

Bible Study 6 – The Epilogue

1. Background.

If the Gospel of John ended at chapter 20 then no one would be surprised (read 20:30-31). But there is still chapter 21 to come. Our study will focus on the second part of chapter 21, but it is worth spending a little time looking at the first part of the chapter.

In chapter 20 we have had the resurrection, Jesus appearing to his disciples, Thomas going from unbelieving to believing and the conclusion that we have just heard read.

The next thing we see is in chapter 21 some of the disciples decide to go fishing. I wonder why they did this? Was it just to fill in time? Maybe they needed the fish for food or as a source of income? Whatever the reason just as in Luke 5:1-11 after a night of unsuccessful fishing Jesus directs them to a large haul of fish. While we don't have time in this study; you may like to compare the two accounts and look at the similarities. I would just like to highlight that Luke uses the account as the calling of the disciples, while John uses it at the very end. Do you think there might be some significance to this?

After hauling in the fish, they have breakfast with Jesus – who is on the shore with bread and fish that he has already cooked. Just as in Luke in the Emmaus account there is Jesus taking the bread and giving it to them. It is at this point we pick up the story.

Read John 21:15-25.

Are there some terms and names used in this reading which are common to John but not to the other Gospels?

To you have any particular questions about this passage as a whole?

2. Focus on verses 21:15-19

This passage has links back to previous passages in John – where do you think these are and what are they about?

Jesus asks Peter 3 almost identical questions, but the first question is slightly different – what is different about it? Why do you think that question was different and to what was Jesus referring?

What does Jesus mean in verse 19 when he tells Peter to follow him? Compare this with John 1:35-42 when Peter became Jesus disciple. Is there a difference? Does this link back to the background and the question that was asked earlier?

3. Focus on verses 21:20-25

Read John 13:23-25 and 20:3-8. How is Peter depicted in these two passages? How does that compare with the depiction of Peter in Matthew 16:15-20 and Luke 24:11-12?

Could there have been some tension between John and Peter? What impact do you think the rumour would have had on the relationship? What does Jesus do to defuse any tension in the relationship? What advice does he have for Peter and how does that apply to us today?

Does this application point us back to 20:31? If so how?

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