

Eighth Sign—Great Harvest of Fish

- The significance of any “sign” is related to the facts: this is the only miracle to occur after the Lord’s resurrection; and it is the only miracle directed at his disciples.

Joh 21:1 AFTER THESE THINGS Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; *and on this wise shewed he himself.*

Shewed—“manifested” (John 2:11; 9:3; 17:6). Appropriately the 8th “sign,” rep. circumcision happens after Jesus’ resurrection.

Joh 21:14 This is now THE THIRD TIME that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, *after that he was risen from the dead.* (THREE: the resurrected Messiah—1Cor 15:4)

Mark 16:9-14—appeared to Mary Magdalene; also to two disciples that walked; to the eleven as they sat at meat; and as they fished.

Joh 21:2 There were *together* **1** Simon Peter, and **2** Thomas called Didymus, and **3** Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the **4-5** sons of Zebedee (James & John), and **6-7** two other of his disciples.

Seven—the number completion of the body of Christ. *The “seven ecclesias” (Rev 1:20); (Rom, Cor, Gal, Eph, Phi, Col, Thes)!*

- After his resurrection, the Lord focuses on the disciples—with Peter at the forefront—and the work that remains to be done.

Joh 21:3 Simon Peter saith unto them, *I go a fishing*. They say unto him, *We also go with thee*. They went forth, and *entered into a ship* immediately; and *that night* they caught nothing. *(What they were called to do)*

Ship—Night—Sea: already considered and a critical part of this “sign.” After the Lord’s resurrection, Peter at the forefront (Acts 1-12).

Fishing—drawing out of the sea of nations those called to the One nation, the Hope of Israel. The disciples were witnesses of Christ—

Act 1:8 “The Holy Spirit is come upon you: and *ye shall be witnesses* unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”

- **Isa 49:6 declares that Messiah would not only be salvation to the Jews, but also a “light to the Gentiles...unto the end of the earth.” While the Lord Himself did not do this personally, it was and is being accomplished by extension of his brethren. In fact, this verse is quoted in application to the Apostle Paul (Acts 13:47), as the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13).**

Mat 13:47-52 “The *kingdom of heaven is like unto a net*, that was *cast into the sea*, and gathered of every kind: Which, WHEN IT WAS FULL, they drew to shore, and sat down...So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just”

Joh 21:4 But when *the morning* was now come, Jesus stood *on the shore*: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Morning—the second advent of Christ after the Gentile night.

Shore—seed of Abrahamic Covenant (*sand*—Gen 22:15-18).

Joh 21:5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

Joh 21:6 And he said unto them, *Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find*. They cast therefore, and now they *were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes*. *(Net is cast out of the ecclesial ship into the sea)*

Right Side—reps. Jesus' resurrection (see: *Mark 16:4-6*); the “side” of fellowship (Gal 2:9) and righteous (Mat 25:34; 1Pet 3:22; Rev 1:20).

Multitude—the redeemed by and for Christ (Rev 7:9; Gen 32:12).

Ecclesial Guide—“The objects of ecclesial operations are TWO-FOLD: 1.—the edification (or refreshment, encouragement, strengthening or building up) of its individual constituents in the faith, “the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16); and 2.—the exhibition of the light of the truth to “those that are without.” In this two-fold capacity, the ecclesia is “the pillar (that which upholds) and ground (that which gives standing room) of the truth” (1Tim. 3:15). These two objects will always be carefully pursued by enlightened and earnest men. Neither is to be lost sight of, and neither sacrificed to the other. Edification is more agreeable; but the testimony of the truth is equally a dutiful function. We must, therefore, resist the tendency to exalt the former over the latter; and, at the same time, be equally on our guard that we pursue not the latter to the sacrifice of the former. There is a tendency in young ecclesias to give the public testimony the more prominent place; and in older bodies, perhaps the tendency is to prefer that which is individually profitable to that which may seem to them a bootless exhibition of divine matters to a heedless public...” —***Art. 12. Bro. Roberts***

Joh 21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, *he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.*

Cast into the sea—Peter was the first to proclaim the risen Lord to the Jews (Acts 2-4); and the Gentiles—Cornelius (Acts 10-11).

Acts 15:14-17 “Simeon (Peter) hath declared *how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.* And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, *After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord*”

- This requires the personal sacrifice of Christ's brethren—

Fellowship With Christ—baptism and the breaking of bread

“So many of us as were *baptized into Jesus Christ* were baptized *into his death*?...buried *with him* by baptism *into death*... we have been *planted together* in the likeness of his death... our old man is *crucified with him*” — Rom. 6:3-6

- “And that HE DIED FOR ALL, that *they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves*, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” — 2Cor. 5:15
- “And they that are Christ's *have crucified the flesh* with the affections and lusts” — Gal. 5:24
- “Christ also SUFFERED FOR US, *leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps*...Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, *that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed*” — 1Pet. 2:21-24

Joh 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, SON OF JONAS, lovest thou me more than these? (Joh 1:42 “Jesus said, *Thou art Simon the son of Jona*”)

Son of Jonah—there is a reason for this addition to Peter’s name.

- Jonah was also cast into the Sea (Jon 1:15); representing his *preaching to the Gentile nations* (Nineveh) requiring his own personal sacrifice. Jonah typified the Lord’s death—
- Mat 12:41-42 “*The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here*”

Prophet Jonah

Apostle Peter

Both biased against Gentiles—

Jonah 1:1-3

Acts 10:13-14

Both found at Joppa—

Jonah 1:3

Acts 9:42; 10:8

Both 3 days before preaching—

Jonah 1:17

Acts 10:9, 23-24

Both cast into sea—

Jonah 1:15

John 21:7

Both see repentance of Gentiles—

Jonah 3:5

Acts 10:44-48

- Both men represented the extension of the Gospel to the Gentile/Sea after at figurative death and resurrection—

Act 26:23 “That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the *first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles*”

- During the Lord’s ministry, the disciples were commanded “go not the way of the Gentiles...but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” After his resurrection they were commanded to “teach all nations” (Mat 28:19-20).

Joh 21:8 And the *other disciples* came in a *little ship*; (for they were *not far from land*, but as it were *two hundred cubits*,) *dragging the net with fishes*.

Other disciples—proclaiming the Truth is the responsibility of all of Christ's brethren; individually, ecclesially, fraternally: a "*little ship*."

Net with fishes—the "*net*" symbolizes the Gospel by which men are extracted from this world, and the "*fishes*" represent the saints.

- Mat 4:18-20 "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, *casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers*. And he saith unto them, *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him*"

"Fish" are those pulled from the chaotic nations to the Kingdom.

Joh 21:9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw *a fire of coals there*, and fish laid thereon, and bread.
Joh 21:10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. **Fire of Coals—used Jhn 18:18. Peter's denial**

Joh 21:11 Simon Peter went up, and *drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three*: and for all there were so many, *yet was not the net broken*.

Drew to Land—fish drawn to the Hope of Israel from sea of nations.

153 “The numerical value of the name ‘Simon’ is 118, and that of ‘Jonas’ is 35; so the two names together have a numerical value of 153 (v. 15). It was ‘Simon, son of Jonas’ who became the leader of the ‘fishermen’ whose task it was to commence the great work of preaching the gospel of salvation in the name of the risen Christ—and to use the ‘keys’ given him by the Son of God, that the gospel might be ‘unlocked’ to both Jew and Gentile (Acts 2:10).”—*Eight Signs of John, pg. 122-123, J. Ullman*

Yet was Not the Net Broken—earlier record notes Jesus enter into Simon Peter's ship and told his disciple to "let down your nets." After Peter resisted, he did as the Lord commanded, and "a great multitude of fishes" were caught, but "their net brake." (Luke 5:1-11)

□ "The contrast between (John 21) and Luke's description of an earlier similar occurrence is quite marked. Whereas Luke stated that the net 'brake' John particularly recorded that the net did not break. There must be a reason for the differing results, stemming from two comparable miracles. The incident related by Luke appears to suggest that, during the period before Christ's second coming many who were 'caught' in the 'net' of the gospel will break away therefrom and return to an evil world, having renounced the Truth. But in John's account the allusion is obviously to *all* the redeemed, not one of whom will be 'lost' (Luke 5:6; John 17:12). The 153 'great' fish thus suggest the ingathering into the kingdom of all who are approved by Christ"—*Signs of John, J.U. pg. 120*

Joh 21:12 Jesus saith unto them, *Come and dine*. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

Joh 21:13 Jesus then cometh, *and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise*. (Sign: feeding the multitude)

Joh 21:14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

Come and Dine—a meal reps. fellowship (Mark 14:12-22; 1Cor 5:11).

Bread—the *flesh* crucified (Mat 26:26-29); personal sacrifice.

And fish likewise—the saints, drawn out of the sea of nations.

Jews had to understand the Gentiles would join in fellowship:

“Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him”—Acts 10:34-35

Joh 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest (agape) thou me *more than these*? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. He saith unto him, **FEED MY LAMBS.**

Joh 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest (agape) thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. He saith unto him, **FEED MY SHEEP.**

Joh 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest (phileo) thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest (phileo) thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, **FEED MY SHEEP.**

Feeding sheep requires laying down of our lives (John 10:15-18).

These—are the fish or Gentiles taken from the sea of nations.

John 10:15-18 *“I LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR THE SHEEP. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, BECAUSE I LAY DOWN MY LIFE, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, BUT I LAY IT DOWN OF MYSELF”*

- **153** *“The numerical value of the name ‘Simon’ is 118, and that of ‘Jonas’ is 35; so the two names together have a numerical value of 153 (v. 15). It was ‘Simon, son of Jonas’ who became the leader of the ‘fishermen’ whose task it was to commence the great work of preaching the gospel of salvation in the name of the risen Christ—and to use the ‘keys’ given him by the Son of God, that the gospel might be ‘unlocked’ to both Jew and Gentile (Acts 2:10).” —Eight Signs of John, pg. 122-123, J. Ullman*

Only personal sacrifice leads to the enlightenment of others.

Joh 21:18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, *thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.* (8th sign: circumcision Phi 3:3)

Joh 21:19 This spake he, *signifying by what death* HE SHOULD GLORIFY GOD. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, *Follow me.*

- Divine pattern: work of one concludes with a “multitude.”
- The “signs” intended “for the glory of God” and “that the Son of God might be glorified therein” find fulfillment in the disciples.
- The greatest suffering experienced by the disciples came thru their efforts to proclaim the gospel to others.

“WHOSOEVER WILL COME AFTER ME, *let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me...whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it*” Mk 8:34

Elpis Israel—“The mystery was revealed to the Jews first; and several years elapsed before it was known, or supposed to that the Gentiles would be admitted to a joint-heirship with Jesus on an equality with the Jews. During this period of about seven years, the body of Christ consisted solely of believing Israelites, sons of Abraham by flesh and faith. At the end of this time, however, God determined to ‘visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name.’ He graciously resolved to invite men of all nations of the Roman territory...Before this, however, could be accomplished according to the principles laid down in God’s plan, *it was necessary to prepare Peter for the work. Although an apostle, he was still a Jew, and had all the prejudices of the Jew against the Gentile...Peter, then, had to be prepared for the work. The narrative of his preparation is contained in the tenth chapter of Acts. A direct attack was made upon these prejudices*” —J. Thomas, pg. 202-203