

FOUNDATION MINISTRIES (UK)

Apostolic Ministry to the Body of Christ

EXPOSITORY & INSPIRATIONAL TEACHING & SERMON NOTES

Subject: - Great Christian Doctrines.

Study: - 013. By Many Infallible Proofs

Bible Reading: - Acts 1:1-11.

We have recorded by Luke in the book of Acts the ascension of Jesus into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father, **Acts 1:9-11** "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." This event took place forty days after His resurrection from the tomb, during which period Jesus showed Himself to be alive by many infallible proofs, for He was seen of His apostles and disciples to be alive, **Acts 1:1-3** "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, **Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:** To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion **by many infallible proofs**, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:" The words "infallible proofs", translated from the Greek word tekmerion, meaning "criterion of certainty", i.e. foolproof, watertight, reliable, dependable, flawless. During this period Jesus had proved without doubt that He was the Son of God, who had taken upon Himself the form of a servant and was made man, that He might suffer death for all of us, defeating the work of the devil, **Hebrews 2:9** "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Just as God through His servant Isaiah had stated, that at Jerusalem the LORD would bring great celebrations, for He would destroy the shadow of death that was spread over all nations and peoples, by swallowing it up in victory, **Isaiah 25:6-8** "And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it." Therefore Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians writes, **1 Corinthians 15:55-57** "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jesus prior to His ascension into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father to commence His intercessory ministry for His Church demonstrated to His apostles and disciples over a forty day period that He was truly the Son of God. Just as when Jesus commenced His earthly ministry He was tested by Satan in the wilderness 40 days, when again He proved He was God, for God cannot be tempted with evil. Jesus had submitted Himself to baptism by John the Baptist in the river Jordan, prior to the beginning of His earthly ministry, **Mark 1:9-13** "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." The Spirit of God descended from heaven and came and rested upon Jesus like a Dove and the voice of God was heard saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. We are then told that the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tested by the devil and that Jesus fasted for forty days and nights, and when He is physically at His weakest the devil tempts Jesus and says that if He is the Son of God, then turn these stones into bread. The devil having failed this temptation tries again by trying to get Jesus to commit presumptuous sin and cast Himself off the pinnacle of the temple at Jerusalem, and that God's angels will save Him from harm when He jumps, and Jesus replies to the devil it is written thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God, **Matthew 4:1-7** "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward

an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Jesus proved to Satan that He could not be tempted with evil for He was the Son of God and so defeated the devil and his clever schemes of entrapment (wiles), **James 1:13** "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:"

Luke here in his opening remarks of the Acts of the Apostles addresses Theophilus (whose name means friend of God), as he does with his Gospel, **Luke 1:1-4** "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." Luke wanted Theophilus to have a perfect understanding by having with all the facts and their proofs brought before in both his Gospel and Acts of the Apostles. Luke did not want Theophilus relying on hearsay and therefore says this important account have I brought together **Acts 1:1-3** "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:" Paul writing to the Christians at Thessalonica in his first epistle tells them to prove all things and only hold fast to those things which are good, **1 Thessalonians 5:21** "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

Further, when Peter writes his second epistle, in which he addresses to the same audience as his first, he says, **2 Peter 1:15-16** "Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." For he states that he had been an eye witness in the mount of Transfiguration to the honour and glory afforded to Jesus by His Father, when they heard a voice from heaven say this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, **2 Peter 1:17-18** "For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." Peter says the reason he writes this second epistle is to remind them of the words which were spoken by the prophets of God and the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, as there shall appear false teachers in the last days, **2 Peter 3:1-3** "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,"

Why did Jesus only show Himself after His resurrection for 40 days?

The number forty in the scripture represents a period of preparation, testing and trial, endurance, proof or evidence, and during a forty day period Jesus by dependable and reliable proof showed He was the Son of God, further in the scriptures we find many periods of 40 days and here are some examples;

- Jesus was in the wilderness 40 days prior to the beginning of His ministry when He was tempted by the Devil and proved He was God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, **James 1:13** "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:"
- The people of Nineveh were given 40 days by God through the preaching of Jonah to repent of their wickedness or experience His judgment, for they were tested by God to see if they were worthy of His mercy and to be spared His judgement.

- The twelve spies were sent ahead to prepare the way and when they had spied out the land for 40 days, they returned to test Israel's obedience with their report. Had they accepted with faith the report of Joshua and Caleb they would have entered into the full blessing of God, yet they chose to believe the report of the ten spies and ten in the scripture represents the inadequacies of man, that is why there are ten commandments to show man his own inadequacies and his need for dependence upon God his creator to survive.
- Moses was with God in Mount Horeb 40 days receiving the first set of commandments and sadly the children of Israel fail this period of testing, for they built the golden calf which they worshipped which caused Moses to break the Tablets of Stone containing the commandments which had been written with the finger of God. The second period of 40 days they survived and received the commandments.
- Elijah proved God and went in the strength of the food provided by the angel for 40 days until he arrived at Mount Horeb where God appeared unto him.
- The earth was subjected to flooding for it rained continuously for forty days and forty nights as God destroyed the wickedness of mankind. Righteous Noah as commanded by God had prepared and made ready the Ark to receive his family with the animals. Noah's faith was tested for forty days and forty nights when it rained continuously.
- For 40 days of each year from the first day of the month of Elul (sixth month) the trumpet would be sounded in Israel until the Day of Atonement and these 40 days were the days of preparation, a time to prepare and to put matters right with God, and their neighbours whom they may have offended, it was a time to search and check out their motives, a time to reflect upon their deeds and actions before Almighty God and show repentance, so that God might once again pass over their sins.
- Goliath, the giant of the Philistines called out and tested Israel for forty days that they might give him a man to challenge him in combat. David responded and in the strength of God slew the giant and gained the victory.

The Church at Corinth

Paul the Apostle, when writing the Epistle to the Church at Corinth seeks to address the matter concerning some of the believers within the Church who were saying that there is no resurrection from the dead, it is possible that some of the Jews may have been of a Sadducee persuasion which did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, before coming to believe in Christ, **Mark 12:18** *"Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection."* Paul addresses this issue by making the point that there is of certainty the resurrection from the dead to those who believe in Christ, **1 Corinthians 15:12** *"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"* Paul makes the case that Christ not only rose from the dead, but moreover following His resurrection, He had appeared to Simon Peter (Cephas) and then to the twelve, and after that to five hundred brethren at once, these appearances being proof of the resurrection, **1 Corinthians 15:1-8** *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."*

Here is a list of the appearances of Jesus to His apostles and disciples during those forty days between His resurrection and ascension, and in this study we shall examine just a few of these appearances;

- To Mary Magdalene, **John 20:14; Mark 16:9**
- To the other women, **Matthew 28:9.**
- To Peter, **1 Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34.**
- To two disciples as they were going to Emmaus, **Mark 16:12. Luke 24:13-32.**
- The same day at evening, to the apostles, in the absence of Thomas, **1 Corinthians 15:5; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 24.**
- To the apostles when Thomas was present, **John 20:24-29.**
- In Galilee, at the sea of Tiberias, to Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, and John, and two others, **John**

21:1-14. This is said to be the third time that he showed himself to the disciples--i.e., to the apostles--when they were assembled together.

- To the disciples on a mountain in Galilee, **Matthew 28:16.**
- To more than five hundred brethren at once, **1 Corinthians 15:6.**
- To James, one of the apostles, **1 Corinthians 15:7.**
- To all the apostles assembled together, **1 Corinthians 15:7.**
- To the apostles at his ascension, **Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9, 10 & 13.**

Then after His ascension

- To Paul, **1 Corinthians 15:8; Acts 9:3-4 & 22:6-10.**

To Mary Magdalene; It is early on the first day of the week that Jesus firstly appears after His resurrection to Mary Magdalene, **Mark 16:9** *“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.”* Sadly doubt has been cast on the authenticity of **Mark 16:9**, by the translators of many modern versions of the Bible, the **N.I.V.** the **N.E.B.** & the **R.S.V.** are but a few, Much weight and authority has been placed on two 4th Century manuscripts, the Codex Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, that remained in obscurity in the Vatican library until the 19th Century, when the Pope made them available to Christian Scholars. Among the many alterations found within these manuscripts is that of the concluding section of the Mark's gospel, **Mark 16:9-20** which is missing. I believe it is because this section undermines the Papal doctrine regarding the pre-eminence of Mary the mother of Jesus, (the Virgin Mary), as Jesus firstly appears to Mary Magdalene following His resurrection.

Many Bible commentators have sought paint a dark picture of Mary Magdalene as a woman of the night, prior to her following Jesus, but there is nothing in the scriptures to support their assumptions. We read that Jesus cast seven devils, or demons from her, which would indicate an involvement in occult practice such as astrology, for it has been my experience to find people involved in this dark art are possessed by the spirit of Balaam, who worshipped at seven altars to seven demon gods to seek enchantment against Israel, **Numbers 23:29-30** *“And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams. And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar,”* & **Numbers 24:1** *“And when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.”*

- Mary Magdalene along with Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna and other women ministered unto Jesus of their substance, **Luke 8:1-3** *“And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.”* Mary Magdalene seems to have exceeded all the other women in duty and respect to Jesus person, by her behaviour and constant attendance on Jesus in his life-time, for;
 - At His crucifixion Mary Magdalene had stood afar off watching the events of Jesus Death on the Cross, along with Mary Salome the mother of the son's of Zebedee, James and John, **Matthew 27:55-56** *“And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children”.*
 - She was present at His burial in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathaea, **Matthew 27:59-61** *“And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.”*
 - When the Sabbath was past on the first day of the week whilst it is still dark Mary Magdalene comes to anoint the body of Jesus with spices with Mary Salome the mother of the son's of Zebedee, James and John, and they find the stone rolled away. The young man (angel of the LORD) sitting on the right side of the sepulchre tells Mary Magdalene that Jesus is risen and to go her way and tell His disciples, so she runs and tells Peter and John, **Mark 16:1** *“And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves,*

Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."

□ Peter and John depart leaving Mary Magdalene weeping outside the sepulchre and when she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre she beheld two Angels, and as she turns back round she see Jesus, **John 20:10-17** "Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Mary Magdalene's response on seeing Jesus, was to run and embrace Him, but Jesus rebuffs her and says to her, touch me not, here in the text the Greek word **haptomai**, which implies "to attach oneself or to holdback or detain", Jesus is saying, you have more important things to do for you need to go to my brethren and tell them I ascend unto my Father, as I have spoken unto you in the past, for I will go to prepare a place for you with My God and your God, **John 20:17** "Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not**; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Matthew in his gospel tells us that Jesus appeared to the women as they ran back to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen, as they had been instructed by the angel, Jesus appears to them and greets them and they come and hold Him by the feet and worship Him. The women whom Matthew mentions one would have been Mary Salome, **Matthew 28:5-10** "And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, **behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."**

Mary Magdalene along with the rest of His apostles and disciples, who had followed Jesus throughout the duration of His earthly ministry had become close to Him, yet from this point they were going to experience a change in how they relate to Him. They had known Jesus physical presence amongst them for they could see His facial expressions when sharing with them and when necessary they could turn and embrace Him and seek His help, but from now on they had a duty to go and spread the good news of His resurrection and share Him with others in the world, for He will shortly be ascending to the Father.

□ There was John the apostle who leaned on Jesus breast as they reclined at supper, **John 13:23** "Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?"

□ Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus who died falls down at Jesus feet weeping, **John 11:32-36** "Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept."

□ Again Mary shows her deep affection for Jesus by anointing His feet with costly spikenard ointment and wipes them with her hair, **John 12:3** "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and

anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

For our understanding at this point it would be helpful to mention there were four remarkable persons all who were named Mary mentioned in the Gospels, and they are;

❶ MARY the Virgin, wife of JOSEPH and mother of Jesus, Luke 2:4-7 "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."

❷ MARY SALOME, her sister, wife of Cleophas, John 19:25 "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." Mark 16:1 "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him."

❸ MARY MAGDALENE, Mark 16:9 "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."

❹ MARY, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, John 11:1 "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha."

To Simon Peter (Cephas), John 1:42 "And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone".) Simon Peter, son of Jona, who was brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew, and Jesus calls him Cephas. At precisely what point Jesus firstly appears after His resurrection to Peter is uncertain, for although Mary Magdalene and Mary Salome hurried and told Peter that Jesus had risen and Peter went with them to the sepulchre, it was only once Peter had left when Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene.

□ The two disciples on the road to Emmaus to whom Jesus appears and reveals Himself to them as they sat and ate with Him, for their eyes were opened as He blessed and broke the bread and gave it to them. They both immediately returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven and told them that Jesus was risen and had already appeared unto Peter, Luke 24:33-35 "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread." Paul confirms that Jesus appeared separately to Peter before He appears collectively to the disciples at Jerusalem, 1 Corinthians 15:5 "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:"

□ There would have been a number of other times when Jesus would have appeared the eleven disciples when Peter would have been present, Luke 24:36-43 "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them."

□ The third time Jesus appears to Peter after His resurrection is the most significant, and this happened beside the sea of Tiberius, also called the sea of Galilee, John 21:1-4 "After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. 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. 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. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." That evening Peter had decided to go fishing and he was accompanied by Thomas, Nathanael, James and John with two other disciples. **The reason for them going fishing appears to be they had no food** and we are they told toiled all night and they caught nothing. As the morning dawns when they are returning to the shore Jesus appears and asks them if they had

any food, to which they answer no, **John 21:5** "Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No." Jesus then tells them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat and they would find fish, which they did and the result was the net was full and so heavy they were not able draw it into the boat, at this point John says to Peter it is Jesus, **John 21:6-8** "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. 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. 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." For the joy of seeing Jesus, Peter jumps out of the boat and runs to Him leaving the other disciples to drag the net of fish to the shore and as soon as they were come to land they saw a fire with fish already laid on it and bread, Jesus tells them to bring the fish which they had caught and Peter goes back and gives them a hand to bring the net full of fish to the land, **John 21:9-11** "As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. 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." Jesus then invites all of them to come and dine with Him for He had already prepared for them fishes and bread, **John 21:12-14** "Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead." Jesus had been aware that the disciples had no food and that was the reason they had decided to go fishing to meet that need. Jesus appears to have allowed these circumstances to happen to test them, so that He might show them that He has not forsaken them, and further that He would meet all their needs if they will only trust Him.

It is through these circumstances Jesus reminds them that He had chosen and called them to the ministry to be His apostles that would lay the foundation of His Church by preaching the truths of the Kingdom of Heaven and they would be fishers of men. Peter, Andrew, James and John left their fishing nets at the call of Jesus and followed Him, **Matthew 4:18-22** "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. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him." This is the second call by Jesus to Andrew, Peter, John and James to follow for their first call came following John the Baptists remarks concerning Jesus, when Andrew goes and finds his brother Peter and brings him to Jesus and it is at this meeting that Jesus changes Peter's name and calls him Cephas, **John 1:35-42** "Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."

The third calling is recorded for us by Luke in his Gospel when Jesus requests that Peter permits Him to have the use of His boat so that He might speak to the multitude which pressed Him to hear the word of God. On conclusion of speaking Jesus tells Peter to launch out into sea and let down his nets, but Peter having been out all night fishing and now cleaning his nets says to Jesus we have toiled all night and caught nothing, yet Peter lets down his nets and to his astonishment the nets are full of fish, **Luke 5:1-11** "And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat

down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him." Peter aware of his own sinfulness falls down at Jesus feet for he felt unworthy to be in Jesus presence and Jesus says to Peter, fear not from hence forth thou shalt catch men, and so the four left their nets and followed Jesus.

Jesus now uses this occasion with Peter, along with Thomas, Nathanael, James and John with two other disciples, after sharing the meal on the shore of Galilee to challenge Peter afresh about his commitment, as Jesus says to Peter lovest thou me more than these, **John 21:15** "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs." These, to which Jesus refers to here, are these boats and nets, lovest thou me more than all the pleasure or livelihood of fishing, to which Peter replies thou knowest I love thee, Jesus commands him to feed his sheep. Peter possibly now felt unworthy of his calling seeing he had denied the LORD three times. Jesus had told Peter that he was blessed for God had reveal to him that truth that to him that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, **Matthew 16:16-19** "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." For Jesus says upon this truth will I build my Church and I will give to thee the understanding concerning matters regarding the Kingdom of Heaven, therefore feed or provide nutriment for my lambs. Before one can feed Christ's flock one must first love Christ, for if the love of self is greater than your love for Christ you cannot feed the flock, and sadly that is the case today many are in the ministry for the status it brings them and they are full of pride and they destroy the flock. Peter was being challenged as to where his heart was, was it with the material things of this life, do you love these more than me, it is only on Peter's reply that he loves Jesus more than all these things that Jesus permits him to feed his lambs.

Jesus twice more challenges Peter, but these two times He does not say, **more than these**, and instructs him to feed His Sheep, **John 21:16-17** "He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest 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." Peter had been humbled for he was no longer judgemental or impetuous and he was therefore ready to be a shepherd of Christ's flock, composing of lambs-young converts, and sheep-experienced Christians, to feed, guide, regulate, and govern.

Peter on the day of Pentecost opens the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven to a great multitude as he preaches and shepherds the eleven with the love and compassion of Christ, **Acts 2:14** "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:" He ensure the sheep are fed, **Acts 2:41-42** "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

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