

Morning Meal

John 21:1, 3-6, 9, 12, 15-17

1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

“After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he revealed himself in this way” (John 21:1, RSV).

“‘Afterward’ implies an indefinite lapse of time, but not always a long time. Since this event is categorized as Jesus’ third appearance to the disciples after the Resurrection, it must have taken place between the beginning of the second week and the Ascension” (*EBC* 9.198).

“The verb *phaneroun* (revealed himself) which is used nine times in the Gospel, occurs twice in this verse and once in vs. 14. It has the general connotation of emergence from obscurity, and for John involves a concrete revelation of the heavenly upon earth” (*AB John xiii-xxi*.1067).

“John is the only NT writer to use the name ‘Sea of Tiberias’ for the Sea of Galilee, as it is called in the other Gospels” (*EBC* 9.198).

“Galilee was a retired place where they would be free from danger, and was therefore a safe and convenient situation for Jesus to meet them, in order to give them his last instructions” (Barnes 358).

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

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.

“The leadership of Simon Peter is apparent at this point. Whether he was actuated by the need of earning money for his family or whether he simply wanted some activity to relieve the mental tension after the preceding fortnight in Jerusalem is speculative. The others assented to Peter’s proposal; so they embarked in a boat that was available for a night of fishing” (*EBC* 9.199).

“The period of waiting had doubtless tried the Apostles severely, and it was more as a distraction, than as a means of livelihood that St. Peter returned to his nets” (Dummelow 810).

It’s possible they were trying to escape the white hot heat of Jerusalem and the fear of being picked up by the Roman soldiers. But on a deeper level, they were all very disappointed and discouraged by Jesus’ death and decided to return to what they knew best.

“Those knowledgeable in Palestinian customs assert that on the Lake of Galilee night fishing is usually better than day fishing; and fish caught at night could be sold fresh in the morning” (*AB John xiii-xxi*.1069).

“That night. At night it is easy to catch fish, because then they cannot see the nets. In daylight it is much more difficult. The successful draught was made in daylight, and is therefore probably to be regarded as miraculous” (Dummelow 810).

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

“Jesus appeared in the early morning, just as day was breaking. The fishermen no doubt were cold, wet with the dampness and spray of the lake, and discouraged by their lack of success. They failed to recognize Jesus, perhaps because they were preoccupied with their failure, or because they could not see him clearly through the morning mist on the lake” (*EBC* 9.199).

At the breaking of the day, Jesus appeared to the disciples from the shore. Perhaps it was the morning mist and the dawning of light that obscured him to them. Or perhaps his appearance had been transformed and they did not recognize him. Surely, there was no expectation from the disciples that he would come to them there.

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

“Children. A term of affection and friendship” (Barnes 358).

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.

“In this experience the disciples recognized the Master, and were awakened to change their thought from a material to a spiritual basis. They had seen the wonderful demonstrations of the Master, had to some extent understood that his work was done in witness of eternal Truth, and

had themselves done some healing work. But it was not until they saw the risen Saviour that they realized more fully that their own ability to demonstrate Truth was from God, and was not a dispensation from the personal Jesus.

Obeying Jesus' directions, the disciples had cast their nets "on the right side of the ship." Then, after he had talked with them, they turned away from materiality, and the temptation to seek place, fame, or power. They centered their efforts on spiritual growth, spiritual understanding, and the demonstration of man's dominion over sin, sickness, inharmony, and death" ("On the Right Side," Ella H. Hay, October 1, 1938, CSS).

There was essentially no difference between the "right side" or the "left side" of the ship, because the current of the lake would have drawn the net wherever it wanted, but Jesus gave them a specific command, and they were obedient to him. Was Jesus trying to elevate thought from the human profession of their former career to the practice of Christianity, becoming fishers of men?

"John implies a more than natural knowledge on Jesus' part and the corresponding moral duty to obey him exactly if one is his disciple" (*AB John xiii-xxi.1071*).

In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mrs. Eddy states: "Those, who are willing to leave their nets or to cast them on the right side for Truth, have the opportunity now, as aforetime, to learn and to practise Christian healing. The Scriptures contain it. The spiritual import of the Word imparts this power" (271:26-30).

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

Jesus demonstrates to the disciples that he did not have to toil for the breakfast. Whatever was necessary to him was effortlessly there. He did not even have to use the fish that the disciples had caught.

Mis 90:28

His spiritually prepared breakfast, after his resurrection, and after his disciples had left their nets to follow him, is the spiritual communion which Christian Scientists celebrate in commemoration of the Christ. This ordinance is significant as a type of the true worship, and it should be observed at present in our churches.

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.

“When the catch had been safely brought to land and presumably sorted, Jesus invited the men to eat with him. Their attitude was peculiar. They desired to ask his identity, but they dared not do so because somehow they ‘knew’ he was the Lord. He had appeared in their beloved Galilee and had repeated the same kind of miracle by which they first had been called to him. In spite of an apparent change in his outward appearance, the disciples’ spiritual instinct confirmed his identity. His action in serving them with the bread and fish must have recalled the Last Supper, when he offered them bread and wine” (*EBC* 9.200).

“How Jesus prepared this meal is a mystery, but why he did so is plain. He wished, after the Resurrection, as well as before it, to set himself forth as the bread of life, or the spiritual food of mankind, and he did so, by a symbolical act” (Dummelow 811).

There must have been a change in the outward appearance after the crucifixion, but now the disciples “knew” who it was. “To know” or “to see” is *eido* in Greek and it means “to perceive with the eyes, to discern, to turn the mind to, to behold, perception as denoted by *eido* when conceived of as completed, permits the sensuous element to be forgotten and abides merely as an activity of the soul” (Thayer 173).

The disciples recognized the Christ on the shore of the lake through their spiritual perception. Whereas before he was imperceptible to mortal sight, now they could see him. The serving of bread and fish might have recalled the Last Supper. This morning meal was a breakfast and not a dinner, and it celebrated his great victory over death. This was the dawn of a higher understanding for the disciples.