

A message exploring the Blessings and Abundance that come through faith in Yeshua and His completed work of redemption – and, through that completed work, what it means now that we are ‘Sons of God’

Headings

- The Appendix to John’s Gospel
- The Story of the 153 Fish
- The Blessings of Relationship with Yeshua
- The Abundance of Faithful Witness
- The New Life as ‘Sons of God’

The Appendix to John’s Gospel

- **The Appendix or Epilogue**
 - **The Last Verses of John 20 constitute the conclusion of the body of the Fourth Gospel**

*‘And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.’ **John 20: 30-31***

- Similarly, John begins his Gospel with a prologue (*John 1: 1-18*)
- **The Epilogue of Chapter 21 Ties Up Five Loose Ends**
 - **Loose End 1: Will Yeshua no longer directly provide for His own (see *John 20: 17*)?**
 - This question is answered in verses *John 21: 1-14*
 - **Loose End 2: What happened to Peter?**
 - Peter had denied Christ three times and fled - and was last seen at the empty tomb (*John 20: 3-7*), where both he and John saw, but only John believed (*John 20: 8*)
 - This question is answered in verses *John 21: 15-17*
 - **Loose End 3: What would be the future of the disciples now that they are without their Master?**
 - The disciples did not, at this point, understand the scriptures that Yeshua would rise from the dead (*John 20: 9*)
 - David, in *Psalms 16: 8-11*, gives an insight into the fate of the ‘Holy One’ and scriptures in *Isaiah 53: 10-11*, and the story of Jonah (*Jonah 1: 17- 2: 6*)
 - Yeshua had told the disciples that he would rise from the dead on the third day (*Matthew 16: 21; Mark 8: 31, 9: 31; Luke 9: 22*)
 - Yeshua opened the eyes of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus to His resurrection (*Luke 24: 13-27*)
 - This question is answered in verses *John 21: 18-19*
 - The Lord tells Peter what would happen to him (and many of the disciples had similar fates)
 - Yeshua commands Peter to ‘follow me’ – it is his lifelong focus

- **Loose End 4: What was going to happen to John?**
 - Peter asks 'and what of this man?' (speaking of John)
 - **This question is answered in verses *John 21: 20-23***
 - Yeshua's answer tells Peter that John's fate is not to be Peter's concern... Peter's focus is to be on following his Lord
 - Stories went about that John would not die – but for us all it is not our concern... we too are to follow the Lord
 - **Loose End 5: Why weren't other things that Yeshua did recorded by John?**
 - **This question is answered in verses *John 21: 24-25***
 - John's gospel records things which are sufficient for our understanding of Yeshua and for us to have faith in, and relationship with, Him
- **We will focus on the story of the miraculous catch of 153 fish**

The Story of the 153 Fish

- **Read *John 21: 1-14***
- **After These Things – the events of *John Chapter 20***
 - **Mary Magdalene visits the tomb and finds it empty – she tells Peter & John**
 - **Peter & John run to the tomb to see for themselves**
 - **John Believes (*John 20: 8*) – he believes Yeshua's words to the disciples about His resurrection (see *Matthew 16: 21, 17: 22-23, 20: 17-19*)**
 - **As yet they did not know the Scriptures (*John 20: 9*) which told of Yeshua's resurrection (e.g. *Psalms 16: 8-10; Isaiah 53: 10-11; Jonah 2: 6-7*)**
 - **Yeshua meets and talks with Mary Magdalene outside the tomb – He tells her He is ascending to His Father and to go and tell the disciples**
 - **That evening Yeshua appears to the disciples and he commissions them and breathes on them and they received the Holy Spirit**
 - **Eight days later Yeshua appears to the disciples again – and this time Thomas is with them**
 - **The gospel concludes with Thomas's words of faith and Yeshua's blessing of all who have faith, even though they do not see him as Thomas did**

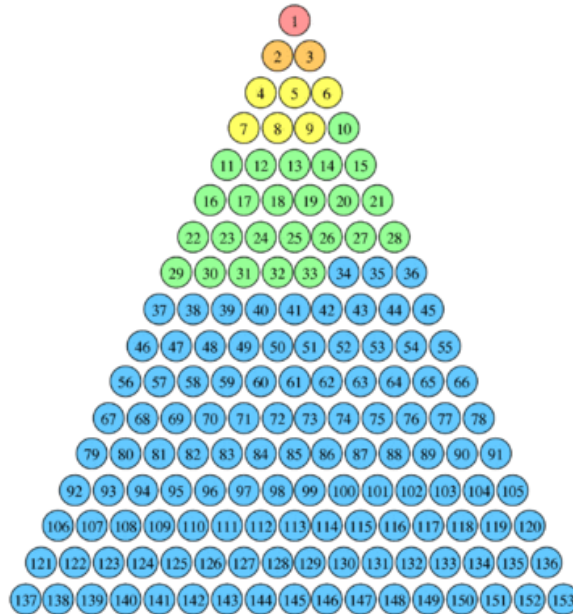
And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

John 20: 28-29

- **There is Nothing in Scripture by Chance – the Holy Spirit inspired the disciples to count the fish, and John to record the number of fish caught for a reason**
 - **In *Luke 5: 1-11*, when Yeshua called the disciples (Peter, Andrew James & John) to become fishers of men, there was a miraculous catch of fish – but all that is recorded is that "they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking"**
 - **So, in *John 21* we should take note that the number of fish is specifically mentioned**

- The 153 fish must have been a quite large species because these disciples were experienced fishermen – and they were amazed the net had not broken
- Fish in scripture are an idiom for Procreation, or New Life, or New Birth
- The context of the passage in John 21 is a gospel one; it also speaks of Restoration and Redirection, the call on disciples to 'feed my sheep' and be 'fishers of men' is one essence of the encounter
 - Restoration – because of the Lord's restoration of Peter following his denial of Yeshua
 - Redirection – because the disciples had returned to their previous roles – as fishermen – but the Lord had purpose for them in the establishment and building up of His body, the church
- The Nature of this Catch is Miraculous:
 - The disciples, experienced fishermen, had caught nothing all night (darkness)
 - Yet in the morning (light), at Yeshua's direction, they caught a multitude of fish
 - The message is that only following Yeshua's direction will there be a catch – and it will be an abundant catch – casting the net on the 'right' side!
- The '200 cubits from the land' (*John 21: 8*) is said by some scholars to indicate a period of 2,000 years of the 'Church Age', between Yeshua's first coming and His second coming
- The Significance of the Number
 - 1 is symbolic of God, unity, uniqueness, beginning
 - 5 is symbolic of grace, divine favour
 - 3 is symbolic of completion, solid, real, substantial and entire; and is the number of persons of the Godhead
 - 153 is 3×51 – or – $3 \times 3 \times 17$
 - 3 is complete (and the first number that 153 is wholly divisible by)
 - 17 is the number for perfection of spiritual order
 - 51 is the number of divine revelation and wisdom – hence 3 (complete) x 17 (perfect spiritual order) = 51
 - 153 is the number representing Blessings and Abundance, in complete spiritual order – from divine revelation and applied wisdom that is divinely established
 - Hence 3 (complete) x 51 (divine revelation and wisdom) = 153
- Mathematical Properties of 153
 - The number 153 has several mathematical properties:
 - It is a triangular number or triangle number (a number which counts objects arranged in an equilateral triangle) – it is the 17th 'triangular number; that is, the sum of the cube of its digits equals itself: $1^3+5^3+3^3=153$
 - It is the sum of the first 17 integers
 - It is also the sum of the first five positive factorials: $1! + 2! + 3! + 4! + 5!$ (see diagram below)

- It is also a hexagonal number (a figurate number of distinct dots in a pattern of dots consisting of the outlines of regular hexagons) – it is the 9th hexagonal number.
- It is a truncated triangle number, meaning that 1, 15, and 153 are all triangle numbers



The Blessings of Relationship with Yeshua

- In Biblical terms, one symbolic meaning of the number 153 is that it represents Blessings
- John 21 testifies to the Doctrine of the Perseverance (or rather, Preservation) of the saints – that is "When Yeshua "catches" (redeems) you, He never lets you go!"
 - You are forever accounted for in a net that will 'not be torn'
- The Perseverance of the Saints is a doctrine that teaches that once you are saved, you are always saved – it is most commonly known as the "P" in John Calvin's 'TULIP' acrostic
 - This doctrine is clearly outlined in the Gospel of John:

"This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."

John 6: 39

"And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

John 10: 28-30

'Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

John 18: 9

- Calvinism teaches that the Elect Cannot Lose their Salvation
 - Because salvation is the work of God the Father; through Jesus Christ, the Saviour; and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – it cannot be thwarted
 - None whom God has called will be lost, they are eternally secure

- Technically, however, it is God who Perseveres, not the saints themselves
 - Calvin's doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is in contrast to the theology of Lutheranism and the Roman Catholic Church, which hold that people can lose their salvation

- The Blessing of Redemption is a theme of John 21 and is seen all over the chapter – the following is a list of some of the physical/spiritual and literal/symbolic combinations in the text:
 - Seven Disciples = Spiritual Completion
 - Night = Spiritual Darkness
 - Caught Nothing – in the Gospels, the Disciples Never Caught Fish Without Yeshua and Only Caught Fish With Yeshua
 - Day Breaking = Jesus Penetrating the Darkness
 - Peter Clothing Himself = Standing in Reverence Before Yeshua
 - Charcoal Fire = A Parallel Between the Charcoal Fire in *John 18* (Peter's Denial and the Darkness of an Evil Night) and the Charcoal Fire in *John 21* (Peter's Redemption and the Dawn of a New Day)

- The Number of People Yeshua Personally Blessed during His ministry is said to be 153, on 48 separate occasions in the Gospel accounts – the 153 are recorded as:
 - 47 in Matthew (23 occasions)
 - 3 in Mark (3 occasions)
 - 94 in Luke (14 occasions), and
 - 9 in John (8 occasions)

See Appendix to these notes 'Blessings - One Symbolism of the Number 153'

- The Blessing of the Preservation of the Saints
 - Demonstrated in the miraculous catch of 153 fish – none were lost
 - It is through God's Perseverance we are saved (caught in His net)
 - Paired with the symbolic meaning behind the seven disciples (seven symbolises completion and perfection) – the meaning is even more emphasized
 - Yeshua perfectly redeems everyone the Father gives Him
 - He doesn't miss anyone!

The Abundance of Faithful Witness

- Abundance is symbolised by the miraculous catch of fish
 - After Yeshua was put to death, a distraught and discouraged Peter decided he wanted to go back to the comfort and safety of his former profession of being a fisherman

- Upon hearing his plans several of the other disciples (Thomas, Nathanael, James, John and two other unnamed disciples) went with him to fish on the Sea of Galilee
- The men (several were experienced fishermen) fish for an entire night and catch nothing
- In the morning, Yeshua calls to them from the shore and asks if they caught anything – they answer no
- They are then told to cast their net on the right side of the ship
- Then it happens, almost immediately – when they try to bring the net out of the water it is so full of fishes that it nearly sinks their boat!
- On shore, Peter hauls in the net and counts the number of fish in the net
 - This indicates that they were sizeable fish (see verse 11)
 - The catch was miraculous
 - The disciples caught nothing until they obeyed Yeshua's instruction
 - The catch was very large
 - The scriptures indicate that the disciples marvelled at the fact that their net held together even though it contained so many large fish
- **Abundance is Revealed through Obeying Yeshua's Instruction**
 - The catching of such a large amount of fish happened only after the Lord became involved – and the disciples followed His instruction
 - This is a subtle reminder that without Christ the disciples' attempts to accomplish something great on their own will fail, but that with Yeshua all things are possible
 - The Lord had told them at the outset they were going to be 'fishers of men' (*Matthew 4: 18-22*)
 - Yeshua had commissioned them again when He appeared to them in the upper room

'So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

John 20: 21

- **The Disciples' Obedience**
 - Although not spoken in John 21, it is implied in their actions following the event, that the disciples got the main point Yeshua was getting across
 - They were reminded of their calling and went back to work as "fishers of men"; notably following the sending of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2
- **Abundance is Revealed through Faithful Witness**
 - The essence of Yeshua's ministry at His first advent was to spread the Good News about the Kingdom of God
 - He also set out to call disciples – to find others willing to involve themselves in the same task
 - The objective, and result, was to be the adding to the Kingdom of as many people as possible
 - As disciples follow the Lord's direction there will be a large catch of fish
 - This same mission is ours – we are to be faithful witnesses to others, telling them and teaching them to follow Yeshua
 - There is great abundance of heavenly reward – even through trials and persecutions

- **Seen in the Beatitudes**

*"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for **great is your reward in heaven**, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

Matthew 5: 11-12

- **Seen in End Times**

*'He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**'*

Revelation 13: 10

- **Being 'Fishers of Men'**

- **All followers of Yeshua are to be "Fishers of Men" walking in his footsteps, by sharing this good news with others and adding to the Kingdom as many as who are willing to enter into it**

- **In this way there is a Double Abundance**

- **The blessing for us of being fruitful for the Lord**

- **The joy of seeing the abundance of fish who are in the Lord's net**

The New Life as 'Sons of God'

- **The pre-eminent biblical symbolism of the 153 fish is as a symbol for the church, the Sons of God**

- **The phrase occurs several times in the Old Testament, sometimes referring to fallen angels – but there are many references to those who are truly 'sons of God'**

- **Israel was chosen by God as a Son**

*'Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "**Israel is My son**, My firstborn. So I say to you, **let My son go that he may serve Me**. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn."* ' **Exodus 4: 22-23**

- **Note that it was God's sovereign purpose and will for Israel to be a Son – just as it is sovereign will and purpose for us**

- **Yeshua, of course, is The Son of God**

*"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." "I will declare the decree: **The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son**, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.'*

Psalms 2: 6-8

- **The proof of His Sonship was that He did the works He did 'in His Father's name' – as Yeshua told the people who asked if He was the Messiah**

*'Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me. **The proof is the work I do in my Father's name.**'* **John 10: 26**

- **We Too are Sons (and Daughters) of God**

- **The story of the 153 fish further emphasizes the theme in John 21 of Redemption**

- Because it testifies of the ability to become a "son of God" – and that we will be perfected in that through Christ
- We become sons and daughters of God by faith in Yeshua ... faith in what He has done for us at Calvary ... faith that He died and rose again (the evidence of our forgiveness and new life) ... and faith that He will keep us 'til He comes again'

'But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' **John 1: 12-13**

- Yeshua is alive – and He intercedes for us now – so our salvation is secure

'Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.' **Hebrews 7: 25**

- Did you hear that – 'Saved to the Uttermost!'
- Do you know – Yeshua now lives and is interceding for you!

- It is through The Fathers Divine Will and Sovereign Work that we are Sons of God

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.' **Ephesians 1: 3-6**

- Did You Hear That???
- Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing
- Chosen in Christ
- Holy and Blameless
- Predestined to Adoption as Sons
- Through Christ (not of, or dependent upon, ourselves)
- It is the Good Pleasure of the Father's Will
- To the Praise of His Grace (God's Riches At Christ's Expense)
- Accepted in Yeshua

- In Hebrew Gematria the words for 'Sons of God', *Beni Ha Elohim*, equals 153:

B = 2, + N = 50, + Y = 10, + H = 5, + A = 1, + L = 30, + H = 5, + Y = 10, + M = 40 == 153

- Gematria is the practice of assigning a numerical value to a name, word or phrase by reading it as a number

Praise and Glory be to The Father and to The Son, through The Holy Spirit

Amen

See Song: There's Not A Friend Like The Lowly Jesus (No Not One)

YouTube Video: Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8mOtjwDxWo>