

**What Now?**  
**John 21:1-11**

**I. Introduction**

**A. Review**

1. We've **completed** the **main** portion of **John**—there **remains** a **sequel**
2. "What **now**?"—That's **exactly** what the **disciples** might be asking!
  - a. Jesus is **alive**—things worked **well** for **Him**, but what about **them**?
  - b. **Previously**, they'd followed **Him 24/7**—but **now**, **most** of the **time**, they don't even **see** Him—just **now & then**

**B. Acquaintance With Other Gospels**

1. **Again**, John **assumes** his **reader** has an **acquaintance** w/**synoptics**
  - a. They **were** in **Judea**—**now** in **Galilee**—Cp. **Mt. 26:32; 28:7; 10**
  - b. Our **text** clearly recalls an **earlier** incident in **Lk. 5:1-11**
2. At this **same** Lake, a **similar** miracle took place—except **nets** broke
3. It was **there** that Jesus **promises** they'll catch **men**--& they **followed**!

**II. What Now?**

**A. Goin' Fishin'**

1. We here **7** disciples—apparently **tired** of waiting for **Jesus** to **show**!
2. So **Peter** says "*I'm going fishing*", & the **others** go **along**:
  - a. Not "*sport fishing*"—These had **been** fishermen by **trade**!
  - b. They've got to **eat** & make a **living**, so they go **back** to their **nets**
3. Yet, as in **Lk. 5**, they've fished all **night** but have caught **nothing**!
4. This sets the **stage** for the **8<sup>th</sup>** & **final** "*sign*"—a sign to **them** & to **us**!

**B. Jesus' Admonition**

1. Christ **appears** to them on the **shore**, but they don't **recognize** Him—**a familiar** pattern—but **understandable**, as He's about **100 yds** away
2. He calls **out** to them, asking if they've **caught** anything
3. They reply "**No**", whereupon He **advises** them to cast on the **right** side
4. As they **do**, they **encompass** a **multitude** of **fish** in the **net**
5. Once again, **Peter** & **John** act in **harmony** with their **characters**:
  - a. John **reasons**—this like "*déjà vu*"—it's the **Lord**!
  - b. Peter **acts**—tying up his **cloak**, he **dives** & **swims** to **shore**!

**C. The Fish**

1. The **other** disciples come **dragging** the **net**—whereupon **Peter** returns & **helps** them **drag** the **net** onto the **land**
2. We find they've caught **exactly 153** large fish--&, in **spite**, of the **number**, the **net** did not **break**—as in the **earlier** incident!
2. They also **see** a **fire** there with **fish** & **bread**—which **Jesus** invites them to **partake** of

**III. Reading the Sign**

**A. Evangelism**

1. Easily we see **this** is a **parable** showing them the **nature** of their **task**!
  - a. Cp. **Lk. 5:10**—Peter, just as you've caught **fish**, you'll catch **men**!
  - b. To "**catch**" them is to **overcome** them, **subdue** them, or **win** them
  - c. This is simply a **depiction** to them of their **work** in **evangelism**

2. Further, it describes to them the **way** it's to be **done**:
  - a. Note the **futility** of doing it **w/o** Christ—Cp. **Jn. 15:5!**
  - b. Note the **success** when they do it at **His** command & **way!**
  - c. Note that He **doesn't** have to be **in** the **boat**—as in **Lk. 5!**

#### **B. The Means of Evangelism**

1. Further, notice the **means** they are to use in this work—a **net!**
2. What is **this**? Clearly, from **rest** of **NT**, it's the **Gospel** message!
3. Compare **2** ways of **fishing**—with **bait** & with a **net**:
  - a. With **bait**, we **appeal** to the fish's **nature**--& try to **hook** him
  - b. With a **net**, we attempt to **overcome** them by the **power** of the **net** itself—to "**draw**" them by its **power!**
4. Note: The **net**—unlike **Lk. 5**, & to John's **surprise**—doesn't **break!**
  - a. In **Lk. 5**, the Gospel **message** draws **many** but they **leave!**
  - b. **Now** the Gospel is **complete**, & it **keeps** all it **ensnares**—not **1** of them is **lost!** (*Unlike bait evangelism!*)

#### **C. The Success of Evangelism**

1. What **determines** success? The **skill** of the **fisherman**, the **enticement** of the **bait**? **No!** To **our** eyes, it's just "**luck**", "**chance**"!
2. There's **no** earthly **explanation** why it's **1** but not **another!**
3. But **here** we see that the **success** stems from the **power** of **Christ**—He **calls** men **to** the **work**, **equips** them **for** it, & **makes** them **succeed**
4. Thumb thru **Acts**—Isn't this **exactly** the **case**? **He's** given the **credit!**
5. Note the **# 153**—as many **theories** as there were **fish!**
  - a. It's **17 X 9**, & a "**triangular number**", the **sum** of **1** to **17**
  - b. Jerome **thought** it **represented** total **#** of fish **species**
  - c. May have **connection** to **Eze. 47:10** – "*En Gedi & En Eglaim*"
6. **My** theory: It's the **exactness** of the **number** that's **significant!**
  - a. It's **not** "**a bunch**", or "**about 150**", but **exactly 153!**
  - b. Thus **precisely** the **number** & **identity** is **determined** by **Him!**
  - c. They're to gather **His** sheep, **His** way, with **His** results
  - d. The **outcome** in the **end** is what He **purposes** at the **start!**

#### **D. Let's Go Fishing!**

1. It's a message to **them**—**This** is their assigned **work**—don't **worry** about **eating**, for **Christ** is **able** to **supply** your **food**, as here
2. But it's **also** a message to **us**—for **we** enter into **this**—**Mt. 28:19-20!**
3. Is Christ's **sovereignty** a **detriment** or an **encouragement**?
  - a. **Many** claim it **kills** evangelism—but I claim the **opposite!**
  - b. **Where** would you rather **fish**? Where it's **guaranteed** you'll **catch!**
  - c. So in **history**—**this** thinking moved **Carey** to go to **India!**
4. So do we just sit **back**? **No!** Christ Who has chosen the **end** has also chosen the **means**—the **preaching** of the **Gospel**—**that's** our **net!**
5. Cp. **Crain's** Bookstore—"*The Wet Net*"—a **great** name—for **that** should be **our** aim—to **grasp** the **net**, & then to **cast** the **net!**
6. It's the **only** means I **know**—if it doesn't **work**, it won't get **done!**