

Book of John, A Walk with The Beloved Disciple

by B. Cobbe Crisler

John 20:27, *"He simply says to him, Go ahead, fulfill what you feel is required for you to believe."*

John 20:28, *"Then Thomas goes to an absolute extreme after giving Jesus what amounts to an examination. Thomas blurts out, My Lord and my God."*

John 20:29. Jesus lets that remark pass. Thomas does not seem to be too reliable and *"Jesus remarks to him, Do you believe now because you have seen me? Those who are really blessed,"* or in Greek, *makarios*, those who are happy, perhaps even worthy, *"have believed without requiring the sense evidence."*

John 20:30. John tells us, *"Many other 'semeia', signs, truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book."*

John 20:31. Now the author gives us his motives for recording what he has in this great gospel, *"These are written, that you might believe,"* not that we might simply repeat Thomas' role because we haven't seen it, we weren't there, and we didn't have sense evidence to refuse to believe, but rather, without that sense evidence to be among those who are blessed. As Jesus said to Thomas, who have not seen and have yet believed. So John tells us he wrote the gospel that we might believe that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus' place in prophecy is the purpose of this book.

Commentary Six

And that believing, or stronger in Greek, trusting, we might enjoy the results of Jesus career, that we might have life through his name.

John 21, the last chapter of John, is considered by some scholars to be a later addition, but still, very possibly, by the same author.

John 21:1. We're told that Jesus appears at the Sea of Tiberias, which is Galilee. John 21:1

John 21:2, *"Already assembled there were seven disciples, all who had left the profession of fishing, we thought: Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, the sons of Zebedee, unnamed here, James and John, and two other of his disciples."*

John 21:3. They apparently had nothing to do. Discipleship returns to the fishing boat. *"Peter,"* with his fingers almost audibly drumming against the side of his boat, *"says I have an idea. I'm going fishing."* Nobody else had any better sug-

gestion. *"So they all go fishing. They spent that entire night fruitlessly. The very fishes avoided them."* Isn't it interesting that the *Anchor Bible* makes this comment on the disciples' profession, "It is notable that never in the gospels do the disciples catch a fish without Jesus help."

But notice the contrast between Verse 3 and Verse 4.

John 21:3, *"That night they caught nothing."*

John 21:4, *"But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore."* What patience Jesus had with discipleship! Waiting for them to realize the importance of carrying on his work. But, once again, without that realization, *"they did not even recognize Jesus humanly"*.

John 21:5. Jesus asked them an important question. You've spent the entire night out there. *"Children, do you have any results? Do you have any meat? No is their answer."*

Now it is obvious when one is fishing using a net that there's very little difference between the right side and the left side. The factor then brought out in John 21:6 must be the obedience to Jesus' word, the concept that he has exhibited throughout in his approach to economics and supply. *"Cast the net,"* he says, *"on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find."* They are obedient. They do exactly what Jesus requests of them. Now, instantly, they find their net is filled with fishes. They could have saved themselves that entire night.

Then John 21:7 refers once again to *"the disciple whom Jesus loved. He recognizes Jesus. It is the Lord, he says."* He must have recognized that sign of dominion over all, that mastery that he introduced even into the profession of fishing but was attempting to elevate them from profession to practice of Christianity. What had happened to his invitation to them, and expectation of them, to become fishers of men?

Edgar Lee Masters (1869-1950), U.S. poet and novelist, says this about the impetuous Peter, "O, Peter, gnarled branch of the vine." Peter throws his fisher's coat around him and plunges into the sea. We must remember that the sea of Galilee has a shoreline that drops off quickly. So, he probably had to swim part of the way.

Traditionally, sailors and fishermen aren't the best swimmers. But, ignoring that, just as Peter had burst into the tomb to be there first, he casts himself into the sea.

John 21:8, *"While the other disciples bring the ship ashore. It says they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits, that's about a hundred yards, dragging the net with fishes."*

John 21:9

John 21:9. Here's all that time they could have spared by giving priority to the lessons Jesus had already taught them. Jesus hadn't toiled all night. He didn't even have to use the fish that they brought in. *"For when they arrived there was a charcoal fire there."* In fact, the Greek word is *anthrakian* which is the root of our word anthracite. *"And fish, already there, laid thereon, and bread."* Toast and fish all ready.

John 21:10. But Jesus wanted them to participate in this, *"and said, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught."*

John 21:11, *"So, Simon Peter, who was already on shore, goes to the net personally, and pulls it to shore."* Who but a fisherman would remember this detail? *"There were one hundred fifty three fishes in that net."* Someone counted. It might be just the sign of the authenticity of authorship here by an eye witness. *"And still, the net was not broken."* Remember, back in Luke 5:6, at another incident, the net broke.

John 21:12

John 21:12, *"Jesus' invitation is to Come and dine. Now they know who he is."* ↓

John 21:13. "Jesus," in his characteristic gesture, *"took bread, and gave them, and fish likewise."* This was indeed a breakfast, but how different from that last supper! This breakfast was celebrating his victory over death. Not looking forward to tragedy, death, and lack of comprehension by the disciples, the dawn was in the disciples thought as well as over the Sea of Galilee on that special morning. ↓

Now we engage in a dialogue between Jesus and Peter. The dialogue as printed in the King James Version, seems rather dull and repetitive indeed. In the original Greek, however, there is a depth of meaning.

John 21:15, *"Jesus says to Peter, Do you love me more than these?"* It's obvious that Peter is being tested. We may ask, tested for what? That becomes clearer