

THE 153RD FISH IN THE NET

WHEN PENTECOST CAME

Discrepancy of the Upper Room

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'Then when the actual day of Pentecost came they were all assembled together. Suddenly there was a sound from heaven like the rushing of a violent wind, and it filled the whole House where they were seated. Before their eyes appeared Tongues like flames which separated off and settled above the head of each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages as the Spirit gave them power to proclaim His message.'
-Acts 2:1

The purpose of this study is to consider where the Disciples were at during the Feast of Pentecost when the Feast 'fully came' on the 50th day after the resurrection of Jesus. According to Acts 2:1 the location and time appears to be different from that of the Acts 1:15 location and time; where about 120 Disciples plus others were gathered in the Upper Room. *'With one accord they all continued in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (a gathering of about a 120)...'* Mathematically in terms of Gematria, this study also seeks to make a connection between the 120 Disciples in the Upper Room to the same that gathered daily in the Temple courts or 'House of YHVH'.

This study does hold to the position that the Holy Spirit descended and began the Pentecostal period of the Church Age or the Times of the Gentiles in the Temple and not the Upper Room. Jesus did 'blow' on them the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room when Thomas was absent. However, it was sort of a preliminary foretaste and enabling to witness boldly and publically after Jesus' resurrection. Up to that point the Disciples were marked men and women subject to persecution and perhaps crucifixion also as they were associated with Jesus. The Disciples had scattered and feared for their lives. They were shut-up in the Upper Room as they locked the door and perhaps kept a lookout for agents of the Jewish Sanhedrin and Pilate's Roman soldiers.

The Disciples, at that time would not dare show themselves publically, much less in the center of the religious and political hub of the Temple precinct to witness boldly about Jesus' resurrection. It took the witness of Jesus Himself literally and physically with the conferring of the Holy Spirit at that time and place that emboldened the Disciples to witness publically and at the Temple. However, the Great Commission was given to the Disciples later on by Jesus. It took place on some mountain in Galilee where the LORD instructed His Disciples to rendezvous at. It was at Pentecost however that due to the Feast that was required of every male of military age to attend, that hundreds of thousands gathered in Jerusalem from all over the world as they did at Passover. The difference was that the Holy Spirit came to down from Heaven as promised by Jesus.

The Spiritual House

The descending of GOD the Holy Spirit corporately on Pentecost was the fulfillment to permanently indwell and 'seal' Believers of the 'better things to come'. It was also to bestow and equip the Disciples and subsequent Believers in Jesus with the 'Spiritual Gifts'. Such Gifts were given for the work of evangelizing throughout the Church Age that is the Pentecostal period. It will last until the Rapture of the Body of Christ is completed as the last 'caught' Gentile 'fish' in the 'net' is to be saved. One clear evidence of such an indwelling was the manifestation of Spiritual Gifts such as speaking in other languages. As the Disciples were in the Temple Courts on the very Feast of Pentecost, there were Jews from different parts of the Roman Empire that could understand the message of the Disciples in the language from where the Jews and many Gentiles came from.

These utterances were known and intelligible languages spoken by the Disciples and was a sign specifically to the Jews. Evidently, some Jews did not even speak Hebrew and others were Gentiles. Such a 'sign' that Jews always demand became a witness about Jesus –in the Temple and not in the Upper Room. The descending of the Holy Spirit came with 'Power from on High' and initiated the Pentecostal 'intermission' period between Daniel's prophetic 69th and 70th Week of Years. This current Pentecostal period that began there and then is not over yet and is dealing with the Spiritual Temple that is being built-up still. However, will such a 'Temple' be completed when the 153rd 'fish' is caught and it concludes the 'harvest' time of the Church Age 'net' or dragnet?

Jesus has cast such a 'net' upon the 'waters' of the world to have included the Gentile as part of the Bride of Christ much like the typology seen between Boaz and Ruth. The purpose was to build up a 'house' much like it was foretold of King David as the type of the coming Messiah when Obed was born. Currently still Jesus' Spiritual House or Temple is being built-up comprised of Jews and Gentiles from all over the world as a 'dragnet' much like the Disciples cast their fishing net at the instructions of Jesus and caught the 153 fish. It is a mysterious work in tandem with Jesus building the 'Mansions' in His Father's House. One has to recognize that it is Jesus that is the one working and laboring. The Disciples of Jesus just have the privilege of entering into the 'sufferings' of Jesus and as a labor of love.

The questions thus could be asked, will the end of the Pentecostal period that will culminate in the finishing of the Spiritual Temple or 'catch' signal that once the 153rd fish is caught, the Rapture is to take place and thereafter the building of the 3rd physical Temple is to follow? As the Holy Spirit came down on that very day of Pentecost at the Temple to start the Church Age, will it finish it by ascending with such a Spiritual Temple once it is complete in number, prophetically even a 153. To reiterated, this study holds to the belief that it was at the Pentecost Feast where the Disciples were at, in the Temple when the Holy Spirit came down corporately. In fact the exact time of day is given, 9 o'clock in the morning, Jerusalem local time. How many Disciples where there were most likely to have been beyond the 120; perhaps even 153? Could that number have been a parody of the catching of the fish by the Disciples on the Lake of Galilee that was 153?

The Age of the Fish

Many are convinced that such a catch of fish was a prelude or foreshadowing of the 'harvest' to come throughout the Church Age, which is the Time of the Gentiles. The catch of the 153 fish was a foretaste of the entire work of the Disciples spreading the 'net' of the Gospel message throughout the world during the 'Piscean Age', meaning the ensuing Age of the Gentiles. This harvest corresponds to the Church Age period of the Great Commission that would have a final 'fish' caught which would be the number and prophetic coefficient of 153. Interestingly though, it is recorded that after Peter's preaching, some 3000 of those at the Temple got saved. Here in is another connection of how the Pentecost season echoed what took place on Mt. Sinai on the 1st Pentecost after the Exodus of the Jews and the Gentile contingent that accompanied them.

It was at the giving of the Law that a rebellion ensued and 3000 perished as the ground opened up and swallowed them whole due to their insurrection against Moses but untimely against YHVH. As it pertains to when the Church Age started, it was when the Holy Spirit came down corporately to begin such a harvest but apparently bound by a terminal number and time then and connected to the Temple. Yes, there were 120 Disciples in the Upper Room but do realize that in the Near East culture and in the Bible, only men were counted for the most part. In addition, that number of 120 is a fractal also of the Jubilee pattern. Consider that the difference between 153 and 120 is 33. As the Bible in Acts 1:15 does mention the 120 and 'others', could it be speculated even that perhaps the 'others' were the 33 women in the group?

Cryptically, the 33 could also insinuate that Jesus, as that was His age could be the Person not seen but present in the 'midst' building the Spiritual Temple during this Pentecostal 'intermission' between Daniel's 69th and 70th prophetic Week of Years. As noted, if one studies and researches the topic of the 1st Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, it is associated with the Upper Room and one will find that there is a discrepancy if the Holy Spirit came down there and then as opposed to the Temple or 'House' on the Temple Mount instead. The prevailing thought is that it was also the same Upper Room as depicted in most paintings. If it was at the Temple, due to the Pentecost Feast that very day, no doubt there were not only 120 Disciples but also perhaps more.

This is again, where the portion of speculation could suggest a 153 number as Acts 2 does not stipulated 120 nor the Upper Room but a 'House'. Many believe that the Greek word for 'house' is referring to the House of the LORD or the Temple. Do realize that from the time the LORD commissioned the Disciples in Galilee and from when Jesus ascended to Pentecost, the Disciples meet in the Temple; the whole context of their corporate meetings were at the Temple. The chapter in Acts 2 even delineates how the Disciples meet also in their private homes to fellowship and break bread. As noted, it was only after the Ascension of Jesus that the Disciples received a measure of the Holy Spirit. Jesus 'breathed' into them in the Upper Room in the occasion that Thomas was not present. Such an enabling and power gave the Disciples boldness to meet openly and without fear of the Jewish Ruling Court or Rome's injustice. The center of the controversy was however, the Temple that Jesus said He would 'destroy and resurrect'.

The Power and Authority to Witness

Although the Disciples were aware of the personal testimony of Mary and John and Peter ran to the Garden to see the empty tomb, they all still had doubts. For one reason as it is still the case in the Near East, the testimony of a woman is less than that of a man's. Then there were the 2 Disciples on the road to Emmaus, etc. The point being is that from the Resurrection to the Ascension, the Disciples were naturally constrained with fears and doubts about Jesus and all that transpired. Perhaps this is why the risen Jesus Christ had to be with them for reassurance for 40 days. Although the 11 Disciples set out for Galilee after the resurrection of Jesus as instructed to a mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them, they saw Jesus and even fell down before Him, though some hesitated.

The Bible teaches that Jesus, there and then stated that all authority in Heaven and on Earth was now given to Him. Amazingly it is within this place of weakness of the 'flesh' of the Disciples that Jesus commanded the Disciples. It was as in a military term to *'Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'* The enabling was to come later by way of Pentecost. This proves the point that the LORD does not call the 'Qualified' but qualifies the 'Called'. As the Disciples later on meet back in Jerusalem, the nexus of the Royal Commission of the new Church Age began and perhaps is to end on a Pentecost and connected with a Temple. In the case of that Pentecost, it was at the Temple as this study suggests.

It was a foreshadowing of the Glory that came down upon the 1st Temple and in similar manner, the new Spiritual Temple begin with the Church Age at the Temple. To reiterate, it was on the day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit descended with 'Power from on High'. Based on a careful study of Acts 1 and 2, there is a difference in the place and amount. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 does not give a number of about 120 disciples and it was not in the Upper Room on Mt. Zion but on Mt. Moriah. The descent of the Holy Spirit thus appears to have taken place in the Temple Courts where the multitudes had gathered for the required Feast of YHVH. Most however, believe that Acts 1:15 where it notes that there were approximately 120 people present in the Upper Room was the Pentecost event though.

Nonetheless, what is unique about the 120 coefficient is that it is Biblical and prophetic on many levels such as the case for the Jubilee counts, etc. In this case, Biblical scholars point out that 120 was the number the Jews required to form a council in a city to make any directive legal and binding. The other case as already noted was when King Solomon in overseeing the dedication of the 1st Temple assigned 120 Priests to perform the required rituals of purification. In essence the 120 Disciples on Pentecost and at the Temple precinct along with the 'others' were functioning to establish a legal quorum. This allowed to set in motion the foundational law and legitimacy for the coming Church Age and its authority based on the succession of the work of the Apostles to witness for Jesus. Consider also the prophetic duality that was occurring on Pentecost as it occurred during Passover.

The Vessels of Honor

During Passover, as the 120 Priests were literally singing the Psalms and slaughtering the lambs for Passover at a certain time of day. So too just outside of the Gate of Damascus, Jesus on the Cross of Calvary as the Passover Lamb prophetically echoed literally and in tandem the words He spoke from the cross the Psalms as He gave up His life as the Lamb of YHVH on that very hour. So too at Pentecost, in the Temple there were 120 Priests leading the people and praising YHVH during the Pentecostal Feast. In the Temple the Priests were trumpeting, singing, praising YHVH with one voice. The Pentecost Feast and its rituals echoed the time when King Solomon prayed and waited for the Glory to descend from Heaven as the trumpets were blowing to dwell in the Holy of Holies. So too where the Disciples there in the periphery gathered and 'sitting' in one place in the 'House' praising YHVH and waiting for the Promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit to come down from Heaven but to rest upon them.

Perhaps it was at the Temple; at this place and time that the Disciples were waiting and praying as in prior days and as instructed by Christ Jesus. So too then, was the sound of a rushing wind as of trumpets that was caused as the Glory came down and set not upon the Holy of Holies of the physical Temple that was empty but on the hearts of the Disciples as a type of the 'Ark of the Covenant'. Does not the Bible depict the Disciples of Jesus as earthen vessels that contain the Glory of the LORD? This typology was seen in how the vessels carried into battle; a 'spiritual battle' by Gideon where lit the within the jars and broke them to reveal such illumination against the enemies of YHVH. Such will one day literally take place concerning the body of a Believer in Jesus. It will coincide with the Rapture's point and time of the last 153rd 'fish' being 'caught'.

That last day as the Apostle Paul describes it, is the point in time when one's earthen vessel will be broken much like that of Gideon and the inner light, the Glory of Christ will transform one's body to shine in indestructible light. This light, this Glory will pierce through the earthen vessels, or the body much like it occurred with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. This study suggests that this same mountain would have been the one that Jesus called the Disciples to return to and receive the Great and Royal Commission to cast the 'net' upon the subsequent Church Age periods. In the 1st Temple, the Glory of YHVH filled the Holy of Holies. Thus, it would make theological sense that the Glory of YHVH -the Holy Spirit rested upon and filled each of the Disciples instead in the form of 'Tongues of Flame' at the Temple precincts nonetheless to become a typology of the 'lights of the world'.

To continue in the duality, in the Holy of Holies the Ark of the Covenant which is a type of Jesus was not present in the 2nd Temple. Why? Because the presence of the LORD was to be now indwelt in the Believers of Jesus starting at Pentecost, at that place and time. The Ark of the Covenant metaphorically was to be in the midst of the Spiritual Temple being built-up with 'Living Stones'. The Holy Spirit started to fill and build this new 'Spiritual Temple' on Pentecost with the Living Stones and perhaps such a 'Temple' will be completed at a Pentecost timing and/or season. This new Spiritual Temple started out with the 120 Jewish Disciples as newly installed Royal Priesthood.

The End of the Catch?

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit began the New Temple, the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ not made by human hands but by the Person of Jesus Christ. This current Pentecostal period, of the Time of the Gentiles is still in operation through the work of GOD the Holy Spirit. Many are supposing that the end of the harvest of the 'catching' of the prophetic amount of 'fish' will someday reach that numerical coefficient of 153. In keeping with such a 'fishing' metaphor, the Church is as a boat to continue in the line of such a typology. In the traditional sense, since ancient and medieval times, the body of a church building architecturally was called a 'nave'. This word is Latin for a boat. Metaphorically, the Church as a 'boat' has been tossed on the stormy seas, that is the 7 Seas as it pertains to the present 7 Churches of Asia as a prophetic template. However, it is Jesus' will that she will prevail and bring in an abundant harvest of souls, all '153' fish.

Why? Because Jesus is 'on board' and the Gates of Hell cannot and will not prevail against her. As to the 153 fish? Biblical scholars have not really realized the true meaning nor its implication perhaps. Most scholars recognize that the 153 fish are symbolic of the souls harvested by the Church for Christ. Some suggest that there were 153 different kinds of fish in the Sea of Galilee, which might be symbolic of all the different peoples of the Earth being 'caught' in the net of the Disciples that would bring the Gospel to the world. A parallel to this theory is found in Matthew 13:47 where Jesus compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a dragnet which when thrown into the sea gathers fish 'of every kind' indicating the universality of the Christian mission. Mathematically, there is some connection to the Gematria of the number 153.

Gematria is the symbolic relationship between letters and their corresponding numbers and the numerical value of words or sentences. For example, John in Revelation does appear to use the principles of Gematria in Revelation 13:18 regarding the 666 Mark of the Beast. Thus, it is not unreasonable to assume that Gematria may be also employed with this specific number of 153. For example, others suggest that using Gematria with such phrases as the 'Sons of God' in Greek equals the number 3212, which is $3 \times 7 \times 153$. This suggestion links even the theory of the Trinity in that the number of fish caught in the Sea of Galilee is the ideal number of souls that will be harvested during the Pentecostal Period of the Time of the Gentiles. This number 153 is related then to the times the Trinity 3 and spiritual perfection 7.

Other scholars also have determined that the number of the Church equals 12 squared added to the number of Trinity equals 3 squared which results in the number 153, etc. Other scholars using a mathematical approach noticed that 153 dots can be arranged into an equilateral triangle with 17 dots on each side to yield a numerical symbol for perfection using the number 17. This is a number that is made up of the 2 numbers symbolic in Jewish thought for completion or perfection of order 10 and fullness and perfection 7. In ancient times, triangular numbers was a passion of both Greek mathematicians and Biblical scholars. However, many Bible scholars have determined and declared that this number 153 is a great mystery yet to be fully understood.

It is nonetheless a prophetic number that in some way is associated with the perfection of the number of souls to be harvested throughout the Church Age through the work of Jesus' Royal Priesthood. To sum-up, there is that connection of how the Disciples left and returned from Galilee having caught the 153 fish in the net that did not break, etc. The key to the work of the Royal Commission was and is that the Disciples were entreatable and took the direction of Jesus. They were guided by Jesus all the way to the shore where there was meal prepared by the LORD. This obviously has echoes of the reward for the work done by the Disciples of Jesus. One day the laboring in the vineyard, the casting of the net will come to an end as the last 'grape' and the last 'fish' will be harvested. Even though presently the signs of the times might seem that all is for not and there is 'no fruit'; there is.

Remember that although Elijah got discouraged for all the Ba'al worship even amongst the so-called 'People of YHVH' as they were sacrificing their children to Molech and perversion reigned in the land. YHVH revealed to Elijah that there were 7000 that did not bow the knee. Then there was the time that Elisha's attendant despaired as they were surrounded and locked-up in the city with no apparent rescue in sight. Elisha prayed and the eyes of the attendant were open to see the celestial war chariots of the Armies of Heaven all about. Could such a phenomena be occurring now as the harvest approaches the end that the murmurings of sounds being heard around the world for unexplained reasons are alluding to the behind-the-scenes spiritual maneuvering of celestial armies getting ready for battle? Do realize that as the Great Sign of Virgo occurs, at least astronomically on September 23, 2017, what ensues right after is a major celestial war. It will be a time where Angels will wage war and Lucifer will be cast to the Earth from Heaven once and for all.

Until that time, as the Church in these Last Days seems weary, remember that although she sows in tears, one day she will reap in joy as the sheaves are brought in at the harvest. *'He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, Shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.'* This mirrors the coming rest and celebration of the joy the Church will have as she helped the LORD bring in the 'sheaves'. She will be rewarded with the 'Banqueting Halls of Glory' that will be prepared after the Rapture of the Bride of Christ that will be the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. This picture has the imagery of how like Boaz, Jesus who is the fulfillment of the Kinsman-Redeemer has chosen a People who were not His People to spread His mantle of love as a Chuppah over Ruth and claim her, a Gentile as His Bride.

Although the Church throughout the Pentecostal intermission has sown with not only her tears, but with the blood of her Martyrs, she has watered the souls of the damned. Even Jesus in Revelation states that 'His reward is with Him' when He comes back for His Gentile Bride for the most part as He is the Kinsman-Redeemer. He is the greater Boaz and the Lord of the Harvest or of the barley fields much like it was with Ruth and Boaz. After a hard day's gleaming by Ruth, Boaz invited her at one point to share in a prepared meal. Such is a prophetic picture of how Jesus had prepared a meal after the catch of the 153 by the Disciples was successfully and brought in without a tear in the net. Could this completion occur at a Pentecost Feast time or season as it began?

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