

## WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

### The Glory of the Christian Faith

#### INTRODUCTION

John, Chapter 21 is the epilogue to the Gospel. An epilogue serves the reader in a particular way. Years ago, we used to watch a show on TV where a crew would come in and build a house for a family who had special circumstances. At the end of the show, they had an epilogue that gave an update on how the family was doing after moving into their new house.

John's epilogue or 'last word' serves us in 2 ways. The latter part of the chapter teaches us what Jesus thinks of Peter – Peter who denied Him. The part we deal with today teaches us how to apply all the evidence that John has amassed to show that Jesus is the Christ.

#### THE TEXT: JOHN 21:1–14 (ESV)

#### OBSERVATION OF TEXT

The first task of biblical interpretation is to observe the passage. I notice 4 key indicators in the passage that will enable us to interpret it correctly. They are:

1. The first is that you've think you've heard this story before. It sounds a lot like the story in Luke 5 that was read for us earlier. They are slightly different, but the similarity is amazing. That's the first observation.
2. Secondly, John gives us a timestamp. We read that in verse 14: "*This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.*" Now Jesus has appeared more often than that, but this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time to the disciples as a group.
3. Thirdly, when you read the story, you are captured with a repeating word. In the ESV it is the word "revealed". In the NIV it is appeared". Three times in 14 verses, John emphasizes that this is Jesus revealing Himself. But in verse 1, John adds a qualifying phrase that makes it unique. John writes, "he revealed himself in this way."<sup>1</sup> "In this way" is an important statement. We must pay close attention to "the way" Jesus is revealing Himself.
4. Fourthly, John makes 2 editorial comments. I've mentioned before when an inspired author makes his own explanation, that becomes an important and necessary commentary on the passage. In verse 4 we read, "yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus;"<sup>2</sup> and in verse 12 we read, "Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord."<sup>3</sup> We will see momentarily how important this is.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 21:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 21:4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 21:12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

## THE POINT OF THE STORY

Preachers are taught to be able to summarize the message in one sentence. Here's my attempt here:

**THE WAY <sup>v1</sup> THAT JESUS REVEALS<sup>v1,14</sup> THAT HE IS THE RISEN LORD IS  
BY DOING A MIRACLE SIMILAR TO HIS PRE-RESURRECTION MINISTRY.**

Let me illustrate it this way. Have you ever experienced *déjà vu*? *Déjà vu* is a French phrase that means "already seen". It's a feeling or thought that comes over a person when they're experiencing something and it feels familiar, or it seems like you've been there before and faced that before.

In Matthew 28<sup>4</sup> we are informed that the disciples left Judea and went to Galilee, to a mountain where Jesus had directed them. According to verse 7 of Matthew 28, Jesus had gone ahead of them. Nothing is known about where Jesus was, but John records that 7 of the 11 disciples in Galilee followed Peter's lead and went fishing. There is nothing in the Biblical record to suggest this was wrong. This is what these men did. These were professional fishermen, but after fishing all night they caught nothing. They fished at night because the fish were closer to the surface, and they used a net to catch them.

At dawn Jesus called to them, "Children, do you have any fish?"<sup>5</sup> Jesus uses the word "children" in a family way. It was an affection title. They didn't know it was Jesus, but here comes the *déjà vu* moment. "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some,"<sup>6</sup> Jesus says. It was then their net captured so many fish they could hardly drag it in. 351 to be exact. It was also then that the light went on for John. "*Déjà vu*." Already seen! When Peter heard it was the Lord, he did as before. He threw himself into the water and went to the shore to see Jesus. With Peter's help, all the fish were soon brought ashore.

Right away these disciples must have thought. We've been here before! And yes, they had. The same Jesus that performed the miracle recorded in Luke 5 did it here. Before He was pre-resurrection. Now He is post-resurrection. Before He was in a state of human humility – God in the flesh. Now He is the risen, glorified Christ. Jesus intentionally created this *déjà vu* moment.

When the disciples gathered with Jesus to accept His invitation of breakfast, John provides for us a commentary. "Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord."<sup>7</sup>

## JOHN'S COMMENTARY

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<sup>4</sup> "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them." (Matthew 28:16, ESV)

<sup>5</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 21:5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>6</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 21:6). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>7</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 21:12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Let us try to capture what's going on here. There was something about Jesus' post-resurrection, glorified body that was unique. There was something about Jesus' glorified body so that He was not immediately recognizable. Think of Mary's first encounter with the Lord. She thought He was the gardener. Until He spoke, she didn't recognize him. Think of the disciples whom Jesus met on the road to Emmaus. They didn't recognize Him until He met with them and broke bread and prayed. Now here the disciples didn't recognize Him until He told them to cast their nets on the right side. John implies that when they looked at Him, He looked different. They wanted to ask, "Is this really you?" But they knew it was Him because of the fish miracle. The evidence He gives confirms He is the Christ – the same Jesus they knew before His death.

## APPLICATION

What's John's point? The evidence was irrefutable. Trust the evidence. Remember what Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews? He said, "*If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.*" (John 10:37–38, ESV)

John has just gathered a mountain of evidence to show His readers that Jesus is the Christ. What is his final word to them: **Trust the evidence!** Christianity is an evidence-based faith. You will hear people use words like a "blind leap of faith". The Christian faith is not wishful thinking, not hoping, not positive thinking, not faith in faith. The Christian faith is based on solid, historical, evidence. Think of the title to Josh McDowell's successful book, [Evidence That Demands a Verdict](#). That's the final word to John's readers: There's the evidence now you are required to decide on it.

Now, for the most part, I am speaking to my brothers and sisters who have made that decision. You have repented and trusted Christ as your Savior. I am also speaking to people who work with and live with unbelievers. My encouragement to you today is not to believe the lie that Christianity is a faith where you close your eyes, cross your fingers and leap off a cliff into an unknown abyss. The Christian faith is based on evidence that is objective, knowable and measurable. The walk of the Christian is based on faith that rests on clear and precious promises. We do not embrace a fuzzy-wuzzy, hairy-fairy, fantasy. Let me just give you a short summary that you can take home and hopefully remember:

(How many of you can remember the word **C-A-R-D-S?**

**C**loseness. The actual events of the life of Jesus were in writing within a generation of them happening.

**A**ccuracy. There are more than 5000 manuscript texts that all confirm the accuracy of historical accounts.

**R**eliable. Most scholars, Christian and non-christian believe that the best explanation considering the facts is that Jesus resurrected from the dead.

**D**ispute. There is not a single dispute by early Christians that denied the accuracy of the Gospels.

**Secular.** Early, non-christian historians write of the existence of Jesus and confirm many of the events that the Gospels speak of.

Lastly, I want you to remember this name: Gary Habermas. Look at his work. It will encourage you and convince you that Christianity is not a pie-in-the-sky religion. It is evidence-based, and IT DOES DEMAND A VERDICT. Here the words of John again:

*"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* (John 20:30–31, ESV)