being readied for her Bridegroom. What a marvel to observe a glorious butterfly emerging where previously was the fleshly form of a caterpillar.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days.