

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 153 – June 2nd – John 21:1-25

Works frequently referenced in these notes on John

Barrett, CK	<i>The Gospel According to John</i> , London, SPCK, 1967
Beasley-Murray, GR	<i>John, Word Bible Commentary, vol 36</i> , Word Books, 1987
Carson, DA	<i>The Gospel According to John</i> , Leicester, IVP (Apollos), 1991

John 21

Beasley-Murray comments, "In the estimate of the majority of NT scholars, chap. 21 is an addendum to the Gospel, whether it be described as an appendix, a postscript, or an epilogue, and whether it be put to the account of the Evangelist or to a later editor of the Johannine school. It is emphasized that the beatitude of 20:29 fittingly closes the accounts of the resurrection appearances of Jesus and that 20:30–31 seems clearly to bring the Gospel to its close... If therefore the Evangelist himself added chap. 21, there must have been an important reason for its composition, not apparent when he wrote the Gospel. The most compelling ground could have been the death of the Beloved Disciple after the writing of chaps. 1–20, and the consequent dismay that it caused among the Johannine churches... It is, however, simpler to assume that another than the Evangelist wrote the chapter, since it has an emphasis on the situation of the Church and its leaders beyond anything in the body of the Gospel." Carson, however, cites Hoskyns, who writes, "A Christian gospel ends properly, not with the appearance of the risen Lord to His disciples, and their belief in Him, but with a confident statement that this mission to the world, undertaken at His command and under His authority, will be the means by which many are saved." Carson summarises Hoskyns' conclusion, writing, "He argues that all three Synoptic Gospels end this way; the Fourth Gospel is consonant with this pattern *only if John 21 is included*." Carson adds, "There is no textual evidence that the book was ever published without John 21... The evidence in favour of an originally integral Gospel incorporating ch 21 seems reasonably firm."

Verse 1

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἐφανερώσεν ἑαυτὸν πάλιν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης τῆς Τιβεριάδος· ἐφανερώσεν δὲ οὕτως.

Μετὰ ταῦτα "establishes sequence but no chronological details. The disciples have left Jerusalem and returned to Galilee ... several days after the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread." Carson.

φανερωω make known, reveal
 ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
 παλιν see 20:21
 θαλασσα, ης f sea
 οὕτως adv. thus, in this way

Verse 2

ἦσαν ὁμοῦ Σίμων Πέτρος καὶ Θωμᾶς ὁ λεγόμενος Δίδυμος καὶ Ναθαναήλ ὁ ἀπὸ Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ οἱ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ ἄλλοι ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ δύο.

ὁμου adv together

This is the only mention of the 'sons of Zebedee' in the Fourth Gospel.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
 δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυοσιν two

Beasley-Murray comments, "So seven disciples have come together, doubtless a symbolical number, representing the whole disciple group, and indeed the whole Body of disciples, the Church."

Verse 3

λέγει αὐτοῖς Σίμων Πέτρος· Ὑπάγω ἀλιεῦν· λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· Ἐρχόμεθα καὶ ἡμεῖς σὺν σοί. ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἐνέβησαν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον, καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ νυκτὶ ἐπίασαν οὐδέν.

ὑπαγω go
 ἀλιεω fish
 ἐνέβησαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἀναβατῶ
 go up, come up, embark
 πλοιον, ου n boat, ship

Barrett says that it is unthinkable that Peter and the other disciples should contemplate a return to their former occupation after the events of Ch 20. Sanders, however, points out that they had to earn a living somehow.

νύξ, νυκτος f night

πιάζω seize, arrest, catch

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing

Some of those who argue that chapter 21 cannot be read as a continuation of the narrative from chapter 20 argue that it presents the disciples in despair after the death of Jesus. Beasley-Murray responds that this chapter should not be read as the *first* announcement of the resurrection of Jesus. He writes, "One should ask first what Peter and company are doing in Galilee: the answer, of course, is given in Mark 14:28 and 16:7: the disciples were told that Jesus would go ahead of them to Galilee and that they would see him there... According to Luke 24:34 Peter has already seen the risen Lord, a report in harmony with the tradition recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:5. The deduction of the Beloved Disciple recorded in v 7 of this chapter implies knowledge of at least *that* disciple that Jesus was risen from the dead; the fact that Peter does not expostulate but leaps into the water to reach him as soon as possible assumes that it was not news to him also. We moderns are extraordinarily unimaginative in our endeavors to understand the thinking of the disciples in a situation that had never existed in the world before. The only thing that they knew about the resurrection of the dead was that it comes at the end of the world; and one place where it may confidently be expected *not* to be revealed was Galilee! The heart of the world was Jerusalem, the navel of the earth, the place where Messiah's throne would be set up, and all nations would flow to it and seek him. The disciples needed to understand before the death of Jesus that his conquest of death would not mean *finis* to history, and they needed to be told that even more urgently after the resurrection of Jesus; for in truth, the end of all things *had* come into history, not as its conclusion, but for its remaking. The new aeon was proving to be different from anything that any Jew, including prophets and apocalyptic seers, had grasped, so it is not surprising that Peter and his friends were finding it difficult to come to terms with what they were experiencing... In the somewhat confused narrative of vv 3–14 we glimpse something of the perplexity of followers of Jesus in the unique period between Easter Sunday and Pentecost."

Verse 4

Πρωῖας δὲ ἤδη γενομένης ἔστη Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὸν αἰγιαλόν· οὐ μέντοι ᾔδεισαν οἱ μαθηταὶ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἔστιν.

πρωῖα, ας f morning (π. δε ἡδη γενομενης as the day was breaking)

ἡδη adv now, already

ἔστη Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἰστημι stand

For εἰς τὸν αἰγιαλόν (read by B c E G H K P S W etc) some MSS have the more 'correct' ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλόν (so κ; A D L M U X etc); the latter is clearly a scribal improvement.

αἰγιαλος, ου m beach, shore

μεντοι but, nevertheless, however

ᾔδεισαν Verb, pluperf act indic, 3 pl οἶδα

know, understand

Barrett says that it is difficult to understand the failure of the disciples to recognise Jesus if they had already seen him twice since his resurrection. Part of the explanation, however, may have been that it was not yet fully light. Beasley-Murray argues that it also "points to the mystery of Jesus in his resurrection state."

Verse 5

λέγει οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Παιδία, μή τι προσφάγιον ἔχετε; ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ· Οὐ.

παιδιον, ου n child

The term can be used much as our 'lads' or 'boys.'

προσφαγιον, ου n fish

A hesitant question, or one expecting a negative answer.

ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply, say

Without Jesus they could accomplish nothing.

Verse 6

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Βάλετε εἰς τὰ δεξιὰ μέρη τοῦ πλοίου τὸ δίκτυον, καὶ εὐρήσετε. ἔβαλον οὖν, καὶ οὐκέτι αὐτὸ ἐλκύσαι ἴσχυον ἀπὸ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ἰχθύων.

βάλετε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl βαλλω throw, throw down

δεξιος, α, ου right

μερος, ους n part

πλοιον, ου n see v.3

δικτυον, ου n fishing net

εὐρήσετε Verb, fut act indic, 2 pl εὕρισκω find

After εὐρήσετε P66 κ ψ vg^{mss} add οἱ εἶπον· δι ὅλης νυκτὸς ἐκοπιάσαμεν καὶ οὐδὲν ἐλάβομεν· ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ σῶ ῥήματι βαλοῦμεν, i.e., 'but they said, We toiled through the whole night and caught nothing, but at your word we shall throw it,' clearly introduced from Luke 5:5.

οὐκέτι adv no longer, no more

ἐλκόσαι Verb, aor act infin ἐλκω draw, drag

"In John (6:44; 12:32) it [ἐλκω] is used of men's being drawn to Christ; this suggests that an allegorical interpretation of the incident may have been intended." Barrett.

ἰσχυον Verb, imperf act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
 ἰσχω be strong, be able, be sufficient
 πληθος, ους n crowd, multitude
 ἰχθυς, υος m fish

Verse 7

λέγει οὖν ὁ μαθητῆς ἐκεῖνος ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ Πέτρῳ· Ὁ κύριός ἐστιν. Σίμων οὖν Πέτρος, ἀκούσας ὅτι ὁ κύριός ἐστιν, τὸν ἐπενδύτην διεζώσατο, ἦν γὰρ γυμνός, καὶ ἔβαλεν ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν·

ἀγαπαω love, show love for
 ἐπενδυτης, ου m outer garment

This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

διεζωσατο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s
 διαζωννυμι wrap around, put on (clothes)

Beasley-Murray comments, "While it is possible to translate τὸν ἐπενδύτην διεζωσατο as 'he put on the outer garment,' i.e., a tunic, the verb διαζωννυμι more properly means 'gird oneself,' i.e., tuck one's clothes in a girdle or belt. Lagrange (525) suggests that Peter, while fishing, was wearing a kind of smock or overall and nothing else (hence 'virtually naked') and that he belted himself so as to be able to swim better, as well as to be more presentable ashore."

γυμνος, η, ον naked, poorly dressed

Beasley-Murray comments on the relationship between the Beloved Disciple and Peter, "The scene is curiously akin to the episode at the empty tomb (20:4–8); if this chapter comes from another than the Evangelist, we are clearly dealing with a Johannine tradition at one with the former narrative and with a writer whose mind is at one with the Evangelist's."

Verse 8

οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι μαθηταὶ τῷ πλοιαρίῳ ἦλθον, οὐ γὰρ ἦσαν μακρὰν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀλλὰ ὡς ἀπὸ πηχῶν διακοσίων, σύροντες τὸ δίκτυον τῶν ἰχθύων.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
 πλοιαριον, ου n boat, small boat

Used synonymously with πλοιον, cf. 6:24.

ἦλθον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3 pl ἐρχομαι
 μακραν far, far off
 γη, γης f earth, land
 πηχυς, εως m cubit

διακοσιοι, αι, α two hundred

I.e. about 100 metres.

συρω drag
 δικτυον, ου n see v.6

Verse 9

Ὡς οὖν ἀπέβησαν εἰς τὴν γῆν βλέπουσιν ἀνθρακίαν κειμένην καὶ ὄψαριον ἐπικείμενον καὶ ἄρτον.

ἀπέβησαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἀναβαινω
 go up, come up

βλεπω see
 ἀνθρακια, ας f charcoal fire
 κειμαι lie, be laid
 ὄψαριον, ου n fish
 ἐπικειμαι lie upon
 ἄρτος, ου m bread

It seems odd that Jesus had fish on the fire before the disciples bring what they had caught (cf. v. 10). However, it hardly warrants the suggestion of Barrett and Sanders that this is evidence of a poorly constructed account from at least two sources. Beasley-Murray also suggests that "vv 9, 12, 13 portray a separate scene, which is here conjoined with the conclusion of the fishing miracle." The picture, rather, is of Jesus with a single fish on the fire then asking the disciples to fetch more so that they can eat together.

Verse 10

λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἐνέγκατε ἀπὸ τῶν ὄψαριῶν ὧν ἐπιάσατε νῦν.

ἐνέγκατε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl φερω
 bring

πιαζω see v.3

Verse 11

ἀνέβη οὖν Σίμων Πέτρος καὶ εἴλκυσεν τὸ δίκτυον εἰς τὴν γῆν μεστὸν ἰχθύων μεγάλων ἑκατὸν πενήκοντα τριῶν· καὶ τοσοῦτων ὄντων οὐκ ἐσχίσθη τὸ δίκτυον.

ἀνέβη Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀναβαινω
 εἴλκυσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐλκω

draw, drag
 μεστος, η, ον full
 μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
 ἑκατον one hundred

πεντηκοντα fifty
 τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three
 τοσουτος, αυτη, ουτον / ουτο correlative adj
 so much; pl so many

ἐσχίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s σχιζω
 split, tear, separate, disunite

The number 153 has intrigued many commentators. Barrett, along with several others, points out that it is a 'triangular' number, i.e. the sum of all the numbers between 1 and 17. 17 itself is the sum of 10 and 7, both numbers signifying completeness or perfection. Hence Barrett suggests that the number is symbolic of the entire Church which is to be drawn to Christ through the ministry of the apostles. The fact that the net was not torn is symbolic of the fact that "the Church remains one, in spite of the number and variety of its members."

It is better to accept that 153 simply represents the number of the fish caught – counted because of their extraordinary number. Carson adds, "Even so, there may be symbolism in the sheer quantity, if not the number itself, since the Evangelist draws attention to it: *but even with so many the net was not torn*. It is hard not to see an allusion to Luke 5:1-11, where the nets were torn. This may suggest that the gospel net will never break, that there is no limit to the number of converts it catches (Bruce ...). If such symbolism is operating, it may owe something to Jesus himself, who elsewhere promised to make his disciples 'fishers of men' (Mk 1:17)."

Verse 12

λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Δεῦτε ἄριστήσατε.
οὐδεὶς δὲ ἐτόλμα τῶν μαθητῶν ἐξετάσαι
αὐτόν· Σὺ τίς εἶ; εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ κύριός ἐστιν.

δευτε adv. come (of command or exhortation)

ἄρισταω eat breakfast, eat a meal

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing

τολμαω dare, be brave

ἐξεταζω ask, enquire

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα
know

Bultmann comments, "Since they have indeed recognized him, the meaning of the question obviously must be, 'Is it *really* you?' This is intended to describe the peculiar feeling that befalls the disciples in the presence of the risen Jesus: it is he, and yet it is not he; it is not he, whom they hitherto have known, and yet it is he! A peculiar wall is erected between him and them. This partition is set aside, as Jesus now distributes bread and fish among the disciples to eat. For even though he, as the risen Lord, does not himself participate in the meal [?], the sense can hardly be other than that table fellowship between the Risen Jesus and the disciples is now established."

Verse 13

ἔρχεται ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ λαμβάνει τὸν ἄρτον καὶ
δίδωσιν αὐτοῖς, καὶ τὸ ὄψαριον ὁμοίως.

ὄψαριον, οὐ n see v.9.

ὁμοίως likewise, in the same way

Barrett and Sanders see eucharistic associations (cf. Lk 24:30f., 35). In this they reflect a similar view to the variant found in D f r¹ (syr^s) which, in place of καὶ δίδωσιν read εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν, an interesting accommodation of the text to the Lord's Supper by one who viewed it as a eucharistic meal; cf. Mark 14:23 par. and John 6:11. For the importance of Jesus eating with his disciples, see Acts 10:40f.

Verse 14

τοῦτο ἤδη τρίτον ἐφανερώθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοῖς
μαθηταῖς ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν.

ἤδη adv now, already

τρίτος, η, ον third

ἐφανερώθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

φανερωω see v.1

ἐγειρω raise

νεκρός, α, ον dead

Barrett says, "Apparently the appearance to Mary Magdalene is not counted (perhaps because she was not a μαθητης); that of 20:19-23 is the first, that of 20:26-9 the second. It is impossible to fit the various resurrection narratives of the other gospels (and of 1 Cor 15) into this scheme." For a contrary view, see John Wenham, *Easter Enigma*.

Verses 15-19

A threefold question and threefold charge to tend the flock corresponding to Peter's threefold denial. Beasley-Murray comments, "The question of Jesus is conditioned by the relationship that had existed between Jesus and Peter during the ministry of Jesus and the peculiar rupture of it at the trial of Jesus, together with Peter's undoubted grief, not to say shock, caused by the crucifixion of Jesus and the guilt that must have haunted him on account of his own behaviour. Peter must have been conscious of the fact that he had forfeited all right to be viewed as a disciple of Jesus, let alone a close associate of his in his ministry, through his repeated disavowal of any connection with him. When one contemplates how Jesus had prepared Peter for responsible leadership among the people of the Kingdom and for the mission to Israel and the nations, this was a profoundly serious failure, which called for a process of re-establishment commensurable with the seriousness of the defection." Cf. 1 Peter 5:2.

Carson comments that Peter's public denial of Jesus demanded a public restoration, hence the setting at the end of the meal. He continues, "Later in the pericope we are probably to think of Peter walking down the beach with Jesus, the beloved disciple not far behind, certainly within earshot (vv. 20-21)."

Verse 15

Ὅτε οὖν ἠρίστησαν λέγει τῷ Σίμωνι Πέτρῳ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾶς με πλεον τούτων; λέγει αὐτῷ· Ναί, κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ· Βόσκει τὰ ἄρνια μου.

ότε conj when

ἄρισταω see v. 12

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

πλειων, πλειον or πλεον more

Barrett prefers to understand the question to mean 'do you love me more than the other disciples do?' rather than '... more than your fishing gear (i.e. your ordinary life)?' Cf. Mk 14:29; Matt 26:33 for Peter's boast.

ναι yes, yes indeed, certainly

οἶδα know, understand

φιλεω love, have deep feeling for

"The usage of these verbs throughout the gospel makes it impossible to doubt that they are synonyms; φιλεῖν does not refer to an inferior kind of love." Barrett. Compare, for instance, 14:23 and 16:27. Moreover, these verses are marked by synonymns, βόσκει = ποιμαίνε, ἄρνια = πρόβατα. similar, though more extensive, arguments are provided by Carson.

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

βοσκω tend, feed

ἄρνιον, ου n lamb, sheep

Cf. 1 Peter 5:2-4.

Verse 16

λέγει αὐτῷ πάλιν δεύτερον· Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾶς με; λέγει αὐτῷ· Ναί, κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ· Ποίμαινε τὰ πρόβατά μου.

πάλιν again, once more

δευτερος, α, ον second

ποιμαινω keep sheep, tend as a shepherd

προβατον, ου n sheep

"The unexpected repetitions of the Lord's question to Peter have the effect of searching him to the depths of his being." Beasley-Murray.

Verse 17

λέγει αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον· Σίμων Ἰωάννου, φιλεῖς με; ἐλυπήθη ὁ Πέτρος ὅτι εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον· Φιλεῖς με; καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Κύριε, πάντα σὺ οἶδας, σὺ γινώσκεις ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Βόσκει τὰ πρόβατά μου.

τριτος, η, ον third

ἐλυπήθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s λυπεω

pain, grieve; pass be sad, be grieved

"Peter was grieved because the question was asked three times, not because φιλεῖν was used." Barrett.

Βόσκει τὰ πρόβατά μου. Beasley-Murray, having outlined contrasting views of Roman Catholic and Protestant concerning the meaning of this phrase, writes, "In 1 Pet 2:25 Jesus is said to be 'the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls'; in context this denotes Jesus as the one who gave his life for the sheep and cares for them in the present. In the hortatory part of the letter (5:2) Peter as 'a fellow elder' (= bishop, pastor) appeals to the elders: 'Shepherd the flock of God that is among you' (ποιμάνετε τὸ ... ποιμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ), so virtually citing the words of the risen Lord to him, 'Shepherd my sheep' (ποιμάνειν τὰ πρόβατά μου). By way of expounding his meaning he adds, 'Watch over it (ἐπισκοποῦντες), not because you have to, but willingly ... not acting as lords over God's people (τῶν κλήρων), but becoming examples to the flock' (1 Pet 5:3). A similar charge by Paul to the elders of Ephesus is recorded in Acts 20:28: 'Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock (ποιμνιον) of which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians (ἐπισκόπους) to shepherd the Church of the Lord' (ποιμάνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ κυρίου). Both passages speak in the same manner as the risen Lord spoke to Peter on restoring him to fellowship and to the service of pastor. The verbs are the same, ποιμαίνω or variants of it; the scope of the ministry is the same – 'my lambs, my sheep ... the flock of God, the Church of the Lord.' There is no formal difference of meaning in the language by which the risen Lord confirmed Peter in his calling to be a shepherd of his sheep from that by which Peter and Paul exhorted the pastor-elders to fulfill their calling as shepherds of the flock of God in 1 Pet 5:1–3 and Acts 20:28. This applies also to the representative nature of the shepherd's office and the authority which it carries." Beasley-Murray argues that there is no hint that this is a role given *exclusively* to Peter.

Verse 18

ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ὅτε ἦς νεώτερος, ἐζώννυες σεαυτὸν καὶ περιεπάτεις ὅπου ἤθελες· ὅταν δὲ γηράσῃς, ἐκτενεῖς τὰς χεῖράς σου, καὶ ἄλλος σε ζώσει καὶ οἴσει ὅπου οὐ θέλεις.

ὅτε conj when
ἦς Verb, imperfect indic, 2 s εἶμι
νεώτερος, α, ον younger, young

νεώτερος frequently loses its comparative sense and simply = 'young man.'

ζώννυμι and ζώννω fasten, fasten one's belt, dress

σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself
περιπατεῶ walk, walk about, live

ὅπου adv. where

ἤθελες Verb, imperf act indic, 2 s θελω
wish, will

ὅταν when

γηράσῃς Verb, aor act subj, 2 s γηρασκω
become old, age

ἐκτενεῖς Verb, fut act indic, 2 s ἐκτεινω
stretch out, extend

χειρ, χειρος f hand

Barrett argues that this refers to crucifixion. Beasley-Murray adds that the order of stretching out the arms and then leading or taking him where *they* will reflects the practice of "the binding of the *patibulum*, the crossbeam, to the outstretched arms of the delinquent, who had then to carry it to the place of crucifixion."

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

For the singular ἄλλος σε ζώσει καὶ οἴσει (B c^{*vid} K x etc) the plural is read by some MSS, ἄλλοι σε ζώσουσιν καὶ οἴσουσιν (so C² MSS of syr and cop), presumably on the assumption that several will engage in the task; yet others substitute either ἀποίσουσιν (x^c; W^{33,565}) or ἀπάγουσιν (D it^d), 'will lead you off' as a criminal.

ζώσει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ζώννυμι

οἴσει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s φερῶ bring,
bear, lead

Sanders argues that there are two points here: the first refers to Peter's old age and helplessness (and perhaps the force is to follow with zeal while he has the opportunity and strength), the second refers to the manner of Peter's death.

Verse 19

τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν σημαίνων ποῖα θανάτῳ δοξάσει τὸν θεόν. καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν λέγει αὐτῷ· Ἀκολουθεῖ μοι.

σημαίνω indicate, make known

ποῖος, α, ον interrog pro. what, of what kind
θανατος, ου m death

Cf. 12:33.

δοξάζω praise, honour, glorify

The death of a faithful disciple brings glory to his master.

ἀκολουθεῶ follow, be a disciple

The demand is to follow Jesus – to follow him in being a faithful shepherd of the sheep and to follow him even in death. Carson writes, "Jesus' concluding words to Peter, *Follow me*, may invite Peter for a private walk along the beach (cf. v. 20). But in the context of this book, they do more: they tie this step of discipleship to Jesus' initial call (1:41-43), challenge Peter to consistent discipleship until the martyrdom he now faces comes due, and implicitly invite every waverer, every reader, to the same steadfast pursuit of the risen Lord. They also anticipate v.21."

Verse 20

Ἐπιστραφεῖς ὁ Πέτρος βλέπει τὸν μαθητὴν ὃν ἡγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀκολουθοῦντα, ὃς καὶ ἀνέπεσεν ἐν τῷ δείπνῳ ἐπὶ τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν· Κύριε, τίς ἐστὶν ὁ παραδιδούς σε;

ἐπιστραφεῖς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
ἐπιστρεφω turn back, turn round, turn
βλεπω see

The beloved disciple is following of his own accord.

ἀκολουθεω follow, accompany, be a
disciple

ἀνέπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀναπιπτω
sit, sit at table, lean

δειπνον, ου n supper, main meal

στήθος, ους n chest, breast

παραδιδούς Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s
παραδιδωμι hand over, deliver up

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

Verse 21

τοῦτον οὖν ἰδὼν ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ·
Κύριε, οὗτος δὲ τί;

ἰδων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὁραω see

οὗτος δὲ τί; an elliptic sentence. The meaning is clear, 'What about *him*?' Beasley-Murray comments, "If Peter's path in life has now been made known to him, it is natural for him to be curious as to what is in store for his colleague."

Verse 22

λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἐὰν αὐτὸν θέλω μένειν ἕως ἔρχομαι, τί πρὸς σέ; σύ μοι ἀκολουθεῖ.

θελω wish, will

μενω remain, stay, abide

ἕως conj until, while

τί πρὸς σέ; 'What has that to do with you?' Cf. 2:4.

What Christ may choose for another disciple is not Peter's concern. His responsibility is to ensure that he is faithful in his own following of Christ.

Beasley-Murray adds, "Is it reasonable to suggest that this presentation of the relations of Peter and the Beloved Disciple, to the Lord and to each other, was made for the benefit of churches which were inclined to exalt one over against the other? The tendency to favour one apostle more than another is seen in the Corinthian correspondence of Paul – an all-too-human tendency, as Paul himself wryly remarked (1 Cor 3:3-4). And that would be the more natural in circles where one apostle was known and loved, and others were known only through secondhand reports. The anonymity of the Beloved Disciple indicates that he was so well known in the churches he served that there was no need to use his proper name, but it is well possible that he was quite unknown in many areas of the Church, whereas Peter was known to all. It was desirable therefore for Christians elsewhere to learn how the famous Peter and the comparatively unknown Beloved Disciple were related. So the author endeavors to show that both men were gifts of the risen Lord to the churches, very different in gifts and calling, but with important tasks to perform for the benefit of all."

Verse 23

ἐξηλθεν οὖν οὗτος ὁ λόγος εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὅτι ὁ μαθητὴς ἐκεῖνος οὐκ ἀποθνήσκει. οὐκ εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι οὐκ ἀποθνήσκει ἀλλ'· Ἐὰν αὐτὸν θέλω μένειν ἕως ἔρχομαι, τί πρὸς σέ;

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death

Barrett writes "It is probable that this disciple, who it was thought would not die, had died. The writer of the present chapter explains carefully that Jesus had made no such prediction; he had simply expressed in the strongest terms that the fate of the disciple, whatever it might be, was no concern of Peter's." Carson, however, suggests that the Beloved disciple was still alive but advancing in years and wished to put paid to rumours concerning him living on till Jesus' return.

Beasley-Murray adds, "What, then, has the author of the epilogue done to counteract the mistaken belief of 'the brothers'? One thing he did not do: he did not state that belief in the promise of the Lord's coming is a mistake. The promise stands, and it must be cherished still. The author contented himself rather with correcting the wording of the statement that had been in circulation, and refrained from any further comment: the Lord said, not, 'I will that he remain ...,' but, 'If I will that he remain.' That is, he announced a possibility of the future, in harmony with the eschatological hope of the entire NT gospels and epistles, in order to etch indelibly on Peter's mind that the future of the Beloved Disciple was not his concern but that of the risen Lord, and of him alone."

τί πρὸς σέ is omitted in \aleph^* 565 etc it^{a e} syr^s, but it is included in \aleph^1 A B C^{*} W Θ and the majority of MSS. The shorter text may be due to the desire of copyists to emphasize the main element in the sentence. While most in the UBS committee wished to retain the phrase, it is put in brackets to show its uncertainty in the text.

Verse 24

Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν.

μαρτυρεῶ bear witness, testify

'These things' could refer to the last paragraph (so Dodd), but more naturally refers to the entire content of the Gospel. The beloved disciple was the author of the Fourth Gospel, or at least caused it to be written – he was its source and authority.

Beasley-Murray comments, "The Fourth Gospel is supremely a book of witness to Jesus, based on the witness borne *by* Jesus, and *to* Jesus by the Paraclete Spirit, who enabled the Beloved Disciple to grasp it and hand it on to the Church."

γράφω write

οἶδα know

The person of the verb may suggest a different author for these final verses (or of the last chapter?) but Beasley-Murray suggests that it is an 'editorial' we. Going further, J Chapman, who believes that the writer is none other than John, the son of Zebedee, the Beloved disciple, paraphrases v. 24, "This person (... in the Chinese sense; 'this person' = I) is the Apostle, who is the witness of these things and is the writer of this book, and I, even I (whose high place among the Apostles has been described in it) know that it is all perfectly accurate." A similar, if more moderately expressed, view is adopted by Carson who cites parallel usage of the first person plural in the Johannine epistles (e.g. 1 Jn 1:2, 4, 5, 6, 7; 3 Jn 12).

ἀληθής, ες true, truthful, honest, genuine
μαρτυρία, ας f testimony, evidence

Verse 25

ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ ἃ ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἅτινα ἐὰν γράφηται καθ' ἓν, οὐδ' αὐτὸν οἶμαι τὸν κόσμον χωρήσειν τὰ γραφόμενα βιβλία.

At various times in Christian history v 25 has been thought to be a marginal note which became incorporated in the text (so in various scholia prior to the eighth century, Westcott, 2:377; Brown, 2:1125). Tischendorf thought that it was originally omitted from Codex Sinaiticus (\aleph) and added by a corrector. Closer examination of the text has shown that the addition was by the original scribe, who corrected himself. Whether his omission had been accidental or due to his using another MS cannot be known. There is, however, insufficient reason for viewing the passage as a later addition to the original text of chap. 21.

πολύς, πολλή, πολυ gen πολλοῦ, ης, ου much, many

ὅστις, ἡτίς, ὅ τι who, which

εἷς, μία, ἐν gen ἑνός, μίας, ἑνός one

καθ' ἓν 'one at a time' cf. Acts 21:19.

οἶμαι suppose, think

χωρεῶ make room for, have room for

βιβλίον, ου n book, scroll

The similarity with 20:30-31 is evident. Barrett argues that this verse is a crude imitation of the former. Carson argues that, having now identified himself, John now concludes by overtly alluding back to 20:30-31. "It is as if John has identified himself (v. 24), but is not content to focus on himself, not even on his veracity. He must close by saying his own work is a minute part of the honours due to the Son."

Beasley-Murray fittingly concludes, "It may be observed that no person on earth can encompass and assimilate all that has been and is being written *about* this Gospel, which is a tribute to the achievement of the Evangelist, and still more to the subject of whom he wrote. The greatness of the revelation of God in the Logos-Son is vaster than the cosmos created through him. But he sent us the Paraclete-Spirit, through whom the Beloved Disciple was given to grasp the revelation in a unique measure. By that same Spirit, and with the aid of testimony of the disciple whom Jesus loved, we may enter more fully into the revelation in the Son, and into the experience of being a disciple whom Jesus loves."