

## Yochanan ~ Part 39

### Yeshua's Third Appearance to the Talmidim

The **Synoptic Gospels** had mentioned that **Yeshua** would appear to the **talmidim** in the **Galil** (Matityahu 28:7, 10 and 28:16–20; Mark 16:7), reports one such appearance. Here **Yochanan** describes another, earlier appearance.

*21 <sup>1</sup> After this, Yeshua appeared again to the talmidim at Lake Tiberias. Here is how it happened: <sup>2</sup> Shim'on Kefa and T'oma (his name means "twin") were together with Natan'el from Kanah in the Galil, the sons of Zavdai, and two other talmidim. <sup>3</sup> Shim'on Kefa said, "I'm going fishing." They said to him, "We're coming with you." They went and got into the boat, but that night they didn't catch anything.*

**Shim'on Kefa** said, **"I'm going fishing."** He was going back to his old way of life, apparently unaware of what **Yeshua's** commission (20:21) meant. The others followed his example and went with him. As a result of this self - rather than **God-determined activity**, they didn't catch anything. When they let the **Messiah** determine what to do, they caught a netful (v. 11); compare Luke 5:3–7.

*<sup>4</sup> However, just as day was breaking, Yeshua stood on shore, but the talmidim didn't know it was He. <sup>5</sup> He said to them, "You don't have any fish, do you?" "No," they answered him. <sup>6</sup> He said to them, "Throw in your net to starboard and you will catch some." So they threw in their net, and there were so many fish in it that they couldn't haul it aboard. <sup>7</sup> The talmid Yeshua loved (here and the following remainder of this scenario, **Yeshua** is referring to **Yochanan**) said to Kefa, "It's the Lord!" On hearing it was the Lord, Shim'on Kefa threw on his coat, because he was stripped for work, and plunged into the lake; <sup>8</sup> but the other talmidim followed in the boat, dragging the net full of fish; for they weren't far from shore, only about a hundred yards. <sup>9</sup> When they stepped ashore, they saw a fire of burning coals with a fish on it, and some bread. <sup>10</sup> Yeshua said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." <sup>11</sup> Shim'on Kefa went up and dragged the net ashore. It was full of fish, 153 of them; but even with so many, the net wasn't torn.*

Various attempts have been made to interpret 153 symbolically, but it most likely simply represents the actual number of fish. Large numbers elsewhere in Yochanan are meant literally as well (2:6; 12:3).

*<sup>12</sup> Yeshua said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the talmidim dared to ask Him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Yeshua came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time Yeshua had appeared to the talmidim after being raised from the dead.*

By taking the bread and fish and giving them to His talmidim, **Yeshua** acted as a **Jewish** host pronouncing the blessing at a meal (6:11, 23).

### Threefold Restoration of Kefa

*<sup>15</sup> After breakfast, Yeshua said to Shim'on Kefa, "Shim'on Bar-Yochanan, do you love me more than these?" He replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I'm your friend." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." <sup>16</sup> A second time He said to him, "Shim'on Bar-Yochanan, do you love me?" He replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I'm your friend." He said to him, "Shepherd my sheep." <sup>17</sup> The third time He said to him, "Shim'on Bar-Yochanan, are you my friend?" Shim'on was hurt that He questioned him a third time: "Are you my friend?" So he replied, "Lord, you know everything! You know I'm your friend!" Yeshua said to him, "Feed my sheep! <sup>18</sup> Yes, indeed! I tell you, when you were younger, you put on your clothes and went where you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." <sup>19</sup> He said*

*this to indicate the kind of death by which Kefa would bring glory to God. Then Yeshua said to him, "Follow me!"*

This passage uses two Greek verbs with related meanings. **Greek agapaô** is selfless, self-giving love, the kind of love **God** has for his human creations; **"phileô"** is the love friends or brothers have for each other (Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love). Scholars are divided on how much the use of these two different words for **"love"** affects the sense of this exchange between **Yeshua** and **Kefa**. The exchange goes like this: **"Do you agapaô me?" "I phileô you." "Feed my lambs. Do you agapaô me?" "I phileô you." "Shepherd my sheep. Do you phileô me?" "You know I phileô you." "Feed my sheep."** Some translators use **"love"** throughout, believing the two words are used only for variety. The books of **Acts, 1 Kefa** and **2 Kefa**, show that **Kefa** rose to the occasion and fulfilled **Yeshua's** calling.

*The kind of death by which Kefa would glorify God.* Tradition has it that he was crucified upside down, because he said he was unworthy to be crucified in the same position as his **Lord**. He is believed to have died in **Rome** in the mid-60's CE.

## Correcting a False Report

*<sup>20</sup> Kefa turned and saw the talmid Yeshua especially loved following behind, the one who had leaned against him at the supper and had asked, "Who is the one who is betraying you?"<sup>21</sup> On seeing him, Kefa said to Yeshua, "Lord, what about him?"<sup>22</sup> Yeshua said to him, "If I want him to stay on until I come, what is it to you? You, follow me!"*

**Yeshua** rules out curiosity about matters that do not concern us or help us live a holy life, although He does not rule out scientific inquiry into how the world works. Likewise, He excludes unhealthy, jealous competition that compares our lives, tasks, gifts, accomplishments, interests, and calling with those of others. In both matters, **Yeshua's** central point is: *You, follow me!*

*<sup>23</sup> Therefore the word spread among the brothers that that talmid would not die. However, Yeshua didn't say he wouldn't die, but simply, "If I want him to stay on until I come, what is it to you?"*

Like the final chapter of **Matityahu**, the closing verses of **Yochanan's Gospel** dispel a rumor. **Matityahu** denied that **Yeshua's talmidim** stole His body (Matityahu 28:11–15; Matityahu 27:62–66) while **Yochanan** sought to lay to rest the rumor that **Yeshua** had promised to return during **Yochanan's** lifetime.

## Epilogue

*<sup>24</sup> This one is the talmid who is testifying about these things and who has recorded them. And we know that his testimony is true. <sup>25</sup> But there are also many other things Yeshua did; and if they were all to be recorded, I don't think the whole world could contain the books that would have to be written!<sup>1</sup>*

Yochanan 21 also speaks to the importance of purpose and calling in our lives. If you're feeling aimless or disconnected in your life, take time to pray and reflect on what **God** might be calling you to do. Start by listing your talents and passions, then identify one specific action you can take to align those gifts with His purpose - like starting a Bible study group in your home or mentoring someone at work. Having clarity on your calling can ignite your inspiration and energy in daily life.

This concludes our review of the Gospel of Yochanan. Beginning in the next posts, we will take a look at his letters.

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<sup>1</sup> Yochanan 21:1-25.