



John 21
By Chuck Smith

John chapter twenty-one. It would seem that the gospel of John actually ended with chapter twenty. John puts on a beautiful conclusion. “Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that by believing you might have life through His name” (John 20:30,31). That seems to be the very logical end of the book. That sort of sums it up. Jesus did a lot of other things. I didn’t write them but I wrote these that you might believe that He is the Messiah. So that chapter twenty-one is almost an epilogue to the gospel of John. It’s as though John wrote this later and added it to the Gospel.

One further incident and John says it is the third time that Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection. Now He appeared to individuals. But the disciples as a group, this is His third appearance. We know that His first appearance was on the day of His resurrection, that evening as the disciples were gathered together, Jesus appeared to them. Thomas was absent. But earlier that day He had appeared to Mary Magdalene. Earlier that day He had appeared to Peter, and then to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and then in the evening He appeared to the disciples with Thomas absent.

The following Sunday night a week later, He again appeared to all of the disciples. Matthew’s gospel tells us that Jesus told them to go into Galilee and He would meet them there. And so sometime between the second Sunday and the final appearance of Christ on the mount of Olives, Jesus went to the sea of Galilee to meet the disciples up there.

The angels at the tomb told the ladies to tell the disciples to go to Galilee where Jesus would meet them. Jesus actually appointed a place in Galilee where He would meet them. And so John is giving this third meeting of Christ. Now He did meet them many other times. This was probably shortly after His resurrection. For forty days, He was appearing to them. Various places under various circumstances. Paul gives us a list of the appearances of Christ in one of his epistles. And so this is the appearance in Galilee that we have in chapter twenty-one.

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and this is how He showed himself. There were together Simon Peter, Thomas called the twin, Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee [that would be James and John], and two other unnamed disciples (21:1,2).

They were there. They were waiting for Jesus in the appointed place.

Simon Peter said unto them, I’m going fishing (21:3).

They were restless. Their future was still uncertain. They didn’t know yet what the future held and in this restlessness, just waiting, Peter, it would appear more or less, was just giving up. He said, I’m going fishing. Sort of, I’m going back to fishing. He was a fisherman when Christ first met him. It was from his fishing that Jesus called him to become a fisher of men.

Luke’s gospel tells us in chapter five concerning the call of Peter from his nets, Jesus had been thronged by the multitudes, they were pressing so much that it was difficult to speak to them. So Peter’s ship was there on the shore of Galilee and Jesus stepped into it and asked Peter to just pull off a little ways from shore that He might teach the people. And so from Peter’s ship, Jesus taught the multitudes. When He was finished with the lesson, He said to Simon, Now let’s go out into the deep and you can let down your nets for a draught of fish. And Peter said, Lord, we were fishing all night, and we didn’t catch anything: nevertheless at Your word I’ll do it. In other words, I know better but to satisfy You, I’ll do it. When they let down their nets, immediately they were filled with fish: and the nets began to break, we are told. So Peter whistled for John and James who were at the shore in their ship to come on out and they began to fill their ships with fish to the extent that the boats began to sink because of the multitude of fish. When they came to shore, Jesus said, Leave it now, and I will make you fishers of men (Luke 5:3-11).

Now some three years later, restless because Jesus hasn’t appeared, impatient, Peter said I’m going fishing. No doubt Peter was a natural leader.

The rest of the fellows and those that were there said, We'll go with you (21:3).

Seven of the disciples are told of here.

So they went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples didn't know that it was Jesus (21:3,4).

Actually they were about a hundred yards out. And at that distance, they couldn't recognize Him. It was probably still dusk, early morning. And they heard this voice, they could see the form and,

They heard this voice calling, saying, Children, you have any meat (21:5)?

Or did you catch anything? That's really sort of an obvious question for a fisherman. You see a guy fishing, you say, You catch anything? It's just one of those obvious questions for fishermen, it goes way back. Catch anything?

They answered him, No (21:5).

Some have said that you can't believe the gospels because they were written by fishermen and you know what liars they are. Whoever said that didn't realize that only one of the gospels was written by a fisherman and that was John. Notice John just says, They said, No. He didn't tell about the whoppers that got away or anything else. He just said, No, didn't catch anything.

And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find (21:6).

Interestingly enough, back in Luke's gospel chapter five, it followed a night of failure. Lord, we've been fishing all night and caught nothing. Nevertheless, at Thy word, we'll do it.

What a difference there is between self-motivated service and directed service. Service that is directed by the Lord is fruitful. So often that which we do just as a matter of routine is unprofitable. It doesn't gain us anything. But service directed by the Lord; notice how certain the Lord is: Cast your nets on the right side and you shall find. He is directing now again their activities and when Jesus directs the activities of your life, you can be certain that there's going to be success.

They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes (21:6).

The net was burgeoning with fish.

Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved [again John talking about himself] said unto Peter, It is the Lord (21:7).

Whenever the nets get so full that you can't draw them in, you know there is only one reason for it and that is, it is the Lord. I look at Calvary Chapel and what the Lord has done. And incidentally, next Sunday we'll be celebrating 30 years at Calvary Chapel. And when I look at what God has done in just thirty short years, when I look at the many Calvary Chapels across the United States—of the twenty-five largest churches in the United States, nine of them are Calvary Chapels—when I look around the world and see all of the missionaries, hundreds of missionaries around the world, you see nets that are so full you know there's only one reason for it. It is the Lord.

It isn't a planned program. It isn't an ambition fulfilled. It isn't a ten-year goal setting kind of an operation. It's just the Lord. It can't be attributed to the genius of man or to the skills. It can only be, it's just the Lord. And so when John saw they could not draw in the net because of the multitude, he said, It's the Lord. That's always the case. It's just the work of the Lord.

So Peter girt on his fisher's coat, (for he was naked,) (21:7)

That is, he was just wearing the typical loincloth. So he grabbed his coat,

and he dove into the sea and he swam to shore (21:7).

Again, impulsive, impetuous Peter and just not willing to wait to get in the little boat and row. Just swim. It's the Lord. His eagerness to get to Jesus. I love it.

And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, only about a hundred yards,) and they were dragging the net with the fish (21:8).

Not going to let that catch go. They come dragging the net in with the fish.

As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals, and there were fish laid thereon, and there was bread (21:9).

Where did Jesus get the bread? Where did Jesus get the fish? We don't know. But He had it all prepared for them.

He said unto them, Bring the fish which you have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fish, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken (21:10,11).

It is said that Simon was sort of a giant of a man. There is a book called *The Giant Fisherman* and he seeks to trace some of the early legends and stories about Peter, that he was a big fellow. It is perhaps an indication here because they could not draw the net into the ship but Peter, it would seem, drew it to shore by himself. "So many, and yet was not the net broken."

Remember back in Luke five, the net began to break. Here the net was not broken. And the number of fish, hundred and fifty-three. There must be some significance to the number but I'll leave Chuck Missler to tell you what it might be because he always finds significance in numbers. To me it's just a hundred and fifty-three. Why a hundred and fifty-three? I don't have any idea.

Augustine had an idea. It's probably worth as much as anybody's idea. Not much. But this is how they come to these kind of things. There were ten commandments. So ten represents the law. There were seven graces manifested in the life of Jesus. So ten plus seven is seventeen. If you count or add up the numbers from one to seventeen: one plus two, plus three, plus four, plus five, up to seventeen, it totals up to a hundred and fifty three. So it represents all of those that will be brought in through the law and through grace.

Why are fire engines red? Papers are red, too. Two plus two equals four, and four times three is twelve, twelve is a ruler and Queen Mary was a ruler. Queen Mary was also a ship. You go on and on and on. Finally you get to Russians are also called Reds and because fire engines are always rushing, they're red.

As you can tell, I don't really put too much stock in the reason for the numerics. It's interesting, it's fascinating what Chuck Missler can find in these things but I sometimes wonder.

Jesus said unto them, Come and dine. And none of His disciples durst ask him, Who are You? knowing that it was the Lord (21:12).

That to me is an interesting statement because after His resurrection and in the many appearances of Jesus, He was not always immediately recognized. You remember when Mary Magdalene saw Him in the garden, she thought that He was the gardener. That could be because it was early morning and she had been crying. But the two disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Him. That's possible that their heads were just down because they were so dejected and they didn't even bother to look up. But there seems to be some significance here that He didn't appear exactly as He had. The very fact that John would say, "None dared to ask Him, Who are You? knowing that it was the Lord," would indicate that there was probably some change in His appearance after His resurrection from the dead.

We know that He still bore the marks of the cross. In His hands there were still the prints of the nails. There was still the mark where the spear pierced His side. It is possible that His face still bore the marks of the horrible abuse at the hands of the soldiers and of the officers of the high priest. They had beaten Him quite severely. They had put a sack over His head and hit Him with their fist. They had pulled out His beard just grab hands full and pulled it out. His face was so disfigured that in looking at Him, you would not even recognize Him as a human being. Isaiah told us by way of prophecy. So it could be that He was still bearing some of those marks of the horrible abuse that He received at the hands of the soldiers and of the high priest officers who had so horribly beat Him.

Of course, He had had the scourging. He had had the crown of thorns pressed on His brow. His face was probably swollen. His eyes may be swollen shut from the buffeting that He took. And thus hard to recognize. We are told by Zechariah that when Jesus returns, "they shall look on Him whom they had pierced" (Zechariah 12:10). We are told in the book of Revelation that in heaven, when the time comes for the redemption of the earth, for the kingdom of God to be established and Satan's power and hold to be broken and Satan overthrown, that as the title deed to the earth is presented in heaven and the angel asked who's worthy to take this scroll and to break the seals, that when John is weeping because no one was found worthy, how that the elders said to John, Don't weep. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed. He will take the scroll and lose the seals. And John said, I turned and I saw Him as a Lamb that had been slaughtered. So that in heaven He may still bear the marks of His suffering on the cross.

Isaiah tell us that when we beheld Him, we turned our face from Him. And "there was no beauty in Him that we should desire Him." It could be that your very first view of Jesus will be a great shock. Have you ever seen a person who has been in an automobile accident and has had their face cut up and all and when you go in to see them, you just sort of look away because it is shocking to see how disfigured they are as the result of a severe accident. That's sort of what Isaiah said, When we see Him, we "hid as it

were our faces from Him because there was no beauty in Him that we should desire Him.” But then Isaiah went on to say, “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities:” (Isaiah 53:2,3,5).

Is it possible that God has allowed Him to keep the marks of His suffering and of His death so that we will be reminded when we see Him of the great extent of God’s love for us. That He was willing to allow His Son to be thus physically abused in order that you might be forgiven. Your transgressions and your sins in order that you might be able to have a share in the eternal inheritance of the kingdom of God. And that everytime we look at Jesus, there will be just that fresh rush of love. Lord, You were willing to take that for me. Is that possible? I don’t know. There are indications that that might be so. And that could be the reason why they didn’t immediately recognize Jesus.

Isaiah said, And when we beheld Him, His face was so disfigured that you could not recognize Him as a human being. But “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” I offer that only as a suggestion. I don’t know. I offer it as a suggestion.

Now John tells us,

This is the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead (21:14).

After this, He showed Himself still more. As I told you, there were forty days and we’ll get that in the first chapter of Acts next week. For forty days, Jesus was seen of His disciples after His resurrection. He did return and they did return to Jerusalem.

At one point, He was seen by over five hundred disciples at one time. There were other appearances, to James and to others. His last appearance to the disciples was in Jerusalem or outside of Jerusalem. He went with them over to the mount of Olives as far as to the city of Bethany which is down the hill towards the Judaeen wilderness on the mount of Olives. It was from there that He ascended into heaven and that was the last time the disciples saw Him.

That was about seven days before the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them on the day of Pentecost. And so this is the third time, not the last time but the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after He was risen from the dead.

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me more than these (21:15)?

Jesus used the word “agapas” when He asked, Loveth thou me? The word “agapas” or “agape” is a love in the realm of the Spirit. It is the deepest love that man can know. It is true love. The shallowest love is probably love on the physical level, that’s “eros” and that’s the thing that Hollywood plays up so much. The erotic aspects, physical aspects. But it can be questioned whether or not that is true love. Surely it is self-gratifying and a person who is involved in that kind of a relationship is thinking only of the physical aspects of a relationship. The gratification that I am getting from this relationship. And so often it isn’t really a real genuine love for the other person. But it is only a self-gratifying kind of a love. It’s because what it does for me.

There is another love, the “phileo” which is emotional love. It is a brotherly love. It is deeper than the “eros.” We get the word “Philadelphia” from two Greek words, “phileo” “adelphos”, which is brother. And so the city of brotherly love, “phileo adelphos—Philadelphia. That’s love on an emotional level. It is sort of a give-and-take. It’s a mutual kind of a benefit from the relationship. I love you because you love me and you make me feel good. You like Italian food and I like Italian food. You like garlic bread and I like garlic bread. We both like classical music and we have these things that we can share and we appreciate and it’s sort of a give-and-take kind of a thing. There’s a mutual benefit from it.

But when you get to the “agapas” or the “agape,” this becomes a giving love. It is more interested in the giving aspect than it is the receiving aspect. In fact, it gives without expecting to receive. It continues to give even if it doesn’t receive. It is the deepest form of love. It is the love that is described of God. God so loved the world. And there that word “agape” is used. God’s love for the world that He gave His only begotten Son. It’s a giving love. Now this word “agape” is almost unknown in classical Greek. They knew much about “stergeo” and “eros” and the “phileo.” In fact, Cupid was the god of love, Eros. But they knew very little about the “Agape.”

In fact, it’s a word that was almost coined by the New Testament for the New Testament. A word

that was developed to separate this kind of love because it is different and exceeds all other kinds or types of love. Whenever a new word is introduced into a language, that word has to be defined so that when a person uses it, you know what they're talking about. And so there are two places in the New Testament where this word "agape" is defined for us in order that you might understand just what is the nature and the character of Agape love.

First Corinthians chapter thirteen, Paul gives us a very good definition of Agape. He said it "suffers long, and is kind; it doesn't envy; it doesn't vaunt itself, it's not provoked, it doesn't behave itself in a weird manner, it isn't seeking its own way; But it believes all things, and it hopes all things, and it endures all things. And it doesn't fail" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

Paul gives another definition for it in Galatians 5:22 where said, "The fruit of the Spirit in your life. If your life is filled with the Spirit, truly filled with the Spirit, this will be the fruit. This will be the result. It is Agape. And then he defines it for you. "Joy, peace, long suffering, gentle, good, meek, self-controlled or temperate," and these are the characteristics of this Agape love. This is the love that Jesus taught His disciples that they should have. This is the kind of love that Jesus has where He was willing to give Himself for us. It's the kind of love that He desires from us, that selfless kind of giving love. And so He asks Peter, Do you love Me more than these? Or, is your love for Me the supreme love of your life? That's what Jesus is wanting to know from you. Is your love for Him the supreme love of your life? Or are there other things that you love more?

The ten commandments, the first one is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3). Are there gods, are there loves, are there interests in your life that take precedence over your interest in God and your relationship with God? Is God first? Everything else can go by the boards, nothing else matters as much as my relationship with God. I love Him supremely. That's what Jesus is asking.

When Jesus was questioned concerning the greatest commandment, He quoted what is known as the Shema out of Deuteronomy chapter six, "The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:4,5). And Jesus added, "The second is like unto the first, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And He said, In these two are all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:39,40). He used the word Agape to translate the Hebrew into the Greek. That is, your love for God should be supreme. "With all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might."

Your love for God is to exceed all other loves. So Jesus is saying, Peter, do you love Me supremely? Do you love Me more than these? More than the old life of fishing? At this time, the fish were probably still flopping there in the nets on the shore. The net was full of fish. It really represented the epitome of success in the career that he had been following. Is that more important to you? Do you love that more than you love Me, Peter?

Jesus talked about the sacrifice of following Him. How that no man has given up houses or homes, brethren, family for My sake and for the Gospel's. "He said, If a man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). But a man who is not willing to forsake all to follow Jesus, Jesus said, wasn't really worthy for the kingdom of heaven. He doesn't want a part of your love. He doesn't want a part of your life. He wants all of your love.

"Lovest thou Me more than these?" The question is, What are the "these" in your life? What are the things that are vying in your heart with your love for Jesus? Do these things exceed your love for Jesus? Or is your love for Him above all other loves? That's what He desires.

Jesus had said to His disciples at the last supper, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John 14:21). In other words, our love for Jesus is proved by our obedience to Him. Keeping His commandments. And His commandments were that we were to love one another. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). So do you love Me, Jesus said, more than these? Is your love for Me supreme? And Peter was not keeping the Lord's commandment when he said, I'm going fishing.

When they had (back in Luke five) caught all of those fish, when they got to shore after this tremendous catch, the boats were just up to the gunnels, Jesus said, Come, follow Me. I'll make you fishers of men. And they left their nets and they followed Jesus. Peter's going back to the nets. There's a draw. There's something there that is still attractive. Peter, do you love Me more than these?

Peter was caught in a position where he could not really say, Yes, Lord, I love you supremely

because his actions did not really declare that. And so instead of using the word Agape, or Agapas in responding to Jesus,

He said, Lord; You know all things and You know that I am fond of You (21:15).

He used the word “phileo.” I admire You. I respect You. I’m fond of You. But when you’re asking someone if they really loved you, you don’t want them to just be fond of you. You don’t want them to say, Well I think you’re a very nice person. You want to hear the words, I love you. That’s what you desire to hear.

And so Jesus said to Peter, Feed my lambs (21:15).

The word “feed” there in the Greek is “bosko” or “boski”, and it is more than just feeding, it’s tending. It’s watching over. Taking care of My lambs. In other words, if you love Me, Peter, you’re not to fish the rest of your life. If you love Me, My commandment is for you to tend, take care of My lambs. Notice He didn’t say, Take care of your lambs. They’re not Peter’s lambs. They’re the Lord’s lambs. Take care of My lambs. Tend them.

Interesting, in Peter’s first epistle chapter five as he is writing to the elders of the church, he said, Tend, [he uses the same word “boski”] “tend the flock of God which is among you, take the oversight, not for filthy lucre’s sake, but just out of love” (1 Peter 5:2). Watch over them, tend them, take care of them. And that is the duty of the pastor of the church. The feeding is a part of it but it’s not the totality of it, that’s just a part of it. It’s tending them. It’s nurturing them. It’s watching over them.

He saith unto him the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me (21:16)?

Again using the word “Agapas.”

And he said unto Him, Yes, Lord, Thou knowest that I am fond of You (21:16).

Again using the word “phileo” which is a lesser degree of love.

And Jesus said, Feed my sheep (21:16).

Here the Greek word is different in both cases of “feed” and “sheep.” The first one was the “boski,” my lambs. And here is the word “shepherd” over my sheep. “Probaton,” the sheep. And this is the idea of feeding as a shepherd leading them to the green pastures and all.

And then He said to him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, are you fond of Me (21:17)?

He used Peter’s word “phileo.”

Peter was grieved because Jesus said, Are you fond of Me (21:17)?

Jesus was no longer asking, Do you love Me with this divine intensive, supreme love? Where do I fit, Peter, in the category? Of the loves that you have, where do I fit, Peter? Do you love Me more than these? Are there other things that are of greater interest, greater concern? You have a greater love for these other things? Finally, Peter, are you fond of Me? Where do I fit? How far down the list in the interest and the loves of your life is My place? Are you fond of Me? It grieved Peter that Jesus would use his word “phileo.”

And he said, Lord, You know all things; and You know that I am fond of You (21:17).

He never did arise to the word “Agape.” He does in his epistles. That came with the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit. But at this point, Peter could not commit to a total love, a complete love. All he could commit to was an admiration, a fondness. Jesus came down to Peter’s level because Peter would not rise to the Lord’s level. And it’s always a sad day when we bring the Lord down to our level, rather than rising to His. When I force the Lord to come down.

The Lord always desires to lift me to the highest level. He’s not satisfied until your cup is overflowing. Until your life has experienced the total richness and fullness and glory that He wants you to have. That glory of just living in fellowship with Him. Close, total. And it’s sad when we through compromise are satisfied with a lower level of living and a lower relationship than a total relationship.

Jesus said unto him, Tend my sheep (21:17).

Going back to the first word again, the “boski.” Nurture, take care of My sheep.

And then Jesus said,

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When you were young, you clothed yourself, you went where you wanted: but when you are old, they will stretch forth your hands, and another will dress you, and they will carry you where you do not want (21:18).

John tells us that Jesus was signifying the death that Peter was going to die. He was signifying that Peter’s arms would be stretched out on a cross. And that Peter would die as did the Lord by crucifixion. And we are told that when Peter was in Rome and he was sentenced to death and they went to crucify

him, that he requested that he be crucified upside down because he said he was not worthy to be crucified as his Lord. So tradition has it that Peter was crucified in Rome upside down. It is interesting to me that Jesus here at the beginning is telling Peter what the price is going to be to follow Jesus. To feed the sheep. To take care of the flock of God. Peter, it's going to cost you your life. They're going to crucify you.

It's interesting to me that when the Lord apprehended Paul on the road to Damascus, the Lord told Ananias that He had revealed unto Paul all of the things that he was going to suffer for Christ's sake. That's when the Lord called Paul to the ministry. On the road to Damascus when the Lord apprehended Paul and he said, Who art Thou, Lord, that I might serve Thee? He said, I'm Jesus of Nazareth. It's been hard for you to kick against the goads. He said, What will you have me to do, Lord? He submitted himself and then the Lord told Paul all of the things he was going to suffer (Acts 9:3-16).

The Lord lays it out straight. He doesn't say, Now if you just follow Me, your life is just going to be surrounded by roses and pleasant experiences and you're going to enter into a glorious bliss and there'll be no problems, no more worries, no more difficulties. Things are going to be just so smooth and nice. No, no, the Lord says it's a rough road. The world's going to hate you. They hated Me, you're not greater than your Lord. You're going to be persecuted for My sake. You're going to be brought into prison. You're going to be put to death. Even your own families will turn against you. He laid it out straight, the things that it will cost to follow Him.

But you see, that makes your following Him all the more meaningful. It proves your love. The fact that you're willing to experience these difficulties, these hardships in order to hold on and have your relationship with Him. It sort of cements the love relationship that you have with God. And sort of like with Job, "Even though He slay me, yet will I serve Him" (Job 13:15).

As when many of the disciples found the words of Jesus a little bit too tough and they turned and didn't follow Him anymore, Peter and the rest were standing there. He said, You guys going to go, too? He said, Lord, where can we go? You alone have the words of life (John 6:65-68). It isn't easy but when you consider the alternative, there's not much choice.

So He told Peter by what death he was going to glorify God. And then He said to Peter, Follow me (21:19).

This is what's going to happen to you, Peter, but follow Me. Notice by what death he would glorify God. Paul the apostle one time said that he desired that God would be glorified in his body, whether by life or by death. My one goal, my one desire, my one ambition is that God might just be glorified through my life. And if He can be glorified in my death, great. Or in my life, doesn't matter. Just that God would be glorified through me.

So Peter, turning about, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved and he was following; the one which also leaned on the breast at the last supper, the one who said, Lord, which is the one that's going to betray You? And Peter seeing him {because John's talking about himself} said unto Jesus, Lord, what about this guy? Jesus said unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? you follow Me (21:20-22).

In other words, don't worry about what the Lord is going to do with the fellow next to you. You be concerned with what the Lord has called you to be and to do. Peter was saying, Lord, what about him? He says, None of your business. I'm talking about you, about your commitment. And the Lord always deals with you on a personal basis. He's interested in you. And so Jesus said, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me. That's your business. You follow Me. That's the chief business. I'll take care of John. You follow Me.

So the saying then went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple [or that John] would not die (21:23):

That is, that the Lord would come back before John died.

yet Jesus did not say unto him that he would not die; but that, If He willed that he tarry till He come, what is that to thee (21:23)?

I would imagine that this rumor actually took on much greater import after they boiled John in oil and it didn't kill him. According to *Fox's Book of Martyrs* John was boiled in oil but it didn't really have any negative effects on him and so he lived out his final years in Ephesus until he was banished to the island of Patmos because the Lord wasn't through with him yet. The Lord wanted him to write the book of Revelation. And so he had not written that yet. He was finally banished to the island of Patmos

where he then had the time to write the book of Revelation. But there was the rumor and it was going around in the early church that the Lord would return before John died. That John wasn't going to die. And John is saying, That's not what He said. He said, If I will that he remains, what is that to you? He didn't say that he wasn't going to die.

This is the disciple which testified of these things, and he wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true (21:24).

John is saying, I was there, I was a witness. I know that what I'm telling you is the truth.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen (21:25).

John said, Jesus did a lot of other signs that he didn't write. He chose and selected a few in order that in reading and knowing them, you would believe that Jesus is the Messiah. Did a lot of other things that were not recorded. It's interesting that there are a lot of aspects about the life of Jesus that wasn't recorded. In those days the arts were highly developed. The Greeks had many marble statues of their famous people. There are busts and statues of Alexander the Great so that we have a fairly good idea of what Alexander looked like plus there were many descriptions of Alexander the Great. His blonde hair and things of that nature. It is interesting that there were no physical descriptions written of Jesus nor were there any paintings made or any bust or sculptures or whatever. A lot of things that could have been written that were not written.

Enough was written in order for you to know that Jesus is the Son of God. He is the promised Messiah and that by your believing in Him, you can have eternal life. All that is necessary for eternal life and godliness was written. If everything had been written that could have been written, there wouldn't be enough libraries in the world to hold the books, John tells us. So just enough that you can know and that you can have eternal life through Him.

Throughout all of eternity, the rest of the story can be told. God through the ages to come shall be revealing unto us what is the exceeding richness of His love and His mercies towards us in Christ Jesus. It's going to take all of eternity for you to know it all. So enough is given to get you there and then once you're there, you'll have plenty of time to learn the rest. Throughout eternity God revealing the exceeding richness of His love and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

Thank You Father for the records that have been given to us by the apostles, disciples, and those men of the first century who have left for us a record of the life of Jesus, the ministry of Jesus, the death of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead so that we, Lord, have come to a faith in Jesus Christ. We believe that He is the Son of God and that He died for our sins and that He rose for our justification and He lives to make intercession for us. Lord, we thank You that You so loved us that You gave Your only begotten Son who taught us to love. Help us, Lord, to prove our love in obeying His commands. That we might love You, Lord, with all of our hearts, with all of our soul, all of our mind; and that we might love one another even as You loved us. That our lives, Lord, would be pleasing unto You. And that You will receive praise through our obedience and our love. In Jesus' name, Amen.