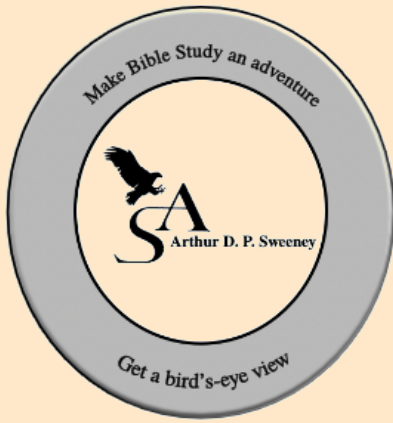




15



John: Come & See; Come & Dine



Fellowship, Food, and feeding

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Introduction

This 15th *Sandwich* paper centres again on the fourth Gospel with another inclusio, that starts and ends with invitations by the Son of God (John 1:39, 21:12). In chapter 1 He invited two of John's disciples to "Come and see," and in chapter 21, He invited seven of His own disciples to "Come and dine".

Come & see: John 1:35-42

35 The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "See, here is the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). 42 He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter) (John 1:35-42).

This bracket of text is separated from the events of the day before (John 1:29), and the day after (1:43). On the previous day, John pointed out *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*. The day after this announcement (1:35), John was standing with two of his disciples, one of those who heard him say, *See, here is the Lamb of God*, was Andrew Simon Peter's brother (1:40). John's 'look' was an imperative, it carried the demand to recognise and understand Who Jesus is as the Lamb of God.

So, Andrew and his unidentified companion followed Jesus. John wanted his disciples to accompany, or travel with Jesus to learn more. What more did they want to understand of *the Lamb of God*? Perhaps they did not understand the singular phrase "the sin of the world" is collective, not individual, racial, not personal. John was referring to the fallen human condition inherited from Adam that affected the whole human race. The Lamb of God imagery of the Hebrew sacrifices took the total mass of human sin as a single, monumental burden, lifted it up, carried it away and destroyed it by the cross.

Jesus sensed that the two men were following Him and asked them *What or who are you looking for?* Was this the first question Jesus asked in His public ministry? If so, the Lord was probing their desires, or demands that drove them. So, their motivation was to know where He was living. They wanted to be with Him, for it was the only place to be in order to understand Him better. The Lord didn't put them off with, 'today is not convenient come back tomorrow', or 'let's sit down on the park bench here and have a brief discussion.' No, He spoke an imperative, a demand like John - *You come and you see*.

And, so they went to where He was staying. It was the tenth hour of the day, roughly 4 p.m by Jewish reckoning. Interestingly, studies of decision fatigue identify late-day cognitive decline, yet Andrew and his friend chose to push through this invisible barrier driven by their pursuit of truth. So, because the tenth hour was a time when many daily activities start to wind down, it may suggest that the disciples stayed with Jesus overnight. A night of fellowship and deep learning.

Moreover, 4:00 p.m aligns with the time of the evening sacrifice at the temple "between the two evenings," (Exodus 29:38-41) commencing about the ninth to tenth hour thus linking Jesus' introduction as the Lamb of God to the rhythms of Jewish worship.

This is one of four places in John's Gospel in which he refers to an exact hour of the day: 1:39 (tenth hour); 4:6 (sixth hour); 4:52 (seventh hour); and 19:14 (sixth hour). In the first two cases the hours describe the time of transformative personal encounters with Jesus, whereas the last two mark decisive salvation moments. Thus, there seems to be a series of deep theological messages behind the expression 'the tenth hour' ([Kubis](#)).

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Finding the lost

Andrew's first priority having stayed with Jesus, and having discovered Him for himself, was to find his brother Simon and tell him about the Messiah. And, when Andrew found Peter, he brought Simon to Jesus (John 1:35-41-42).

So, we get the sequence. John the Baptist pointed Jesus out to Andrew and his companion, but a third party cannot discover Jesus for ourselves. That has to be an individual experience, which it was for these two disciples after following the Lord and having spent some time in His company. Then Andrew was equipped to find Simon and introduce him to Jesus, who then had to discover Jesus for himself. The next day Jesus goes to find Philip (1:43), and the Master and disciples go their own way to do the same work of gathering men and women for Christ Himself.

Come & dine: John 21:12

Feeding His disciples

1 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. 2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." 6 He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

*9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "**Come and dine.**" Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead (John 21:1-14).*

The "after these things" in verse 1 throw us back to previous occasions when the Lord made Himself conspicuous to His disciples in post-resurrection appearances. As this was the third post-resurrection appearance described by John, we are meant to find the theological thread that ties the three together.

Evening appearance 1 - about FEAR

John 20:19-24 describes the appearance. It occurred on the evening that the day the Lord rose, and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. This was a perfectly understandable reaction to the events of the past few days wherein the Jewish leaders took the leading role in pushing for the death their Master. The disciples correctly feared that they would be next.

On cue, Jesus came and stood among them with His reassuring words to assuage their fear - "Peace to you." Jesus when entering the room may well have passed through the closed doors. Or, the doors may have opened of their own accord before him, or that he simply appeared in the middle of the room. Whatever, closed doors were no barrier to the resurrected Lord. He then showed His wounds, which made the disciples rejoice and assuaged their fear again with - "Peace to you." The antidote to their fear was His imparting to them His peace.

Then the Lord put them to work, and not to mope around wallowing in fear. In the power of the Holy Spirit they were to proclaim forgiveness of sins on the basis of repentance and faith, which they did (Acts 2:38, 10:43).

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Evening appearance 2 - about FAITH

Thomas was not with the disciples when the Lord appeared on resurrection day, and when told that they had seen Him, Thomas refused to believe unless he saw with his own eyes and touched with his own hands.

A week later the disciples were again in the house, presumably it was evening, and Thomas was with them. Again, the doors were shut and Jesus came and stood among them with the same words of peace.

Thomas then became the direct object of the Lord's concern, challenging the seeing and touching actions that Thomas had insisted on. So, Jesus demanded, using the imperative, "*You bring your pointing finger here and see my hands and you bring your hand and thrust it in my side*", where, of course, the Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side with his lance.

Using the imperative again, Jesus demanded "*and do not become unsteadfast (apistos) but steadfast (pistos)*." *Pistos* meaning steadfast in the sense of trustworthy or dependable. This amazing word is often translated with "believe" but that word has in our modern time assumed a religious and compliant meaning that the Greek word certainly does not possess.

Rather it describes a solid foundation, something that can be confidently counted on and built upon, and is as such part of the name of Christ as He appears in the form of the white horseman (Revelation 19:11), as well as a quality of the saved multitudes (Revelation 17:14), and is applied to trustworthy or dependable people (1 Corinthians 7:25, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 1:7, 4:9, 1 Timothy 1:12, 1 Peter 5:12, Revelation 2:13).

On the other hand, (*apistos*) means untrusting, suspicious or willfully stupid, willfully deceptive or cheating. Someone who is *apistos* is both doubting, unsolid and de-solidifying, both scared and fear-spreading ([Abarim Publications](#)). This hit Thomas very hard, and in response exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? *Blessed (makarios) are those not seeing and yet believing* (John 20:26-29). Makarios means safe and secure.

Morning appearance 3 - about FOOD

This meeting with the disciples was the third mentioned by John (21:14). But, why does John call it the Sea of Tiberias here? It was so named after the nearby Roman city on the western shore, which was named after the Emperor Tiberius. Is it possible that John wrote his Gospel for a non-Jewish audience throughout the Roman Empire where the political name "Tiberias" was well-known. This possibility syncs with John explaining Jewish customs, and the meaning of Aramaic words. If his audience was Jewish, there would be no need for frequent explanations of things Jewish.

Seven of the 11 disciples are mentioned as being present when the Lord appeared just after daybreak. Peter was the leader and encouraged his colleagues to accompany him on a night fishing trip, but they caught nothing. John makes no comment about the desirability of the disciples' action. Today, people offer numerous opinions. Some see the fishing expedition as a retreat from their calling to fish for men because of discouragement from recent events, so returning to a familiar, comforting trade was a natural human response to stress and uncertainty. Alternatively, these men needed to earn a living while waiting for Jesus' next instructions in Galilee.

Was their all-night failure to catch anything a lesson that efforts driven purely by human independence—even at their professional trade—were empty until guided by Jesus. Rather than rebuking them, Jesus showed them where to net a miraculous catch of 153 great fish compared with their zero catch. Why 153? A catch of 153 large fish fits observed ranges of commercial hauls documented today. Moreover, Jerome (4C AD) cites the Greco-Roman naturalist Oppian, who catalogued 153 known species of fish ([biblehub.com](#)).

When Jesus invited His disciples to "Come and dine", He fed them from a complete variety of fish food available. From this experience, He was now about to teach these disciples a lesson about feeding His people.

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Feeding His lambs & sheep

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "**Feed my lambs.**"

16 A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "**Tend my sheep.**"

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "**Feed my sheep.**"

18 Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." 19 (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

20 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" 23 So the rumour spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"

24 This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. 25 But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written (John 21:15-25).

Jesus fed His disciples, now they must feed His sheep. See the connection? As a Bible teacher you must first be fed from the Lord's hand before you can feed the people of God. Moreover, just as the Lord fed His men with a full variety of food, so Bible teachers must feed God's people from the complete array of biblical food. Paul is the example who declared the whole counsel (*boule*) of God to the Ephesians (Acts 20:27).

Boule describes a mind like a well-ordered house. A man with a well-ordered mind is not ill-advised, or thoughtless in his preaching. Paul's preaching involved the whole, the totality of God's word showing its oneness or unity. Not the micro preaching that we are subject to today that preaches from a verse here and one from there, or a chapter from here and one from there, or one topic this week and another one next week. Paul taught the Bible in macro, the whole story line of the Scriptures.

Many teachers that I have listened to over eight decades were micro specialists. They taught only a limited range. For example, some specialised in the tabernacle, priesthood and offerings of Israel, others just the church, others preached only the narrative stories of the Old Testament, and many served up an incoherent smorgasbord from everywhere. None of this fits with the Lord's example of feeding.

So what might an outline of the whole Bible look like from which to draw coherent, well-ordered messages? See the diagramme on the next page.

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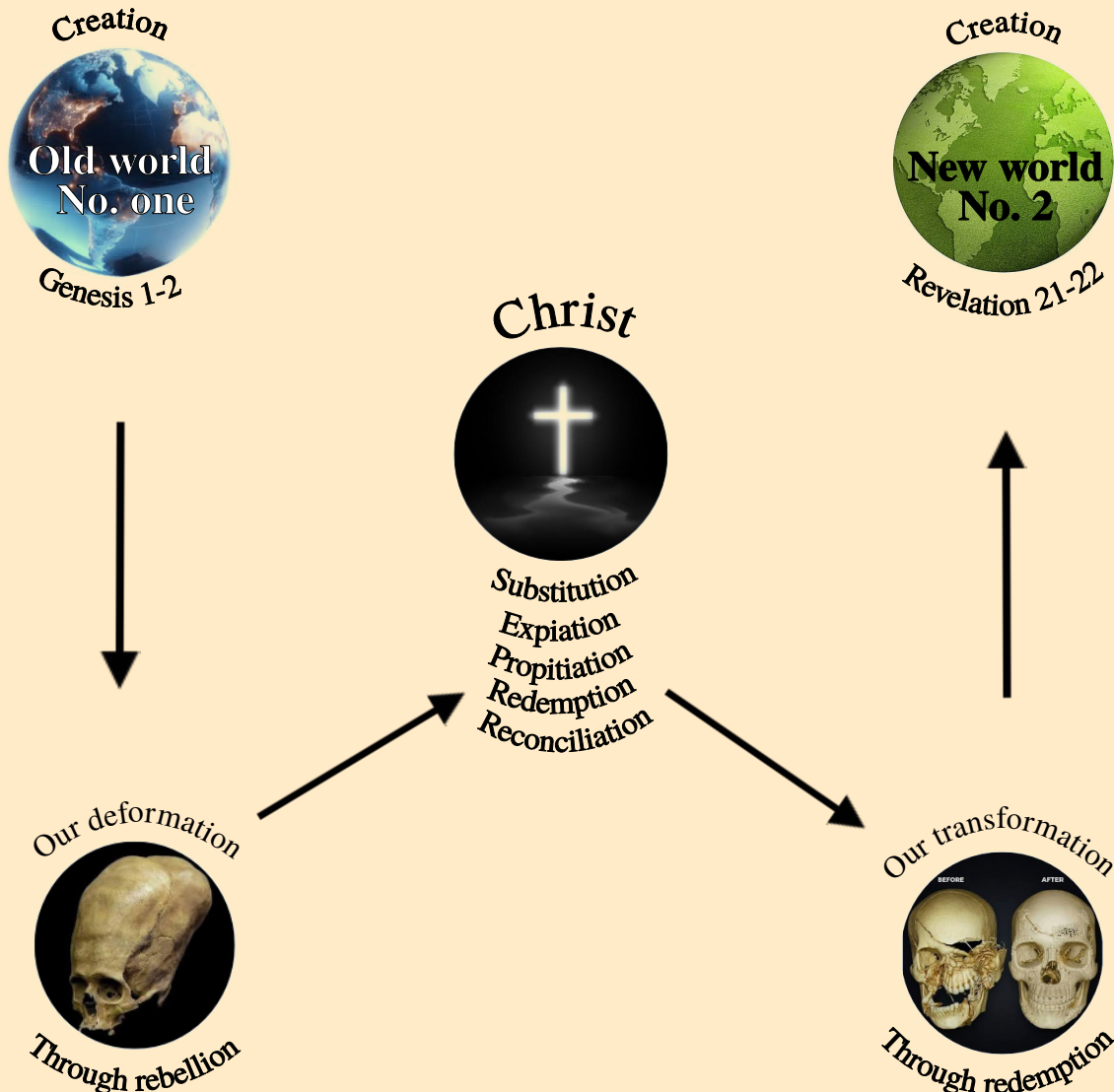
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This is what the whole Bible looks like.



Feeding His lambs & sheep continued

After feeding His disciples, the Lord addressed Peter particularly. He led the group fishing, now he must show leadership in feeding God's people. So, Jesus instructs Him three times; *"Feed my lambs," "Tend my sheep," "Feed my sheep."* First the lambs, then the sheep.

The lambs (*arnion*), little or very young, quite possibly the cutest and least assertive creature in the agrarian world, also emphasising the aloneness of the lamb in question ([Abarim Publications](#)). In symbol, these are new believers often neglected in the Bible teaching of churches, but for the Lord, they were His priority, and He employed the imperative, a demand 'you put out my little lambs to graze'.

And then, another imperative for the sheep. 'You shepherd my sheep'. A shepherd is not so much someone who exerts his will on a subdued herd but rather someone who understands which parts the elements of a herd play in the greater herd-dynamics, creating order out of chaos, by aligning the natural inclinations of individuals within a synthetic whole that none of the individuals would have been able to bring about but which is so attractive that the individuals willingly participate once it has been established. Finally, another imperative for the sheep. 'You put out my sheep to graze'. The older, mature sheep need both managing, organising and feeding as much as the lambs.

Three times the Lord pressed Peter about his love for the Master. For the Lord, 'love' was (*agapao*) the gradual process of approach and merger of two parties, like a zipper that closes or DNA that duplicates. The best Peter could do was express his love by (*phileo*), which was emotional affection. However, the extent of Peter's love is measured by how well he feeds the Lord's new and older believers ([Abarim Publications](#)).

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Feeding His lambs & sheep continued

So, did Peter become a good shepherd? The following letter that he wrote provides the answer:

*So as your fellow **elder** and a witness of Christ's sufferings and as one who shares in the glory that will be revealed, I urge the elders among you: 2 You **shepherd** the little flock of God, closely **overseeing**, not forcibly but willingly, not for shameful profit but with fierce will (1 Peter 5:1-2).*

Note the three labels for the one man; elder, shepherd, and overseer. The elder (*presbuteros*), means being old, or being pre-eminent, or else being an ambassador. Being old denotes maturity, while being an ambassador means speaking on behalf of Jesus Christ. We have already considered what a shepherd does, and the Latin word pastor means "shepherd". Overseeing (*episkopeo*), from which we get 'episcopalian' in English, describes an active role of caring for others, guarding them, or watching out for their spiritual well-being.

Churches often separate elders from pastors but that's not biblical. Peter as well Paul (Acts (20:17, 28) both taught that they were the same man, but expressing different functions. Elders as ambassadors speak the word of God to the people of God. Shepherds (pastors) feed and organise the flock, while overseers guard and care for them.

Conclusion

This second 'sandwich' ebook of John examined the two invitations issued by Jesus, one at the start and one at the end of His public ministry. They were not 'take it or leave it' invitations. No, they were insistent, imperative invitations. *Come and see* demanded John's two disciples to stay where He lived for **fellowship**, and understanding of His role as *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*.

His second invitation to His own disciples, *Come and dine*, likewise imperative, taught them about the importance of **food**. Firstly, to feed themselves from His table spread with all the variety at His disposal, and then feed their congregations from the word of God.

So, fellowship with Him, feeding from Him, feeding others, that's the divine order.

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