



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty of Theology

The Pericopes of the Miraculous Catch of Fish in Luke 5 and John 21: Contrast and Functions

Andrew Farrugia

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology.**

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Student's Code: 264696M

Student's Name & Surname: Andrew Farrugia

Course: Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology

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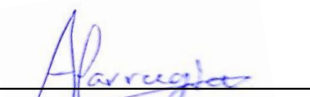
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Abstract

The episode of the miraculous catch of fish is narrated in Luke 5: 1-11 and John 21: 1-14. Luke presents this episode at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry and combines it with Simon Peter's call which ends up with an invitation for Peter to be 'a fisherman of men.' On the other hand, John concludes his gospel narrative with another edition of the story which is presented as one of the appearances of the Risen Lord.

The different placing of the story in these two gospels shows that Luke and John had varied aims for narrating this episode which manifests common elements in both gospels. The aim of this dissertation is to present the contrasts between Luke's and John's edition of this episode and to highlight the underlying possible reasons why this episode was included in the narrative of both evangelists.

**To my parents, Tony and Jane,
who have passed on to me the gift of faith in Jesus Christ.**

To my five brothers and three sisters for their support.

**To Monica, a very special person in my life
who has stood by me all the way.**

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Introduction

For a long time, the episode of the miraculous catch of fish, which is narrated in both Luke's and John's Gospel, has been the cause for debate among scholars. Whilst it is true that there are a significant number of stories that are shared by the Evangelists in their gospel writing, with slight editions and redactions, however, a growing body of biblical literature shows how the episode of the miraculous catch of fish seems to have stirred the minds of scholars in their attempt to see the link, if any, between the two narratives. In fact, upon further study of the two narratives in both Luke's and John's editions, one could say that whether directly or indirectly, the two authors had different objectives for placing this episode in their respective Gospel. This assumption is derived from the fact that Luke's and John's editions are structured differently, not only from within the text but also in relation to their whole respective Gospel.

The episode of the miraculous catch of fish in Luke's edition is preceded by some accounts which describe the beginning of Jesus' ministry. In Luke 4:16-30, Jesus preaches in the synagogue of Nazareth by referring to the book of the prophet Isaiah. Here, the people of Nazareth refuse to accept Jesus and His teachings. In the same chapter, Luke recounts the healing of the man with a malevolent spirit and a reference to Simon's mother, as well as the many other outcasts of the city.¹ Luke seems to make a Christological emphasis on the 'Son of God' and 'Messiah' claims as affirmed by the spirits. Prior to the miraculous catch of fish, Luke recounts how Jesus preached the Kingdom of God in all other places.

Luke 5 then commences with the episode of the miraculous catch of fish and the calling of Simon Peter and the other companions who left everything to follow Jesus. This chapter of Luke's Gospel follows with the healing narrative of the leper, the forgiveness of sins and the healing of the paralytic, the call of Levi the tax collector, and Jesus' dining with the sinners. Luke ends this chapter with Jesus' response to the question addressed to him about fasting.

In Lk 5:1-11, one cannot be left untouched with the way Luke narrates the miraculous catch of fish, somehow carefully integrated with the calling of Simon Peter to "fish for people."² In this account, which took place by the Lake of Gennesaret, Luke presents Jesus standing among a crowd of people, which continued to increase in number

¹ Simon is mentioned for the very first time in the Gospel of Luke by the healing of his wife's mother (Lk 4:38-39).

² Luke 5:10

as he spoke. They carefully listened to him teaching them the Word of God. Not far away were two boats belonging to fishermen who were washing their nets. Eventually, Jesus got into one of these boats which belonged to Simon the fisherman. Once he had finished preaching, Jesus asked Simon to let down the nets into the deep water to catch fish. Obeying Jesus' request, Simon and his fishing partners were astonished to see a large number of fish caught in the nets, which tore under the large weight of the fish. When the other companions were called for help, they filled their own boats with so much fish that the boats started to sink.

Luke recounts how Simon Peter, aware of his sinful nature, was so touched by this miracle that he asked the Lord to stay away from him. Jesus, however, encouraged him and comforted him by saying that he will become a 'fisherman for men.'³

The episode of the miraculous catch of fish is also found towards the very end of John's Gospel (Jn 21:1-14), that is, in what is often referred to as the epilogue.⁴ Just as Luke dedicates parts of his Gospel to Jesus' ministry and the call of discipleship, John also seems to present the earthly life of Jesus in The Book of Signs, that is, from Jn 1:19 to Jn 12:50. This is followed by The Book of Glory in Jn 13:1 up to Jn 20:31, wherein the Johannine theology features Jesus' love and self-giving as culminating in the Son of God being glorified on the cross. In fact, an important aspect in Johannine theology is the faithful belief in Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God.⁵ Towards the end of this part in the Gospel it describes how, on various occasions after he had been crucified and buried, the Risen Christ appeared before his disciples.

Just before the episode of the miraculous catch of fish is narrated, Jn 20:31 concludes with the words "that by believing you may have life in his name" and therefore, one expects that the Gospel has come to its concluding part. Despite this wording used

³ Ibid.

⁴ From the Greek word *epilogos*, the last section of the Gospel compiles everything in one last section. Many scholars seem to favour the idea of reserving chapter 21 as a later addition, possibly by the same author, being an *amanuensis* or perhaps by a later redactor. This is for the very fact since chapter 20 is seen by many scholars as the excellent climax of the Gospel. "Everything else is necessarily anticlimactic." See also D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Apollos, 1991), 666. On the other hand, scholars such as Raymond Brown accepts chapter 21 as it stands now since it gives balance to the prologue found in the beginning verses of the first chapter. See also Raymond E Brown, *The Gospel According to John 13-21. Volume 29A* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1970), 1079, and Jeanene Reese, "John 21 as Epilogue: An End and Beginning," *Leaven*, vol. 14, n. 7 (2006): 1-2, <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol14/iss1/7/>. Accessed 14.2.2020

⁵ Jn 20:29: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

towards the end of The Book of Glory, it seems that there is something more to read and know about Jesus' post-resurrection appearances and his disciples. In fact, in Jn 21, it is placed after a seemingly good conclusion to the Gospel (Jn 20:31). This has sparked off a long theological debate among Biblical scholars. Jn 21 presents two main narratives, namely Jesus' post-resurrection appearance to the disciples alongside the miraculous catch of fish, followed by Jesus' questioning to Peter.

These differences between the two episodes with their varied approaches, inspired this study which will explore whether there are different pericopes within the two narratives. The aim of this dissertation is to present the contrasts between Luke's and John's edition of the episode of the miraculous catch of fish, as found in both narratives. Both Luke's and John's edition will be examined separately, and their aims and theological motifs presented after a brief exegetical analysis. This is the purpose of Chapter 1 for Lk 5:1-11 wherein this narrative will be studied in the context of Luke's portrayal of Jesus' ministry. This chapter will also present the pertinent Lucan theology that features throughout this episode after a brief description of the elements and features that are found in this narrative. Luke's theological framework within this narrative seems to point out not only to Christology but also soteriology, missiology and discipleship. Finally, Chapter 1 will finish with an account of Lukan motifs that are appropriate to his narrative.

Chapter 2 will present an analysis of John's edition of the miraculous catch of fish as narrated in Jn 21:1-14. This chapter will elaborate John's episode within the whole gospel. After pointing out the two different approaches to John's Gospel with respect to sources, this chapter will identify the key elements, features and themes that stand out in John's episode. An exegetical analysis of this episode will finally lead to a conclusion of this chapter with an account on the Johannine motifs and functions in Jn 21:1-14.

This dissertation will conclude with a comparison of both episodes in order to highlight any similarities and contrasts between the two texts. This study will also present the long-debated argument on the question of historicity and sources that are related to either narratives. In doing so, this dissertation will attempt to explore the theological relationship between the two episodes and to propose any likely objectives for which these narratives were written. These findings will be summarised in the Conclusion.

Chapter 1:

The Miraculous Catch of Fish in

Luke 5:1-11

1.1 The Miraculous Catch of Fish in Jesus' Ministry

Luke presents his narrative through various steps to portray Jesus' ministry and what it entails. Luke styles the wording of this narrative through rich symbolism and a theology that suits the community to which he is writing. Nolland argues that even by just considering Luke 5 and parts of Luke 6, one will notice how these two chapters are pivotal to understand Jesus' ministry within the Lucan perspective.

Right till the end of Chapter 4, Luke depicts Jesus as engaging and interacting with the Jewish people, while at the same time, He prepares for the climax of his ministry, namely his death on the cross. Green points out that after reading Lk 4, Luke seems to recount that Jesus was going to "*preach in the synagogues*" (4:44). However, in Lk 5, Luke starts with Jesus' preaching in an everyday situation by the lake. Here, Luke emphasises the importance of the immediate conversion in the preaching of Jesus that cannot be prolonged any further.

Episodes of 'interaction' with the Jews include the various parable teachings, healings and miracles.¹ Luke's way of recounting Jesus' miracles often serve to conclude in a way of praising God.² This is particularly shown in the miraculous catch of fish whereby Peter ends up praising Jesus as the Lord. A similar account is narrated in Matthew and Mark, both leading to the parable of the farmer who sows the seeds.³ Whilst everyone is called to hear the Word, few are chosen for the Kingdom of God. The notion of the 'crowd' is intentionally included by Luke as in the preceding chapter, he already mentions that Jesus' listeners were amazed by the miracles and that his name was becoming known across the region.⁴

1.2 Parallel Texts to Luke 5:1-11

Many scholars have debated the origins of the miraculous catch of fish narrated in Luke 5:1-11, taking into consideration its resemblance to other texts. Its first three verses can be paralleled with Mark 4:1-2, whilst verses 3 to 9 stand in parallel with John 21:1-11. Finally, the last two verses (Lk 5:10-11) seem to be in parallel with Mark again

¹ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke: The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997), 227.

² Walter L. Liefeld, *Luke, The Expositors's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984), 812.

³ See also Mt 13:1-2, and Mk 4:11

⁴ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 231. See also Lk 4:37.

(Mark 1:16-20).⁵ It is evident that right after this narrative of the miraculous catch of fish, Luke seems to follow Mark's order all throughout.⁶

Considering the fact that Luke's Gospel is one of the three Synoptic Gospels, one might also ponder on the narrative's relation to Mark's and Matthew's Gospel. In fact, the only significant link between Luke's Gospel and the other Synoptics is the reference to the lake where Jesus met the people.⁷ The narrative by Luke is also distinct from that of Mark and Matthew in that Luke's description is "structured differently."⁸

1.2.1 Parallel Texts in Luke 5:1-3 and Mark 4:1-2

In these parallel texts, there are no significant implications in the similar wording and style. The parable of the sower in Mark's account has a similar introduction to the narrative by Luke. In both accounts, we read that Jesus was teaching besides the lake and the increasingly gathering crowd was pushing themselves to hear Him. Then, the Evangelists refer to the boat in the water in which Jesus sits to teach the gathered crowd. Both Luke and Mark write that the crowd listened to Jesus from the shore. While there are similarities, Luke's account is more elaborate in its detail and also includes the character of Simon, the owner of the boat.

1.2.2 Parallel Texts in Luke 5:3-9 and John 21:1-11

More significant than the first parallel is the miraculous catch account by John. The long-debated question is whether these two narratives refer to two different episodes, or else two elaborate versions of the same account. In this regard, the contrasts and similarities between these two narrations will be the point of study in the third chapter.

⁵ Robert H. Stein, *Luke: The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, ed. David S. Dockery, vol. 24 (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1992), 167.

⁶ Lk 5:12-16 (Mk 1:40—45); Lk 5:17-26 (Mk 2:1-12); Lk 5:27-32 (Mk 2:13-17); Lk 5:33-39 (Mk 2:18-22); Lk 6:1-5 (Mk 2:23-28); Lk 6:6-11 (Mk 3:1-6); Lk 6:12-16 (Mk 3:13-19); Lk 6:17-19 (Mk 3:7-12). As referred in Stein, *Luke*, 168.

⁷ Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke: The New International Commentary on The New Testament*, ed. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishers, 1988) 183.

⁸ J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Ἦσαν γὰρ ἀλιεῖς (Mk. I 16): Jesus's Fishermen and the Parable of the Net," *Novum Testamentum* 22, no. 2 (1980): 121, DOI:10.2307/1560785. Accessed 01.10.2019.

1.2.3 Parallel Texts in Luke 5:10-11 and Mark 1:16-20

In these two narrations, there are noticeable parallels between Luke's and Mark's descriptions. Both Evangelists refer to the three characters: Simon, James and John. Moreover, both Luke and Mark refer to Jesus' calling of 'catching people.'⁹ In both narrations, the disciples leave everything and follow Jesus. One may therefore plausibly assume that by considering the last two verses of the miraculous narrative, Luke edited this story into his own theology from Mark 1:16-20.¹⁰

1.3 Salient Elements / Features Attributable to Luke

Luke pays great attention to a number of characters, elements and features which are present in this narrative. Noticeable elements include the crowd, the fishermen as well as John and James, sons of Zebedee. A unique feature that is presented in this narrative is the way Luke portrays Jesus' way of teaching, that is, first by being on the shore and then by sitting on a boat, not far away from the crowd. Accordingly, Luke makes sure that the public context where Jesus is teaching is evident throughout his writing. However, he is also sure to move the action to a closer context, which in this case is among the circle of fishermen. Luke also speaks of another feature which is the tearing of the nets. He even shows Jesus encouraging his disciples to gather followers to his teachings, even though Peter acknowledges his sinfulness.

Another feature which Luke includes is a description of the disciples' responses to Jesus' call to service. Luke also highlights the importance of their response to the call by reflecting on Peter's response and comparing to how Mary responded to her call resulting in her self-giving to God (1:34, 38).¹¹ Luke is keen to show how Peter's mission will at a later stage, involve the intermediary action and figure of Jesus, rather than just the human effort. Eventually, this element will be developed further in Luke's second volume, which is the Acts of the Apostles, with the added aspect of its relation to the Church.

⁹ Luke 5:10 and Mark 1:17

¹⁰ Stein, *Luke*, 167.

¹¹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 232. This is then confirmed in Peter's address to Jesus by calling Him (Επιστάτα) "master," giving away his possessions and already showing a clue of following Jesus.

Another element in Luke's account is the seemingly illogical instructions given by Jesus to Simon and his companions.¹² After they had "worked all night" without success, Jesus asks them to throw the nets into the sea again. Bivin argues that in those times, the only way the fishermen of Capernaum could fish was by using a trammel fishing net. This net could only be used during the night since during the day, fish would be aware of the netting and eventually escape.¹³ Therefore, technically speaking, the catch of fish which was carried out during the day, was more difficult to achieve.

1.4 Luke's Theological Framework

Throughout Luke's narrative, one can notice four pertinent themes upon which Luke builds a solid framework in order to present his own theology. The emergent theological framework in Luke 5 serves Luke to highlight first and foremost the Christological nature of Jesus. In addition, it is clear that within this narrative, Luke also points to the divine soteriological action and the call to discipleship. A final aspect of Luke's framework within this narrative is his perspective of what mission entails after he has laid the grounds with the former theological insights.

1.4.1 Christology

The Gospel of Luke contains truths about the historical and divine Jesus. Luke 5:1-11 also reveals important truths regarding Jesus in that He is both fully human and fully divine. Jesus spoke with the people and in turn, they sought his teachings. However, Luke goes beyond the historical Jesus to reveal his Divine nature. In this account, Luke manages to prove five divine attributes of Jesus as follows:

Jesus as the Source of Truth,

Jesus as Omniscient

Jesus as Omnipotent,

Jesus as Merciful and

Jesus as Holy.¹⁴

¹² Ibid., 232.

¹³ David Bivin, "The Miraculous Catch: Reflections on the Research of Mendel Nun," *Jerusalem Perspective: Exploring the Jewish Background to the Life and Words of Jesus* 5, no. 2 (March/ April 1992): 7.

¹⁴ John MacArthur, *Luke 1-5, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 301.

These five divine attributes are described further in the following sub-sections.

1.4.1.1 Jesus as the Source of Truth in Luke 5:1-3

Luke depicts the listeners of Jesus as a crowd that was becoming even more numerous. The way Luke writes about their longing to listen the Word of God shows that they recognized Jesus to be unique and a source of truth (Lk 5:1). The language used by Luke indicates that the people were listening to Jesus' word as coming from God. As people started pushing, Jesus stepped on a boat. The fishermen were not in their boats but were washing their nets to prepare for a next catch during the night. Eventually, Jesus sat down, as rabbis used to do while teaching and preached to the crowd from a short distance away.¹⁵

1.4.1.2 Jesus as Omniscient in Luke 5:4-6a

The narrative of this miracle could be evaluated in terms of God's character, particularly in light of His omniscient nature and prior knowledge.¹⁶ Thus, Jesus stands in contrary to Simon and his companions. The latter were professional fishermen who knew that it was almost impossible to catch any fish under those circumstances. On the command of Jesus "to let down one's nets," Peter shows a hint of a sceptical attitude at first and not that of total obedience.

In these short verses, Luke is keen to show how Jesus, although a carpenter, is also the Son of God and therefore, he knows everything.¹⁷ Simon, being a fisherman by profession, is requested to "put out into the deep water" to let down the nets for a catch of fish (Lk 5:4). Luke's way of showing that Jesus is omniscient can also be seen in Simon's reply to Jesus, referring to Him as "Master," a title which is given to someone in authority, yet, not necessarily divine.¹⁸

1.4.1.3 Jesus as Omnipotent in Luke 5:6-7

Jesus is also presented by Luke as the omnipotent being who is the cause behind the miraculous catch of fish. In these two verses, Luke's way of expressing the quantity of fish caught, without a possible explanation in terms, clearly points to Jesus' divine

¹⁵ Ibid., 303.

¹⁶ Stein, *Luke*, 170.

¹⁷ See also Heb. 4:13: "There is no creature hidden from His sight."

¹⁸ MacArthur, *Luke 1-5*, 305. See also Stein, *Luke*, 169, and Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 88. In his commentary, Johnson claims that this term is usually reserved to the disciples and those who need help.

nature and His omnipotent aspect of his being. Luke’s details in this narrative, such as the nets almost tearing, the call for others’ help and the description of the boats almost sinking due to the huge catch of fish, all point to Jesus as the Lord, who had performed this miracle with divine power.¹⁹

1.4.1.4 Jesus as Holy in Luke 5:8-10a

Witnessing the miraculous act by the Holy One, Simon Peter becomes aware that he is in the presence of the One who knows everything, even his personal life. Luke portrays Simon Peter acknowledging Jesus as the “Lord.” He no longer he addresses him as the “Master” (*epistatēs*), but goes further calling him *Kyrios*, “the Lord.” Being a devoutly Jewish man, Simon knows that only God is to be worshipped. In front of his mother-in-law’s healing, the other healings and exorcisms, and of course, the recent miraculous catch of fish, Peter throws himself in front of Jesus in worship. The theme of repentance is evident in other Lucan passages, such as that of the tax collector who was praying “God, have mercy on me, sinner” (Luke 18:13). Luke refers to the sons of Zebedee who were also amazed by the catch of fish and bowed before Christ in worship. These three characters would eventually witness Christ’s transfiguration, also (Matt. 17:1-6).²⁰

1.4.1.5 Jesus as Merciful in Luke 5:10b-11

In the concluding lines of this narrative, Luke depicts Jesus as trying to draw Peter closer to Him. Not only does Jesus give his word of encouragement, but he also calls Peter to “catch men” (*zōgreō*) – meaning to capture alive. Just as Peter caught fish by killing them, he would also ‘catch men’ but from now on, to give them life. To this permanent call of discipleship, the fishermen also left everything and followed Jesus.²¹

1.4.2 Soteriology

Analysing Lk 5 on its own might prove to be futile in trying to understand Luke’s theology within the literary text. On further scrutiny, the narrative seems to also give a hint of God’s saving action. Luke refers to the book of Ezekiel and therefore, it could be

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 307, 308.

²¹ Ibid., 308.

that Jesus followed a Midrashim tradition that was appropriate for him.²² It also points to the Judaic tradition and its influence on Jesus' discourse and its symbolism which refers to words such as 'fish' or 'fishermen'.²³

The image of the fish portrays the disciples awaiting God's grace.²⁴ The fishermen, on the other hand, are God's servants who are sent to proclaim the Kerygma, that is, Jesus Christ is the Risen Lord.²⁵ Through this perspective, fishing and fishermen are understood as sort of a catechetical agency aimed to transform "the fish" at the Banquet to be diners.²⁶ Such a theological outlook is part of Luke's Great Reversal, whereby sinners are given a new place in the Kingdom of God and whereby conversion is offered to any individual.

In Luke, the Great Reversal is also expressed in the triumph of the Divine power over human weaknesses, as evident in the passages which recount Jesus' healing and power over the spirits.²⁷ In fact, a major motive of the Incarnation for Luke is that Jesus came particularly for the sinful people and the 'sick'.²⁸

While there are more references which point to the notion of fish and fishermen, one which stands out is the idea of a symbolic reassurance of immortality. It seems that the image of the fish is interwoven in Luke's theology of the call. The miraculous act includes the fishing aspect as symbolic of immortality, and therefore, following Jesus becomes a call for immortality in light of the Kingdom of God.

²² Derrett, "Jesus's Fishermen and the Parable of the Net," 108.

²³ Ibid., 109. In the Jewish thought, the symbol of a fish signifies the soul that is expecting salvation. Therefore, such a symbolic image represents the weakness of the human person before God (Heb 1: 14-16) On the other hand, the fishermen holding nets symbolizes those who are delivering the 'fish' to be saved. Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996), 340.

²⁴ Such a symbolism is represented furthermore by the early Christians in the catacombs, where they used dolphins and other figures to represent the human soul emerging and joining with joy with that of Christ.

²⁵ Derrett, "Jesus's Fishermen and the Parable of the Net," 109. Considering this explanation, the miraculous catch, Peter seems to be 'fished by Christ' rather than being a fisherman.

²⁶ Ibid., A clarification which provides a new light in approach of the Lucan theology

²⁷ The Great Reversal is a way of showing that by God, the impossible is made possible or better said, "those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last" (Lk13; 30). Although it is found exclusively in his first chapter in the Magnificat, Luke uses the Great reversal throughout his Gospel and Acts. See also Stein, *Luke*, 49-50., and Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*. Sacra Pagina Series, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 3 (Minnesota, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 22.

²⁸ In the Greek text, *ἁμαρτωλός* (*hamartolos*), "sinner" is one of Luke's characteristic words to show the necessity of man to repent and then receive the saving grace of Christ. For further reading, Liefeld, *Luke*, 877.

1.4.3 Discipleship

After a brief exposition of what Jesus' mission and identity entails in the previous chapters of the Gospel, Luke embarks on the nature of the response to Jesus' preaching and calling.²⁹ As Simon had already been introduced in the previous chapter and since Luke knows that Simon would eventually lead the apostles, the evangelist chooses the calling of the disciples as the subsequent narrative to express this response.³⁰ The narrative in Luke 5:1-11 seems to serve Luke as an important introductory paradigm for what will take place in Luke 5:12-16:16.

Luke seems to emphasise the notion of response or 'readiness' for the call of God in one's life. As with the calling of the disciples, Jesus' choice seems to be one of a kind with regards to their social background. Therefore, it is not only about the disciples' responses but also the type of persons He associates himself with. For instance, Peter, although a sinner, responded positively to His call and was given a great mission in God's Kingdom. When Jesus noticed two different boats, he chose one of them; in particular "the one belonging to Simon."³¹ As soon as Jesus sees his boat, it was empty, for they were "washing their nets."³²

In fact, Luke also places great emphasis on the notion of leaving the boat and the nets. Leaving one's nets is a tough decision which shows that one is willing to follow Christ. Peter's confession of being a sinner and not fit for God's glory could be placed in parallel to the prophets who also confessed their unworthiness before the glory of God.³³ The confession of Peter being a sinner – *hamartolos* - is further presented throughout Luke's Gospel by showing the kind of people who in light of God's revelation eventually change their way of life – the *metanoia* as the pivotal moment in one's life. Jesus' calling served Peter and his companions a call for *metanoia* in their life. Upon committing themselves to Jesus, "they left everything and followed him."³⁴ The way Luke concludes this narrative is, according to Brown, a reflection of Luke's theological mindset, which is

²⁹ Stein, *Luke*, 167.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Luke 5:3

³² Luke 5:2

³³ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 88. This claim of being a '*hamartolos*' involves the acknowledging of one's sinfulness.

³⁴ Luke 5:11

the detachment of oneself from earthly possessions and a disposition towards the heavenly realities.³⁵

1.4.4 Missiology

Luke writes that people who are introduced and who follow Jesus wholeheartedly will remain in the circle of Jesus and his ministry. This can be seen in the sinful people who were granted a new friendship with Christ and reserved a mission by Him.³⁶ This coalition could be clearly seen in the narrative of the miraculous catch whereby Peter and his companions are called to a special mission of ‘fishing for people’, even though they are just fishermen. This calling of Peter can be seen in three stages, as reflected in the book of Isaiah. First, Jesus appears to Peter in his Glory (Luke 5:5-7). Then, Peter acknowledges himself as an unworthy and a sinful man (Luke 5:8-9). Finally, there is the Divine commissioning (Luke 5:10-11).³⁷

In spite of this parallelism to the Old Testament, the account in Luke goes beyond this linear meaning and value. In fact, this account serves a two-fold purpose, namely, as a historical evidence about the earliest apostles (the leaders of the *ecclesia*) and to show by a historical miracle what it means to experience the start of a *metanoia* and to leave everything.

1.5 The Lukan Motifs

Luke narrates this account in a way that Simon seems to be alienated from the Word of God. Simon did not stop working, nor did he join the crowds to hear Jesus’ teaching; rather, he continued washing his nets.³⁸ Despite his inattentive attitude, Luke shows how Jesus precisely chose Simon’s boat, that is, his own skill and life where He can interact with and ask him to do something. Simon could either choose to ignore him or else listen to Jesus. Luke narrates this episode by gradually moving the attention from

³⁵ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to The New Testament*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1997), 238.

³⁶ John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20: World Biblical Commentary*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 35A (Columbia: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 1989), 219.

³⁷ Stein, *Luke*, 171. This is paralleled in Isaiah 6:1-13. The three parts found in Isaiah are 6:1-4, 6:5-7, 6:8-13.

³⁸ The nets in the context of the miraculous Catch of fish represents the earthly possessions of the fishermen which will further on be discarded in order to follow Jesus.

the crowd to Peter. Using Simon's boat to proclaim His message to the crowd, Luke narrows his focus from the crowds to Peter through a personal dialogue.

Therefore, when Peter is presented before the Divine power, followed by a miraculous catch which leaves Peter in a sense of awe, he responds faithfully to Jesus' call. However, it must be noted that the kind awe that Peter experienced is not in the sense of a pity emotion, but rather a kind of speculative thought about the Divine Power;³⁹ the so-called "*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*."⁴⁰ When Peter experiences the amazement of witnessing a miraculous catch, he is immediately filled with fear and trust in the Divine power, making him leave everything and follow Jesus. Thus, the evangelist highlights the way Peter obeys and trusts in Jesus by 'putting in the deep,' to exhort his readers about trust and faith.⁴¹

As the disciples' call narrative is not written towards the very beginning of the Gospel, but rather delayed, Luke also manages to place an emphasis on the prophetic significance of Jesus. In so doing, he entwines it with the call of Peter and his confession of faith.⁴² Unlike the other Synoptics, Luke presents us with Peter's response because of Jesus' guarantee that he will become a fisher of men. In the other two Synoptic Gospels, there is not a similar "foundation of assurance" but rather an obedience to the "naked command of Jesus as he passes by."⁴³ In the different approach taken by Luke, the response is justified in light of faith in Jesus. It is not through Peter's human potential that he could catch any fish but rather through Divine power. Peter seems to overhear the voice of Mary.⁴⁴ In fact, it is this type of faith, that is, the leap from human potentiality to divine actuality, which is typical in the Lukan texts.

For Luke, as evident throughout his Gospel, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the long-awaited and promised Christ. In fact, for Luke, Jesus is the Anointed One (Luke 4:18). The Gospel already commences with important witnesses about the personhood

³⁹ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 90.

⁴⁰ "Rudolf Otto's Concept of the 'Numinous,'" Kenyon College, Religious Studies, www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/Religion/Fac/Adler/Reln101/Otto.htm Accessed 06.11.2019. This concept was coined by Rudolf Otto about the 'Numinous'; he claimed that the religious experience has three components; the *mysterium* is experienced which is a different experience than the natural observations; this evokes an energy of fear which furthermore presents itself as attracting in spite of terror. See also Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Cary, Oxford University Press: 1958).

⁴¹ Luke 5:4

⁴² Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 89-90.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

and role of Jesus, especially by the Angel Gabriel, the priest and his wife, another angel of the Lord, Simeon and other prophets, such as Anna and John the Baptist. While in the Synoptics, there is also the beginning of Jesus' ministry along the proclamation of God's Kingdom, in Luke there is Jesus' self-description when commencing His ministry.⁴⁵

One of Luke's favourite themes is that of God's salvation to the poor and oppressed as had been mentioned in the soteriological theology of Luke.⁴⁶ Being rejected in Nazareth, Jesus' rejection by Israel is anticipated. Luke shows how Jesus' rejection by his own people is typical of the prophets in the Old Testament and thus, stands to confirm Jesus' prophetic and messianic identity.⁴⁷

Being highly knowledgeable in fishing, Peter was sure that they would not catch any fish and wanted Jesus to take his responsibilities on such a command.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Jesus could certainly predict a large catch of fish.⁴⁹ Therefore, in this narrative Luke seems to be stressing the prophetic vision of Jesus, prior to the calling of Peter, being aware of his doubts.

The episode of the miraculous catch shows Luke's clever ability of re-ordering narratives.⁵⁰ Moreover, it is only Luke among the Synoptics who records this miracle and binds it with the call of Peter. For some scholars, the miracle and the call are two distinct episodes which are carefully linked together through Luke's way of redaction, addition and omissions, in order to intensify the message that Christ is the Lord.⁵¹ Luke performs this edition so that he can emphasise his theology. In this way, he is also successful in relating the two in a way that Peter ends up being the protagonist of such a miracle. In fact, the cause for performing this miracle is ambiguous; whether addressed to the crowd

⁴⁵ Lk 5:21; 7:49; 8:25; 9:9. See also Stein, *Luke*, 160.

⁴⁶ This soteriological dimension is one of the most vivid ideas that are present in the Lucan theological framework. Such particular interest of Luke to express salvation to the poor and the oppressed is furthermore encapsulated through his verse of chapter 19 (Lk 19:10); "The Son of man has come to seek out and save what was lost." Those who respond positively to this message are invited to participate in the Kingdom of God, while living in perseverance and self-denial and to wait for the Parousia. This can also be detected from the miraculous catch of fish. For further reading see I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text, The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, ed. W. Ward Gasque (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1978), 35-36.

⁴⁷ Stein, *Luke*, 160-161.

⁴⁸ Derrett, "Jesus's Fishermen and the Parable of the Net," 122.

⁴⁹ Stein, *Luke*, 171. Although this claim could be possible, this should be treated in light of God's attributes and the Divine Power. Otherwise it could undermine the power of the miracle and that Jesus 'just knew'.

⁵⁰ Brown, *An Introduction to The New Testament*, 238.

⁵¹ Derrett, "Jesus's Fishermen and the Parable of the Net," 108-109.

or intentionally for Peter.⁵² However, the miracle could stand as an action on its own, carried out by Jesus to provide Simon Peter with a guarantee on His later command.⁵³ In other words, it seems that the purpose of the miracle could serve to foretell Simon about his future mission. In this way, he could have a foretaste on what the mission commissioned by Jesus entailed.

Peter's response has been a subject of concern for some scholars. Any reader, too, would expect that Simon Peter was going to admire Jesus right after the miracle rather than confessing his sinful state. In fact, Luke is not only writing a mere narrative about a miraculous act, or a pronouncement story, but rather a theophany which includes a call to service the Lord. With regards to Peter's response, Luke is therefore right to first write a theophany and then Peter's confession, followed by Christ's call to His service. This theophany serves to foreshadow the calling of the apostles, beginning with Simon Peter and his later role in the Church. Therefore, for some scholars such as Stein, it is worthless to consider this narrative as a post-resurrection account re-read in Christ's life.⁵⁴

⁵² Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 89. The miraculous catch of fish is also identified in John 21:1-11, and as Johnson points out, this narrative also resembles a similar account in Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras* which includes an account of fish.

⁵³ Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 224.

⁵⁴ Stein, *Luke*, 168.

Chapter 2:
Jesus' Appearance and the
Miraculous Catch of Fish in Jn 21:1-14

2.1 The Miraculous Catch of Fish in John's Gospel

The miraculous catch of fish, as recorded by John, is found in the epilogue of this gospel in (Jn 21:1-14).¹ Despite the long-debated arguments on whether the last chapter of this gospel could have been a later addition to the original writings of John, the miraculous catch of fish precedes a significant statement in Johannine theology which merits attention:

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name.²

In this direct address to the reader, John explicitly writes to convince the community to which he was writing that Jesus is the Messiah, Son of God.³ John was not writing a historical synthesis of the life of Jesus but a historical and theological account with which he wanted to help his believing community to understand, believe and grow in faith.⁴

2.2 Diachronic and Synchronic Approaches to John's Gospel

The chapter in which this narrative was written, that is, John 21, sparked a long-standing discussion among many scholars about its origin and source as well as the historical strata to which it belongs. The consensus among Johannine scholars is that the Gospel of John, as it now stands, is the result of more than one hand, that is, an outcome of more than one source.⁵

In his commentary about the Fourth Gospel, Bultmann argues that John combined three main sources, namely, a discourse source, a miracle (sign) source and a

¹ The epilogue is the final part of the Fourth Gospel preceded by the prologue (1:1-18) and then the two main parts of the whole gospel; "The Book of Signs" (1:19-12:50), and "The Book of Glory" (13:1-20:31). For further reading on the structure and composition see Brown, *An Introduction to The New Testament*, 334- 335.

² Jn 20:30-31.

³ Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John, New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: 1986), 24.

⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John. A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray, ed. R. W. N. Hoare and J. K. Riches (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 698. See also C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of The Fourth Gospel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 444.

⁵ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 17.

passion-resurrection source.⁶ While this theory attempts to explain the sources and thus the origin of the Fourth Gospel, other scholars hinted to a more complex redaction theory behind in the composition of this Gospel. According to this theory, the Gospel as it now stands, is the work of a series of redactions and editions. Therefore, while one evangelist could have written down the original material of this Gospel, this material had been redacted until it reached its final edition by means of a final editor or redactor.⁷

With this line of thought, these scholars, among whom are pioneers such as Brown and Schnackenburg, analyse the Fourth Gospel mainly from a diachronic approach. This means that the adopted approach tries to detect the different layers of tradition and sources behind the final text. In doing so, this approach deals mainly with the so-called Johannine problem, that is, its sources, its authorship, date of composition, original audience and to whom it was addressed.

Another significant approach to John is that of a synchronic approach. Scholars, such as R. A. Culpepper, F. J. Moloney, T. L. Brodie and Mark W. G. Stibbe, are more interested in analysing the text as it stands from the very beginning till the very end, by considering the theological message and the structure of the Gospel in its canonical form.⁸ Within this perspective, Jn 21 is considered as an integral part of the text of the Fourth Gospel without any claims of its origin or how it was inserted into the text.

⁶ Brown, *An Introduction to The New Testament*, 363. The miracles in John are not called miracles but signs (*semeia*). See also Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 6-7. Unlike the three Synoptic evangelists, John's miraculous narratives have a special purpose in his gospel.

⁷ Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 46.

⁸ See also R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel. A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John. Sacra Pagina Series*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 4 (Minnesota, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998); Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). With regards chapter 21, Brown claims that while the two scenes concerned in Jn. 21 are not in harmony with each other and do not complement each other, yet they are related in their theological sense. See also Brown, *An Introduction to The New Testament*, 361.

2.3 John 21 in the Fourth Gospel

Those scholars who are interested in the diachronic approach, noticed the presence of different *aporias* in the text of the Fourth Gospel, that is, indications that the text does not flow smoothly.⁹ Jn 21 is considered by many as one of the Johannine *aporias*. For some scholars, this chapter may have been added at a later stage, that is, they consider it as a post-script to Jn 20 which seems to have been the original conclusion to the Gospel.¹⁰

These scholars, upon studying Jn 21, ask whether this chapter was originally written as part of the whole Gospel, or otherwise added as a postscript.¹¹ For scholars such as Bultmann, whilst the question of authorship still prevails, he believes that Jn 21 was added as a second conclusion within the original one.¹² In Bultmann's study, the idea is clear that John's Gospel must have been concluded with Chapter 20. In this latter part, Bultmann points out John's clear declaration of the purpose of the Fourth Gospel, addressing his readers with the call "to awaken the faith in Jesus as the Son of God" and that through this faith one could be saved.¹³ Bultmann also discusses the context of the settings of these narratives. John's text, he claims, is more original in terms of a post-resurrection context, and therefore, unlike Luke, John retains the original setting of an Easter formulation.¹⁴

⁹ Against the difficulties that may arise by the aporias that create tension in its logical flow, or even contradictions; Schnackenburg offers his idea on such a topic and says that although these difficulties are evident throughout the gospel, one must keep in mind that John may have formed his own way of thought and kerygmatic intentions with no rules of logic or whatsoever. See also Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John: Commentary on Chapters 13-21*, trans. David Smith and G.A. Kon, vol. 3 (Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Burns & Oates, 1982), 44-45.

¹⁰ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on The Greek Text* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), 577. In his commentary, Barrett claims that chapter 20 does not need any supplement to it. He argues that after the great apostolic mission given by Christ in chapter 20 (verses 21-23), the apostles return to their former life of fishing and moreover, they fail to recognise Jesus. For Barrett this is difficult to comprehend as chapter 20 is an 'impressive conclusion'.

¹¹ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 700. See also Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 618. Lindars addresses such a problem and claims that this chapter is written 'soon after' the whole gospel was written. Moreover, it was adjoined at the same time it was being presented to a wider audience.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The idea is also evident in Brown's where he sees Chapter 20 as concluding with the purpose of the Gospel, unlike with Luke who hints the purpose of his Gospel towards the very beginning. See also Brown, *An Introduction to The New Testament*, 360.

¹⁴ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 705. In such an argument, Bultmann also refers to the two narratives of Peter's Confession and the Transfiguration, and claims that these too, must have originally been post-formulated in the "Life of Jesus" from their Easter context. Likewise, Luke too projected such a miracle to Jesus' early ministry.

Dodd also considers Jn 21 as a later addition to the original text, whereby there is a change from Jerusalem to Galilee. As with Bultmann, Dodd, also points out that new characters, such as the sons of Zebedee, are mentioned for the first time in this gospel during this narrative. This also includes new themes and related vocabulary, such as death and time, respectively.¹⁵

On a closer look at John 21, various inconsistencies arise when comparing it with the previous chapter.¹⁶ For Brown, it seems unclear as to why the disciples went back to Galilee even though they witnessed the Resurrected Christ in Jerusalem. Despite the commissioning by Jesus, the disciples still returned to their normal way of living. Another conflict would be the fact that the disciples do not recognise Jesus in John 21, notwithstanding their already-witnessed events of the Resurrected Lord. Accordingly, for Brown, the way John 21 unfolds is quite anticlimactic in its theological sense, so much so that Moloney considers the stories of the Lord's appearances as contradictory to the original design of the Evangelist.¹⁷

Gaventa shares the same sentiments with these scholars arguing that Chapter 21 is a post-script in John's Gospel, while pointing out that both John 20 and John 21 have "dual endings" which relate differently to the major part of the Gospel. Gaventa explains how John 20 eventually refers back to the Prologue, while John 21 refers to various points mentioned throughout the Gospel. Therefore, both chapters have different purposes and focus; John 20's main emphasis is on the Resurrected Jesus, while John 21 focuses on the disciples.¹⁸ In an attempt to analyse John 21, Bultmann states that its unity is not evident throughout and that it includes two distinct sections, namely vv. 1-14 and vv. 15-23.¹⁹ In joining them together in the same chapter, the editor must have had a specific intention precisely that the former part serves as an introductory section to the other.²⁰

¹⁵ C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 431; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 700-706.

¹⁶ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 666, quoted in Reese, "John 21 as Epilogue," 1.

¹⁷ For further reading see Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, vol 2, 1077-1082, and Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 564.

¹⁸ Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "The Archive of Excess: John 21 and the Problem of Narrative Closure," in *Exploring the Gospel of John*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Kentucky/KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 243.

¹⁹ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 700.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 702. In this commentary Bultmann maintains that the Johannine story is original in its context and that Luke might projected such an appearance narrative earlier to Jesus ministry.

On a different note, Morris does not stop with the idea that John 21 is simply a post-script or that it points to different authorship. Morris mentions the English Biblical scholar Edwyn Clement Hoskyns and his ideal conclusive mode of a Gospel. In his words, Hoskyns argues that the:

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.²¹

Apparently, it seems that Hoskyns has no issue with accepting the Fourth Gospel as it stands, that is, having Chapter 21 as an appropriate conclusive entity proper to the Fourth Gospel, just as the Synoptic Gospels have their own endings.²² In addition to Hoskyns' claim, Morris also suggests that most probably Jn 21 was written by the same author, however, at some later stage of the gospel writing.²³

2.4 Elements, Features and Themes in John 21:1-14

The episode of the miraculous catch of fish unfolds using features and elements which are unique to this narrative. For instance, the characters that are mentioned in this narrative have a significant relationship with Jesus. The fact that the author names the characters is also imperative to the understanding of this narrative. This applies especially to Thomas, Nathanael, Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple, all of whom were directly related with Jesus' mission before the resurrection.²⁴ These disciples were also central in

²¹ Edwyn Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. F. N. Davey (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1947), as quoted in Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John: The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1989), 859. Morris also says that for Hoskyns chapter 20 alone does not end in this manner. On the other hand, if one is to accept the Fourth Gospel as it is; ending with chapter 21, will agree with such a claim. Moreover, Morris refers to the scholar Temple and his claim that the if the gospel ends in the vindication of faith in Christ would be, in a sense incomplete; "The victory was won but its fruits had still to be gathered."

²² Brown too claims that an epilogue at the end of the gospel would give balance to the prologue at the beginning. See also Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1079.

²³ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 859. Leon Morris seems to prefer to adhere with the idea that John 21 was written by the same author than the idea of a whole different author for chapter 21. On a similar note, Brodie too argues that chapter 21 is an integral part of the whole gospel, since it portrays different life situations that the human person may experience throughout his life. "It speaks of some of the most basic elements in life; going to work, companionship, fishing, dark, emptiness, hunger, dawn, a stranger, surprise, the sharing of insight, the plunge into the sea, the boat journey towards welcome land, morning on the shore the sight of fire and food, someone waiting, the domesticity of breakfast," in Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 581.

²⁴ Emmanuel George Chimkango Phiri, "A Redaction Critical Analysis of Luke 5:1-11 And John 21:1-14," *Academia*, October 2013, accessed October 20, 2019,

the makeup of the Johannine theology. Moreover, this episode mentions Jesus' appearance which takes place at dawn. The post-resurrection appearance precedes the miraculous catch of fish, even though Jesus was first unrecognisable by the disciples.

At this point, when Jesus stands on the shore, he asks them whether they have caught fish. This would lead to another important feature whereby Jesus addresses them as "children."²⁵ Upon the miraculous catch of fish, it was the Beloved Disciple and not Simon Peter who first acknowledged that the man on the shore was actually Jesus. An important feature is Peter's description of being lightly clothed and the resulting action upon hearing that it was the Lord, that is, to immediately clothe himself up and jumping in the sea.²⁶

The disciples' towing of the boat to the shore, the reference to the quantity of fish being caught, that is 153, and the description of the net that was untorn, are also important features found only in John. Other features in the concluding verses would be the sharing of the bread and fish by Jesus and the reference to Jesus' post-resurrection appearance as being the third time.²⁷

Further details in Jn 21:1-14 show how the Greek language used in this narrative at times differs from the rest of the Gospel. Thus, while in John 1-20 there are exact indications of a chronological time-frame, such as the mentioning of the "sixth hour" (Jn 19:14) or "a week later" (Jn 20:26), in Jn 21 there is an absence of such details.²⁸

Moreover, there is a significant number of words that appear as new to the Gospel, that is, *hapax legomena*.²⁹ Then again, other words which feature elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel are used with a different function.³⁰

A new theme that is portrayed in light of the previous chapters is the observation of a transition from an optimistic to a pessimistic theme in John 21. This would include

https://www.academia.edu/5575469/A_REDACTION_CRITICAL_ANALYSIS_OF_LUKE_5_1-11_AND_JOHN_21_1-14

²⁵ Jn 21:5

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1067.

²⁹ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 700-701.

³⁰ J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John, The International Critical Commentary*, ed. A. H. McNeile, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), 688. In his commentary, Bernard claims that the vocabulary used in such a narrative is common to a fishing tradition.

the return of the disciples to their former way of life and work, the failure of catching fish, the disciples' inability to recognise the Lord, the Beloved Disciple's death and the reference to Peter's death.³¹ Another surprising element in Jn 21 is the lack of Christ's discourse about his relationship with the Father, unlike in the rest of the Gospel, as evident in the numerous references to the Father-Son paradigm.³² The author seems to focus more on the roles of the disciples, that is, Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple.

As for Schnackenburg, the diversity of features and elements as found in Jn 21 accounts for the lack of unity throughout the narrative, and which therefore points to more than one author or an author that is not John.³³

2.5 Analysis of Jn 21:1-14 within a Johannine Theological Pericope

The Johannine theological framework can be noticed as John 21 unfolds its story.³⁴ In fact, this chapter seems to reveal a further theological message, relying on the two united stories of the miraculous catch of fish and the resurrection story.³⁵ Accordingly, this narrative could be placed in three main sections, which are, vv. 1-3 for the setting of the meal, vv. 4-8 for the meal preparation and Christ's miracle, and vv. 9-14 for the meal.³⁶

Naming the very first two disciples in the narrative, namely, Simon Peter and Thomas, points to John's theology in that the redactor reminds the reader about the experience of these two disciples of the resurrection of Christ.³⁷ After the disciples have failed in their attempt to fish during the night, Jesus appears to them "just after daybreak" (v. 4), that is, at the moment of their failure and at the moment of God's intervention.³⁸

³¹ Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 564.

³² Dorothy Ann Lee, *The Symbol of Divine Fatherhood*, in *Semeia* 85 (1999): 181, <https://search-proquest-com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/docview/202942332?accountid=27934>. Accessed 20.02.2020.

³³ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 342.

³⁴ Although chapter 21 may be an addition to the Fourth Gospel, chapter 21 too has significant Johannine characteristics. See also Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: A Concise Commentary* (Minnesota, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1988), 100.

³⁵ See Lk 5, 1-11 and Lk 24, 30-35.

³⁶ Jonathan Sammut, "Jn 21 as an Appendix to The Gospel of John." (Unpublished B.A. diss., University of Malta 2012), 28.

³⁷ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. 3: 342. On the one hand, Simon Peter, in Jn 20:3-10, experienced the resurrection without knowing what happened. On the other hand, Thomas the Twin experienced the actual sign of the Resurrected body of Christ in Jn 20:26-28.

³⁸ Santi Grasso, *Il Vangelo di Giovanni. Commento Esegético e Teológico* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2008), 789.

Here, John's symbolism is very evident: during the day, everything becomes visible in the light, an important symbolic element in Johannine theology. Thus, right from the initial verses with the contrast between the night and day, there is a foreshadowing of Jesus' intervention in the narrative.

What follows is the figure of Jesus standing on the beach (v. 4), reminiscent of the Resurrected Jesus as described in John 20, but who is not recognised by the disciples, just as in John 20:14.³⁹ The fact that the disciples fail to recognise him could be due to different reasons as argued by scholars.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, from the shore there is Jesus who has started a conversation with them. The wording which Jesus uses to address the disciples could be translated to "little children."⁴¹ To Christ's question of whether they have caught any fish (v. 5), the disciples responded that they have caught nothing. At this point, Jesus, still unrecognised by the disciples, suggests that they throw their nets on the right side, convinced that there is fish there (v. 6). Here, a theology of abundance is evident in these verses whereby Christ's intervention points to an abundance of fish from nothingness.⁴² Such a theology is also evident in Jn 2:1-11, the miracle at Cana, and in Jn 6:1-14, the abundance of food and wine.⁴³

The way the disciples respond to this miraculous catch is also reminiscent of the empty tomb scene in Jn 20:1-10. Here, as with the fishing narrative, it was the Beloved Disciple who first recognised Jesus, followed by Simon Peter.⁴⁴

³⁹ Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. John Vriend, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997), 659.

⁴⁰ Different scholars put forward different explanations for this unrecognition. It could be that their eyes were held like the disciples in Emmaus. See also George R. Beasley-Murray, *John: Word Biblical Commentary*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 36 (Waco, Texas: Word Book Publisher, 1987), 400. However, Murray does not conform to this latter idea but gives another explanation that is, the way the disciples experienced Jesus is different from before: Jesus' mode of existence is different from his former earthly condition. It could also be due to the lack of light in the early morning that the disciples did not recognize Jesus. For further reading see Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 670. There are other Biblical texts that mention different characters who did not recognize him after His resurrection, namely in Luke 24:15-16 and John 20:14.

⁴¹ *paidia* the plural of *paidion*, can be translated into 'lads' however, in John's theology it denotes the meaning of "little children". In such a context, the word used seems to invite the innermost part of the disciples to be a child of God. See also Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 583.

⁴² Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic Publishing, 2003), 1231.

⁴³ Sammut, "Jn 21," 31.

⁴⁴ Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 584.

According to Brodie, the disciples' obedience to Jesus in v. 6 before they recognised him, excludes the miraculous catch as being the reason for their belief.⁴⁵

Upon hearing the Beloved Disciple's claim that it was the Lord, Simon Peter clothes himself, symbolic of the death-resurrection symbolism, and "jumps into the water," while the other disciples "follow in the boat . . . for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards" (v. 8). The dimensions which are revealed in this verse seem to imply an opening of the way by Peter for the others to reach Jesus.⁴⁶

In the following section, that is, about the meal itself (vv. 9-14), the disciples see a fire of burning coals, as well as fish and bread (v. 9). Scholars have pondered on the presence of the food and from where Jesus had actually brought it. In Jn 6:1-14, there is also a reference to the bread and fish, and thus, within the Johannine theology, Jn 21:9 points to Jesus as the source of life.⁴⁷ For Brodie, this verse also infers soteriological aspects by pointing back to the scene of Peter's denial through the use of similarly used words, such as the coal and burning fire.⁴⁸ However, the Greek language used in this verse denotes a positive scenario and thus, instead of leading to Peter's despair, it will lead to the Lord's meal, the Eucharist.⁴⁹

Christ's request to the disciples to bring some fish (v. 10) may infer a partaking in the Resurrected Christ's mission.⁵⁰ As Simon Peter is introduced again as the first one who responds to Jesus' request, the narrative gives details of the catch of fish, with one hundred and fifty-three large fish caught in an unbroken net (v. 11). These details have been discussed by many scholars who gave different reasons why the author chose this particular number, with its associated symbolism. While it is possible that the author had recorded the actual number of fish caught, as Morris argues, that is, the number 153 is the actual historical number of fish, however, this does not negate the symbolic message implied in the number.⁵¹ On the other hand, Morris tries to identify and understand the meaning of the number 153 in light of the Fourth Gospel. One possible argument that

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 585.

⁴⁷ See also Jn 4:13-14; 6, 35; 51; 7:37; 10:9 especially in 14:6, which also express this theology. For Morris this idea of Christ being the source of life is a typical Johannine characteristic that is behind John's mind while writing such a gospel. For further reading see, Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 641.

⁴⁸ Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 585.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 662.

⁵¹ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 866.

examines the number is that of universality. In ancient tradition, it was believed that in total, there were 153 various kind of fish.⁵² Thus, a symbol of 153 achieves a new connotation of a universal kind - a Gospel that is addressed to all humanity.

In Verse 12, when Jesus invites the disciples to have the first meal of the day, the narrative recounts that “they knew it was the Lord,” despite Verse 7 which accounts the Beloved Disciple was the first to recognise him. The meal that follows in Verse 13 is typical of the customary meal that Jesus used to eat with his disciples. Yet, it is not an ordinary meal as there is no conversation being recorded.⁵³ There also seems to be a twist, that is, despite the miraculous catch of 153 large fish and Christ’s request to bring some of the fish (vv. 10-11), as well as the mention of the fire of burning coal with fish on it (v. 9), Jesus still chooses bread first for the meal. In light of Johannine theology, and particularly to Jn 6:11, Christ’s preference for bread may refer to the Eucharist.⁵⁴

Finally, this episode concludes by being referred to as Christ’s third appearance to the disciples since he was “raised from the dead” (v. 14). At first glance, it seems that the narrator combined this verse with the first verse of this episode, as a way of a literary *inclusio*.⁵⁵ It may also point back to the two post-resurrection appearances in Jn 20.⁵⁶ The fact that in Jn 20:14-17, Jesus also appeared to Mary Magdalene might suggest that the incident in Jn 21:1-14 is Christ’s third appearance to the disciples as a collective group. Therefore, if the author did not consider Mary Magdalene as a disciple, or if the reference is strictly to mean the disciples together, then it makes sense that this is Christ’s third appearance since he was raised from the dead.⁵⁷

⁵² Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 586. In his commentary, Brodie dedicates a section for the interpretation of such a number. He presents the three main interpretations namely; allegory (100- the fullness of gentiles, 50- the remnant of Israel and 3- the Trinity), gematria and a mathematical symbol of a perfect triangle. Regardless of the true meaning, Brodie claims that the Gospel should be dealt as a work of God and that one should trust it as it is; it could surpass understanding. For further reading, see Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. 3: 357-358.

⁵³ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John: Baker Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 594.

⁵⁴ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. 2: 1075-1076; Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 553. However, some scholars also suggest that this may not be the exact reason. See also Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 431; and Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 582.

⁵⁵ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 675.

⁵⁶ Jn 20:19-23. 26-29.

⁵⁷ Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 664. See also Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 675.

In view of the miraculous catch of fish, Culpepper then considers this episode as evocative of the Church and its mission mandated by Jesus Christ.⁵⁸

2.6 Motifs and Functions in John 21:1-14

As many scholars argue that Jn 20 has the original conclusion to the Gospel, then it requires extra attention to expose the function of Jn 21, particularly the motifs and functions in this narrative (Jn 21:1-14). For Schnackenburg, one purpose of this chapter would be to further elaborate on the characteristic of Jesus Christ. Thus, such a narrative obtains a new purpose in light of the previous chapters, and also when combining the post-resurrection appearance in Jn 21 with the whole gospel.⁵⁹ Moreover, Schnackenburg claims that the redactors of such a narrative had specific themes that ‘weaved’ or ‘joined’ with the appearance of Jesus.⁶⁰ By itself, this could happen since each Gospel is not merely historical but rather a composition of one’s own theology, keeping in mind certain motifs and functions throughout the writing process.

One of the motifs that emerges right from the beginning of the narrative is that the Risen Lord is real and living and he is still in the process of intervening in the life of the infant Church. Jesus makes this happen through miracles, just as he used to do before he was crucified. Not only does he speak to them in a humanly manner, but he also participates in the meal with the disciples, and thus, he has a living body and is not a ghost.⁶¹ Even here, Jesus is recognised in the breaking of the bread (Lk 24:30-31). In addition, there is a sustained motif throughout the Gospel that the one who commands, the Master, is the one who serves them (Jn 13:5, 13).

Jesus is intervening in the dark times and failures of his disciples. The fact that Simon Peter decides to go fishing, while the others decide to come along, is considered by Brown as an act of “aimless activity undertaken in desperation.”⁶² Here, the representation of barrenness will lead to an important lesson for the disciples, that is,

⁵⁸ R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, ed. Gene M. Tucker and Charles B. Cousar, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 247.

⁵⁹ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. 3: 343.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Though he mentions 5 themes that could be detected in John 21, most of these seem to be orbiting the ecclesial dimension of such a chapter.

⁶¹ Phiri, “A Redaction Critical Analysis,” 2.

⁶² Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. 2: 1096.

discipleship should always involve the hands of Jesus, for according to Brown, “never in the Gospels do the disciples catch a fish without Jesus’ help.”⁶³

The character of Simon Peter is quite intense in this narrative, on the contrary to other characters, such as Thomas and Nathanael. The latter have already resolved their doubts (Jn 20 and Jn 1) but perhaps Peter has not come to terms with his denial of Jesus. In fact, another motif that emerges is when Simon Peter heard the Beloved Disciple exclaim that it was the Lord. When the latter recognised the Lord, he bears witness to others, especially to Peter and therefore, there is a sustained motif in the resurrection narratives which points to the close relationship between Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple. To this confession, Simon Peter immediately covers himself with clothing. In addition, the reference to the burning fire on the shore is reminiscent of the scene where Peter denied Jesus (Jn 18:18). Thus, being aware of his sinfulness and denial, indicative in his awareness of being almost naked, he jumps into the sea which is evocative of the baptism of water for the forgiveness of sins. On the other hand, Jesus is ready to transform the sinful situation in the court of Annas into an invitation to the partaking of the meal with Him on the shore, and eventually a true following of the Lord.⁶⁴

For Brown, the idea behind the miraculous catch by a “net that is not torn” represents the future missionary success of the disciples in bringing ‘all the nations together’.⁶⁵ This could have been a primary focus in John’s edition of this miracle; that is, the miracle was initially intended to symbolise the missionary success of Jesus’ commission to Peter: “Come, follow me ... and I will make you fishermen of men”.⁶⁶ Therefore, the result is then thought of as a reassuring stage of God’s promise to Peter’s missionary success through his total obedience. Moreover, Brown sees the large number of fish as reflecting the high influx of believers coming into the Church from different nations.⁶⁷

The community to whom the Fourth Gospel was written may have faced various difficulties over time. In light of the three Epistles of John, this may have been the case since it was based only upon the commandments of love and belief. The community might

⁶³ Ibid., 1071.

⁶⁴ Phiri, “A Redaction Critical Analysis,” 2.

⁶⁵ Brown, *An Introduction to The New Testament*, 361.

⁶⁶ Mt 4:19

⁶⁷ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. 2: 1097.

have had concerns with who belongs to the community and who should be leading it. Through this narrative, the community is shown the authority of Jesus, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, under whom they should gather.

While the authority and role of Jesus was evident throughout the whole Gospel, as could be said for the Beloved Disciple, the figure of Peter was restored through his act of threefold confession and a true following of Jesus. Thus, as Culpepper says, Jn 21 has a highly significant function as “it preserves the tradition of appearance in Galilee, records the restoration of Peter, and clarifies the role of Peter and the Beloved Disciple.”⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 245.

Chapter 3:

Contrasts in Luke 5 and John 21

3.1 Common elements in Luke's and John's editions

At first glance, the narrative of the miraculous catch of fish recalls similar nuances in both the Gospel of Luke and John, due to commonalities that exist between the two stories narrated in both gospels.

¹ Yet, while both Luke and John may have had different objectives for narrating this episode, as evident in the different placing of the story within their respective gospels, it is not excluded that there are common elements in both editions of this story. In this chapter we will try to identify the commonalities which will in turn help us to identify the contrasts that exist between Luke's and John's edition of this episode.

We will refer Brown's study and that of other scholars which highlight common elements that exist between these two accounts.² In his study of this episode, Brown pinpoints a number of common elements between Luke's and John's version of the episode of the miraculous catch of fish. This next section lists the common elements as follows:

In the first place, both Luke and John depict the disciples, being fisherman by trade, trying their best to fish during the night. In both accounts, the disciples fail to catch anything and thus, there is total failure and disappointment after trying for a whole night. As both stories unfold, there is an authoritarian command by Jesus to the disciples to cast their nets for a catch of fish. Jesus expresses this command in terms of directions. In both accounts, there is a physical indication where Jesus intends the nets to be thrown. Both Luke and John emphasize obedience attitude on the part of the disciples and this leads to a large catch of fish in both accounts. The large catch of fish effectively impacts the net and both editions highlight Peter's reaction to the miraculous catch. After witnessing the miraculous catch of fish, Jesus is professed as the Lord. In addition, while Peter does react to the miraculous catch, the other disciples help out, although they seem to remain silent, except for the Beloved Disciple in John's episode. Both Luke's and John's editions culminate with the theme of discipleship. Here, Brown justifies this similarity on the part of John by referring to additional verses following the episode in Jn 21:19-22. Moreover,

¹ Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 618. For Lindars, the intensive similarity between Luke's and John's Narrative, prove that there must be a connection in one way or the other.

² Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. 2: 1090. See also John Amedee Bailey, *The Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 12-17.

in both accounts, the catch of fish is expressed as a successful missionary motif. There is also common vocabulary in the two episodes, especially in the reference to Simon Peter.

In addition to the common elements put forward by Brown, Fitzmyer also refers to a further element, namely that there is no mention of Andrew in either episodes (but only in Mk 1:16).³ In Luke's and John's account, a significant number of fish are caught and both Evangelists express this act, whether directly or indirectly, as a miracle performed by Jesus. Bovon also mentions other similarities, such as the interaction between Jesus and Peter as being face to face, the promise (in which for Luke it is in terms of discipleship, whereas for John it is for the call), the prominent character in either narratives being Peter and the notable obedience of the other fishermen.⁴

In another study by Szkredka, there is a reference to J. Delorme's analysis of Luke's pericope. He expands on Delorme's claims that three sequences are evidently parallel to each other within Luke's own edition. The first sequence (Verses 4-6) contains the command of Jesus and the fulfilment of this command separated by Peter's objection and his acceptance. The second sequence is contained in Verse 7 which is similar, that is, the request for help, the acceptance of help and the accomplishment of helping. The last sequence in Verses 8-11 are also parallel to the first two, when Peter commands Jesus, Jesus refuses or rejects his command and then ends by Peter obeying Jesus' refusal.⁵

Bovon also claims that one distinguishing common element in either episodes is the promise given to Peter which was later developed by the Church in the Lucan perspective of discipleship and the Johannine view of the call.⁶

3.2 Contrasts in Luke's and John's editions

Presenting common elements in both narratives also helps to indicate the contrasts that may exist between Luke's and John's edition of the miraculous catch of fish. Thus, albeit the commonalities, Luke's edition stands in contrast to John's episode as can be noted in several differences in either episodes. Scholars have analysed the two narratives

³ J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: 1-9* (New York, Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 561, in Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 1:1-9:50* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004), 780.

⁴ F. Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas, Lk 1, 1-9, 50: Evangelisch-katholischer, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*: vol. 1 (Zurich: Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1989), 228-229, in Bock, *Luke*, 2183.

⁵ Sławomir Szkredka, "The Call of Simon Peter in Luke 5,1-11: A Lukan Invention?" *The Biblical Annals* 8, no. 2 (2018): 179, <https://doi.org/10.31743/ba.2018.8.2.02>. Accessed 15.11.2019.

⁶ Bock, *Luke*, 2183.

closely in order to show the differences between the two.⁷ Apart from the physical setting wherein the episode is narrated, there are other differences, namely, the fact that Jesus is performing the miracle from a different place; that Peter reacts differently in front of the catch and that the nets are referred to in a different way.⁸ Accordingly, in Luke's edition, Jesus performs the miracle from the boat (Lk 5:3). In John's edition, Jesus acts from the shore (Jn 21:4).⁹ While Luke describes the nets as almost breaking (Lk 5:6), John refers to the net as withstanding the stress of the large catch (Jn 21:11). Luke also shows Peter as fearing Jesus and bowing before Him (Lk 5:8). On the other hand, John refers to the fleeing action of Peter when he becomes aware of Jesus' presence (Jn 21:7). It is due to these notable differences that Darrell Bock considers the two episodes as two different events.¹⁰

Other contrasting differences include the difference in the directions given by Jesus about the casting of the net. While in Luke's Gospel, Jesus speaks of letting down their nets for fishing, in John's Gospel, Jesus commands the disciples to cast their nets on the right side of their boat to catch fish. Moreover, while John states that the disciples immediately follow these directions, in Luke we read how Peter seems to recall the night's failure and then it was this person who actually cast the net.

Another difference is in the specific number of fish being caught, that is, in Luke it is simply stated a large catch, while in John it is recorded as one hundred and fifty-three. There is also the contrast of Peter's awareness of the Lord just after the miracle, which entailed falling at Jesus' knees in Luke's episode, while being unaware of Him until the Beloved Disciple speaks out in John's Gospel. It must also be noted that while both Luke's and John's editions culminate with the theme of discipleship, in John's Gospel, the meal is the actual ending of the episode, following the statement about the

⁷ A. Plummer highlights seven contrasting points between Luke's and John's episode of the miraculous catch of fish. For further reading see Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke: The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1922), 147. In his commentary, Plummer makes it clear that it may be possible that these two miracles of the same kind, may be referring, one to the call, and the other to the re-calling of Peter. Moreover, he refers to the Church Fathers who associate these two narratives with the Church Militant and to the Church Triumphant.

⁸ Bock, *Luke*, 780.

⁹ Bock, *Luke*, 780. See also Bailey, *The Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John*, 12.

¹⁰ Ibid. Bock also goes further to analyze the relationship between Mk 1:16-20 and Lk 5:1-11. In his work, Bock shows the possibility of Luke's edition being a further development of Mark's narrative. Bock shows how in both narratives there are common elements such as the same reference to the Sea of Gennesaret, the same group of people present and the same call to 'fish' for men. However, Bock does not exclude the possibility that both Mark's and Luke's edition reflect two separate events as well.

post-resurrection appearances. In fact, John Bailey recalls how in Lk 5, the miraculous catch of fish leads to Christ's call to Peter for discipleship, while in Jn 21, which is narrated within a post-resurrection context, this will lead to a meal.¹¹

In addition to these contrasts, Fitzmyer also lists similar differences which are evident in conjunction of the Lukan and Johannine traditions. The following seven points are dissimilar in either traditions:

Jesus is not recognised in John.

Jesus is on shore in John.

Peter and the Beloved Disciple are on the same boat in John.

In John, Peter leaves the hauling of fish to the others.

In Luke the net is breaking, whereas in John, the net is not torn.

In John, the catch of fish is dragged on shore.

Whereas in Luke, Peter begs Jesus to depart from him, in John he rushes to him by swimming to the shore.¹²

When considering these differences which seem to be shared by many scholars, in Jn 21, there is a clear emphasis on the fact that the net did not break, which apparently stands in contrast to Lk 5 wherein the net is described at its point of tearing. For Morris, this detail about the net in Jn 21 seems to imply a post-resurrection context, claiming that it was because of the Risen Lord that the net did not break: "This would signify that the Church's resources, with Christ in its midst, are never overstrained."¹³

Unlike in Luke, John's episode makes reference to the specific number of fish being caught; this to emphasize a particular theological significance.¹⁴ In fact, the many differences that emerge when comparing the two episodes with each other would naturally lead to an inquiry about the sources and historicity that lies behind the two narratives.

¹¹ Bailey, *The Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John*, 12.

¹² Fitzmyer, in Szkredka, "The Call of Simon Peter in Luke 5,1-11," 180.

¹³ R. H. Strachan: *The Fourth Gospel* (London, 1955) as quoted in Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 868.

¹⁴ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 866. In his commentary, Morris does not negate the possibility that the author of this narrative might recorded the actual number of fish caught. See also Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 663. Unlike Morris, Ridderbos rejects the idea that these fishermen could count all the fish hauled after being caught. Rather, the number seems to project a magnitude of a miracle, that is, 'no less than 153.'

3.3 The Question of Sources

For the last two centuries, scholars have been arguing that John did not intend to write his Gospel as a supplement or addition to the Synoptic Gospels.¹⁵ With reference to the writings about Jesus, scholars assume that John used the Synoptics as his source and then reorganised this material to fit into his own theology and purposes.¹⁶ However, other scholars, such as Bultmann, Dodd and Gardner-Smith, were of the idea that the writing of the Fourth Gospel was not dependent on the Synoptics.¹⁷ Eventually, this theory turned out to assume that the Fourth Gospel relied on non-historical sources, rather than the Synoptics.¹⁸ However, other theories started to emerge with an effort to describe the relationship between John and the Synoptics and their witnessing of Jesus.¹⁹

The episode of the miraculous catch of fish in Luke does seem to be in parallel with that of John, as shown above. In fact, for Howard Marshall, these two accounts are not simply parallel but also share common details.²⁰ In both narratives, one could find a symbolic presentation of the guarantee of Christ's command, that is, to be 'fishermen for men,' and this once the miraculous catch of fish had been performed by Jesus. However, many exegetes are more interested in the sources and originality of the two texts. For many of them, the account of John is said to be a composition of two distinct historical accounts, namely a post-resurrection appearance and the miraculous catch of fish, both bound within a Johannine theology.²¹

Schnackenburg refers to the work of Rudolf Pesch and his critical analysis of the tradition of the miraculous catch of fish. About the Johannine edition in connection with the Lukan narrative, Pesch claims that two distinct traditions can be established from the whole narrative.²² The first tradition, or as he calls it the 'fishing tradition,' can be detected in John's episode in Verses 2, 3, 4a, 6, and 11; these verses contain a hint of a

¹⁵ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 5. In his commentary, Bultmann maintain that central theme that the gospel of John seems to be revolving around, is the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, for his specific theme, John leaves out material from the Synoptics to be able to develop his own surpassing theology. See also Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 362.

¹⁶ Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 362.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 362-363. See also P. Gardner-Smith, *St. John and the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1938).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 363.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 363-364.

²⁰ Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 199.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 200.

²² Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. 3: 345.

complete fishing tradition which did not include the resurrection tradition. The latter can be found in Verses 4b, 7, 8, 12, 13; leaving out Verses 1, 5, 10, and 14 in which Pesch claims them to be simply editorial.²³

Furthermore, Szkredka suggest that in Luke there is a possible Marcan source.²⁴ He also claims that another possible source is Jn 21, which influenced Luke or vice versa, in a direct or indirect way.²⁵ Szkredka derives this conclusion when comparing the two narratives, that is, Luke's edition and his widely used source, Mark. Then, he claims that in the three parts of the Lukan narrative, only the first and the last part reflect the Marcan influence on Luke himself.²⁶

For Bailey, John's episode was based on Luke's episode as its source. Moreover, while there are differences between the two narratives, Bailey dismisses the idea of literary dependence of one narrative on the other.²⁷ The same idea is shared by Brown who thinks that there is no literacy dependence between the two, even though he puts forth the ten points of similarities. Accordingly, for him, Luke's and John's episodes contain "preserved variant forms of the same miracle story," both independently from each other.²⁸

On the other hand, Bultmann is confident to propose a dependency between Luke and John. As for him, Luke had no source to recount the catch of fish, Bultmann suggests that the miracle emerged "out of the saying about 'fishers of men.'"²⁹ In spite of the similar account found in Jn 21, Bultmann seems to justify his position by claiming that "the variant in Jn. 21:1-14 seems to be a later version, which in some way derives from

²³ Ibid. Schnackenburg claims that the story about the draught was taken from the *semeia* – sign source, while the appearance story may be an oral tradition.

²⁴ Szkredka, "The Call of Simon Peter in Luke 5,1-11," 177. For further reading about the relationship between Luke's and Mark's accounts see J. Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas: Regensburger Neues Testament 3* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1977), 184–185; Van Der Loos, "The Miracles of Jesus," *Novum Testamentum* 9, (1965): 670 (who sees in Luke's mostly Marcan material) and W. Dietrich, *Das Petrusbild der Lukanischen Schriften: Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1972), 25–38 (who argues why Mark alone cannot be the source).

²⁵ Szkredka, "The Call of Simon Peter in Luke 5,1-11," 177.

²⁶ Ibid., 178. See also Lk 5:1-3,10-11.

²⁷ Bailey, *The Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John*, 12.

²⁸ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1090.

²⁹ Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1963), 217.

Luke.”³⁰ Eventually, Bultmann further develops these ideas and proposes that a shared source could have been involved.³¹

Regardless of the common aspects, Szkredka still claims that Jn 21 and Lk 5 did not rely on each other, for the very fact that only two words are common to each other and that there are many differences in the details.³² Over this former idea of a direct literal access to each other, he correlates the similarities by arguing for a common source that could be either before or after the resurrection event.³³ For him, trying to see which narrative is more ‘original’ in its setting, may be an endless aim. However, from the similarities of both accounts, one may say that an early tradition, regardless of its setting, contained the miraculous narrative that could either ‘call’ or ‘re-call’ Peter to his mission.³⁴

3.4 The Question of Historicity

A further enquiry would be about the actual time when the miraculous catch of fish took place, that is, whether it took place in Christ’s ministry as portrayed in Luke, or rather, it occurred as a post-resurrection story, as recounted by John. As Howard points out, some scholars claim that the story, being originally an Easter story, was ante-dated by Luke in the beginning of his gospel.³⁵ However, other scholars would place Luke’s narrative in the pre-resurrection period as details of a resurrection story are seemingly absent in this narrative.³⁶ Although many scholars favour one argument more than the other, there are in fact no strict limitations that exclude the possibility of independency with regards to Luke.

The historical aspect of the episode about the miraculous catch of fish is also linked to one’s perception about Christ’s miracles.³⁷ On the contrary, to anyone who

³⁰ Ibid., 218.

³¹ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 704-706.

³² The only two significant words, ‘ἰχθύς’ (fish) and ‘δίκτυον’ (the net) are the two literal common words found in Luke and in John. Another important point is that the occurrences of the name Simon Peter in Luke is only in Lk 5:8, whereas in John multiple references to this name can be found. For further reading see Bailey, *The Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John*, and Szkredka, “The Call of Simon Peter in Luke 5,1-11,”.

³³ Szkredka, “The Call of Simon Peter in Luke 5,1-11,” 181.

³⁴ Ibid., 181-182.

³⁵ Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 200.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Bock, *Luke*, 782.

rejects the oral traditions of miracle stories, Bock believes that Lk 5:1-11 has historical roots. Nolland clearly claims that one cannot separate the sayings and the miracles from each other.

According to Geldenhuys, while different scholars give credit of originality of each Gospel, yet, both Luke's and John's narrative could have historical allocations in separate periods of time.³⁸ This does not mean that one narrative is an adaptation of the other, but rather, he claims that both narratives exclude any material that could spell its historicity and that whoever tried to disprove its historicity had no evidence.³⁹ In his exegeses, Geldenhuys refers to several biblical scholars who speak of historicity in Luke and John. For instance, according to Wellhausen and Bultmann's initial idea, Luke's "own creation" of the miraculous catch is readapted later on by John.⁴⁰

On the other hand, Creed gives credit to John and says that his episode has a 'more original picture.'⁴¹ On a similar note, W. Manson acknowledges a one tradition in "different settings," and thus, the two stories point to different theological perspectives.⁴² While such theories could all be valid, Geldenhuys claims that they contradict each other and have no valid proof.⁴³

In Howard's approach, there is also the possibility that Luke adopted a different and distinct account from that of John.⁴⁴ This means that both narratives are two different stories that took place on two separate dates. Such a claim would, as a result, instigate significant questions, such as Peter's repetitive behaviour towards Jesus.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, this claim cannot be discredited since in the Gospel, Christ himself makes use of similar stories to bring out a new message. Therefore, for pre-modern scholars and for those who would claim that these two narratives reflect two similar, yet distinct stories in Jesus' life, the conclusion would be that there are no shared sources.⁴⁶

³⁸ Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 183.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁴¹ J. M. Creed, *The Gospel According to Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 73, in Bock, *Luke*, 2183.

⁴² W. Manson, in Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 183.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁴⁴ Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 200.

⁴⁵ Could Peter go through the same account twice, having the same dialogue and experiencing the same miracle without recognizing Jesus in the first place? This question is raised by John Brown in the argument of I. Howard Marshall.

⁴⁶ Peter A. Reynolds, "Recasting a Fish Story: Miracle and Mission in Luke 5:1-11." Unpublished PhD diss. (Baylor University, 2016), 138.

Thus, it seems that there are four main approaches with regards to sources and historicity.⁴⁷ The first one is that Luke's edition is a representation of John's and Mark's editions, somehow mixed and fused together. The second approach is that the miraculous catch of fish is entirely Lucan in nature, while also being allegorical. The third and fourth approaches are that Luke's edition comes from an independent source. However, in the fourth approach, Luke additionally refers to Mark. Many scholars agree with the latter approach, that is, Luke mostly makes use of an independent source and some aspects of Mark. Thus, for Schneider, Howard Marshall and Fitzmyer, Luke made use of L material and combined it to Marcan material. These scholars envisage L material in context of post-resurrection traditions which were already projected backwards.⁴⁸ According to Bock, the approach adopted reflects how one perceives the relation between events, that is, whether Luke's, Mark's, Matthew's and John's editions were independent on each other.

3.5 Two Related Episodes

The fact that the Luke's and John's episodes contrast with each other does not negate the strong connection between the two. For instance, Saint Augustine, who acknowledges them as being two distinct episodes, sees the narratives as relational to each other.⁴⁹ For him, Luke's episode speaks of the catch as symbolic of the early Church, while John's episode recalls the catch with its reference to the strong net as symbolic of the true Church.⁵⁰ Thus, by way of comparing the two narratives, Saint Augustine manages to provide interpretations based on these contrasting points.

For Ridderbos, Jn 21 is not all about a meal narrative after the miraculous catch of fish, unlike in a similar account in Jn 6. Rather, he considers Jn 21 not only reflecting the missionary mandate that the Risen Lord has given to his disciples but also symbolic of the realisation of Jesus Christ's authority and his promise of this very mandate.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Bock, *Luke*, 782.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 2183.

⁴⁹ Augustine points out that these two distinct narratives points toward how the Church is now and how she will be in the resurrection of the dead. For further reading see, Augustine, *The Fathers of The Church: Sermons on The Liturgical Seasons*, trans. Mary Sarah Muldowney (Washington: The Catholic University Press, 1959), 300, 309.

⁵⁰ Reynolds, "Recasting a Fish Story," 138.

⁵¹ Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 660.

The first comment that Brown says on the miraculous catch is that the narrations in both John and Luke are similar. He then continues to study the two scenes in their integrity.⁵² In his commentary, Bultmann also acknowledges that Luke's episode is a similar narrative to that of John. Subsequently, he points out two main differences that are evident in comparing the two variants. To begin with, he assesses the two narratives by their core motivation for such a result i.e. a miracle. In other words, he seeks to answer the question of what motivated such a miracle. Clearly, Bultmann thinks that in Luke's Gospel, the underlying reasons are not evident or written; whereas in John the motivation is actually the need for food or a meal.⁵³ Accordingly, John's episode could be more original. Despite this fact, Bultmann contends that the meaning of such a miracle is to illustrate apostleship, both in Luke and in John.⁵⁴ Thus, the notion of motivation is to be left to the sole author as his way of embellishing such a narrative.

Despite the probable Marcan source in Luke, it seems that Luke still reworked such a story in his own elaborative way in his endeavour to depict the future role of Peter. However, the idea of independency from the Marcan narrative can also be observed in the difference that lays between the first few verses of both narratives. Moreover, as Szkredka points out, it seems that Luke relied more on a source that involved the call, a chief motif in Lucan theology, accompanying the miraculous catch of fish.⁵⁵

3.6 The Context of the Miracle Story

A seeming dispute among scholars with regards to the miraculous catch of fish as it stands in Lk 5 and in Jn 21 is whether the author of Jn 21:1-14 had projected Luke's account of the miraculous catch of fish from Jesus Christ's ministry into His post-resurrection period, or else whether it was Luke who made use of a post-resurrection story and had placed it back in Christ's ministry.⁵⁶

Scholars tend to perceive Luke's narrative in different ways, however, there is a consensus that it entails both miracle and pronouncement.⁵⁷ Bock gives a synthesis of the

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 705. In this sense, John's narrative could give the impression of being more original.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Szkredka, "The Call of Simon Peter in Luke 5,1-11," 173. Szkredka claims that one should also think of Mk 2:13 as another possible source for Luke's narrative.

⁵⁶ Schweizer, (1984), as quoted in Bock, *Luke*, 779.

⁵⁷ Bock, *Luke*, 783.

common perceptions.⁵⁸ For Bultmann, the form of Luke's edition is referred to as a nature miracle.⁵⁹ Theissen, who considers this episode more in terms of the miraculous catch, calls it a gift miracle.⁶⁰ For Fitzmyer, Luke's edition is more of a pronouncement story as it shows stronger emphasis on Christ's sayings towards the end of the narrative.⁶¹ Additionally, Talbert calls this episode a commission narrative that highlights the pronouncement aspect.⁶² For Hubbard, Luke's episode reflects an 'epiphany-call' story to underline the importance of the divine.⁶³ Accordingly, for Berger the miracle serves as an introduction to a revelation about Jesus, which in turn, underpins His commission. It is also worth noting that all miracles that have to do with the sea mainly involve one disciple.⁶⁴

As the prevailing idea among scholars is that there is a common source shared by Luke and John, Brown proposes that the narrative about the miraculous catch of fish was the original and primary tradition. For Brown, the miracle story in this tradition has served Peter an opportunity to be familiar with the Risen Lord. Effectively, Peter becomes aware of his sinfulness and was then commissioned by Jesus.⁶⁵

Brown contends that John's episode, reiterates the original story in a faithful way, although it does not exclude details from other scenes, such as the meal of bread and fish.⁶⁶ In addition, Brown places the original story in a post-resurrection context as Peter is aware of his denial that took place when Jesus was still alive. It is for this reason that the story contains Peter's confession and commission. Brown is not the only scholar who thinks that the original story of the miraculous catch of fish was developed in the oral tradition and while laying the groundworks for Lk 5 and Jn 21, knows its setting in the post-resurrection context.⁶⁷ Fitzmyer does not consider Luke's edition as it stands in the

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of The Synoptic Tradition*, trans. J. Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 217-218, in Bock, *Luke*, 783.

⁶⁰ J. Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of The Early Christian Tradition*, trans. F. McDonagh, ed. J. Riches (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 321, in Bock, *Luke*, 783.

⁶¹ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 562, in Bock, *Luke*, 783.

⁶² C. H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 60-61 in Bock, *Luke*, 783.

⁶³ B. J. Hubbard, "Commissioning Stories in Luke-Acts: A Study of Their Antecedents, Form and Content," *Semeia* 8:103-26, (1977), in Bock, *Luke*, 2184.

⁶⁴ K. Berger, *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1984), in Ibid.

⁶⁵ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. 2: 1092.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Reynolds, "Recasting a Fish Story," 143.

Gospel, that is, in a pre-resurrection context. For Fitzmyer, it is difficult to reconcile the fact that Peter cries to Jesus and becomes aware of his sinfulness precisely in a pre-resurrection setting. Accordingly, Fitzmyer acknowledges that Luke had received the narrative as a miracle story from a post-resurrection setting and then projected it back to the life of Jesus.⁶⁸

There are various arguments given by scholars for the backward projection of the story from its post-resurrection context into Luke's edition. These include Peter's acknowledgement of his sinfulness after he had already betrayed Jesus, the reference to Jesus as 'Lord,' which would not be rightly apt in the early chapters of Luke, and the fact that the name 'Simon Peter' is limited to Lk 5 in Luke's Gospel, but common in other chapters in John's Gospel. It is for this reason that many scholars give more credit to the Johannine development of the miracle in the oral tradition and its setting in a post-resurrection period in the context of Christ's appearances.⁶⁹

While this may seem to be a tentative conclusion, other scholars disagree with the fact that the original setting was in a post-resurrection context. While there are identifiable details in Jn 21 that should have been mentioned earlier in John's Gospel, other issues stand out.⁷⁰ Reynolds tackles the prevailing idea of the story being in a post-resurrection context and questions why Peter's acknowledgment of his sinfulness is not present in Jn 21 as in Lk 5, notwithstanding the fact that Peter had already betrayed Jesus and there is a strong emphasis on Peter's denial in Jn 21. Reynolds points out how addressing Jesus as 'Lord' can also be found frequently in Luke's Gospel. Moreover, the Lucan motif of the call had been the driving force to reflect his episode with the Old Testament motif of a commissioning narrative.⁷¹ In his research, Reynolds summarises Benjamin Hubbard's study about call narratives in the Old Testament, who also finds Lk 5 as typical of these narratives.⁷² Thus, for Reynolds, one cannot firmly conclude whether Luke's edition is

⁶⁸ Fitzmyer, 1981, as quoted in Bock, *Luke*, 2183.

⁶⁹ Reynolds, "Recasting a Fish Story," 143. Some scholars would include John Martin Creed, Hans Conzelmann, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and John A. Bailey.

⁷⁰ Reynolds, "Recasting a Fish Story," 143.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁷² Old Testament narratives with a commissioning story include the calling of Moses and Isaiah. Reynolds' summary of Hubbard's study shows seven elements in a commissioning story: 1) There is a circumstantial introduction 2) a conflict arises between the commissioner and the commissioned-to-be 3) the commissioned reacts to the presence of the Holy one 4) there is an actual commission 5) there is an objection to this commission 6) the commissioner acts as a guarantor 7) concluding details. For further reading see Benjamin Hubbard, "Commissioning Stories in Luke-Acts: A Study of Their

an adaptation of a post-resurrection story, and similarly that John's edition is an adaptation from a pre-resurrection setting.⁷³ For him, the context of the story is so crucial in giving a significant meaning to the whole narrative. Thus, detaching the story of the miraculous catch of fish from the Lucan call, or similarly, from the post-resurrection setting and Christ's appearances in Jn 21, would fail the whole theological message. In fact, either Luke's or John's editions of the miracle story have been wisely placed and linked by their authors into their different context.⁷⁴

Antecedents, Form, and Content," *Semeia* 8 (1977): 103-26, as quoted in Reynolds, "Recasting a Fish Story," 144-145.

⁷³ Reynolds, "Recasting a Fish Story," 145.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

Conclusion

This study presented the different pericopes and functions of the episode of the miraculous catch of fish in Lk 5:1-11 and Jn 21:1-14. In the first chapter, we presented an exegetical analysis of Lk 5:1-11 and showed how Luke made use of the miracle story and combined it with the call of Simon, a fisherman, in order to show the future missiological function of Peter and to imply to what extent Jesus Christ's mission entails. In doing so, through the observed features and elements attributable to him, Luke manages to cover other aspects, such as Christology. Throughout this narrative, Luke writes in a way that Jesus Christ's divine nature is clearly expressed. Thus, the episode of the miraculous catch of fish is written in a way that progressively reveals His identity, namely, that Jesus is the source of truth (Lk 5:1-3), Jesus is the omniscient one (Lk 5:5:4-6a), Jesus is the omnipotent being (Lk 5:6-7), Jesus is Holy (Lk 5:8-10a) and that Jesus is merciful (Lk 5:10b-11).

Furthermore, Luke's use of the image of the fish, entwined with his theology of the call, clearly points to Luke's Great Reversal as a prominent motif in this narrative. Apart from the latter, Luke seems to highlight throughout this narrative Christ's discipleship, His call and the type of response to Jesus' call, exemplified in the fishermen leaving their boats and nets behind them. Moreover, the call to 'fish for men' is portrayed by Luke as a special mission which is only possible through this Divine Commissioning, as narrated in this episode. This chapter presented a brief account on the Lucan motifs that emerge from this episode, namely, the emphasis on Peter's total obedience and trust in Jesus and the prophetic significance of Jesus and God's soteriological action to the poor and oppressed.

The second chapter was dedicated to an analysis of John's edition of the miraculous catch of fish as narrated in Jn 21:1-14. A significant claim by many leading scholars is that Jn 21 is a post-script to John's Gospel, that is, it was probably inserted after what seems to have been the original conclusion to the Gospel (Jn 20:31). The reasons may be due to the differences in wording and style from the rest of the Gospel, and due to the fact that it is placed after a seemingly concluding part to John's Gospel. After giving a brief look to John's episode within the whole gospel, this chapter pointed to two different approaches to John's Gospel with respect to its sources, namely, the synchronic and diachronic approach. While the latter approach deals mainly with the Johannine problem, that is, questions related to authorship, date of composition and

sources, the former approach considers the text as it stands. Chapter Two proceeded with further explanations on features and elements that mark Jn 21:1-14. It was argued that the diverse features and elements used in this account demonstrate a lack of unity and thus, either hint to more than one author at hand, or an author that is not John.¹

In addition, John's episode was analysed to illustrate the theological pericopes within this narrative. In fact, this narrative starts with a clear Johannine theology of night-day (darkness-light) symbolism.² The inability to recognise the Risen Lord, the miraculous catch of fish recorded as 153, the net that is not torn and the part played by the Beloved Disciple, amongst others, are all explained within a Johannine framework. Thus, for instance, the miraculous catch of fish shows John's theology of God's abundance, whilst the miraculous catch by a 'net that is not torn' symbolises the future missionary success of the disciples in their attempt to bring 'all the nations together.'³ Finally, it was noted that Jn 21:1-14 did not serve only to portray Christ's role and authority in a post-resurrected context, but also to highlight the role and authority of the Beloved Disciple and the figure of Peter, which was restored through his act of threefold confession and a true following of Jesus. Thus, it was concluded that Jn 21 has a significant function as "it preserves the tradition of appearance in Galilee, records the restoration of Peter and clarifies the role of Peter and the Beloved Disciple."⁴

The third chapter consisted of an account about common elements and features found in the two episodes, as well as contrasting differences that arise in light of the similarities.⁵ In addition, scholars point out to the problem of sources and historicity as to which account is more 'original' than the other. For some scholars, the miracle story was placed by Luke from the post-resurrection period to the beginning of his gospel.⁶

¹ See also Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. 3: 342.

² See also, Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 583.

³ Brown, *An Introduction to The New Testament*, 361.

⁴ Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 245.

⁵ See Chapter 3 for a review of similarities and differences between the two episodes. See also Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1090. See also Bailey, *The Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John*, 12-17; and A. Plummer who highlights seven contrasting points between Luke's and John's episode of the miraculous catch of fish. For further reading see Plummer, *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, 147.

⁶ Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 200.

However, other scholars would place Luke's narrative in the pre-resurrection period as there is a lack of details of a resurrection story.⁷

Moreover, this chapter proceeded with an in-depth analysis of the pericopes when comparing both narratives. In Lk 5:1-11, there is not only an episode about a miraculous catch of fish but also an emphasis on various themes underlying the account. Thus, Jesus Christ's omniscience of a catch of fish, Peter's confession and the call of the first disciples are just a few themes in the subject matter. Clearly, Luke compares Christ's call for discipleship and mission, to the fishing and the large catch described in the account. Throughout this comparison, Luke carefully highlights the change that takes place in Peter, that is, from being a fisherman to a 'fisherman of men.'⁸ Peter's confession of his sinfulness nature has a dual role of revealing Jesus Christ's divinity and humanity's fragility, while at the same time conveying it as a dependent condition for discipleship to flourish. Of greater importance is the Lucan motif of mission, whereby Peter leaves everything and follows Jesus, the one who leads the people.⁹

For Ridderbos, it makes sense that such an abundance of fish for a small number of disciples (Jn 21) shows how Christ's promise and mandate to the disciples (Lk 5:10) is effectively symbolised in this narrative.¹⁰ While from a canonical perspective, the metaphor of fishing for people in Jn 21 makes more sense after having read Lk 5, scholars do not undermine the significant symbolism in either episodes.¹¹ Brown, for example, contends that while the story had initially served a purpose for Peter to recognise the Risen Lord, this does not undervalue the significant symbolic meaning that is similar in either episodes: "the apostolic mission that will 'catch men.'¹² For Brown, this symbolism attached to the miraculous catch of fish preceded either Luke's or John's editions. Only then, Luke and John have developed the miracle story in light of their motifs; in Luke this was related to Christ's call, in John it ends up with the meal.¹³ Then again, it is the latter episode which poses dubious questions about the meaning of 'fishing for men.'

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Bock, *Luke*, 783.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 660

¹¹ Reynolds, "Recasting a Fish Story," 147.

¹² Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. 2: 1097.

¹³ Reynolds, "Recasting a Fish Story," 147.

While in Lk 5, the miraculous catch of fish was portrayed as ‘fishing for men’ and later expressed as a missionary call, in Jn 21 there seems to be an uncertain pattern whereby the catching of fish as ‘fishing for men’ ends with a meal of fish and bread. Reynolds argues that scholars have justified this incongruency, or difficulty with understanding the implied symbolism as a result of a later editing. About this Bultmann claims: “So ends the story, which in the form that lies before us offers such a remarkable confusion of motifs that one can hardly say wherein the real point lies.” It is through this attitude that “scholars allow the contrasting metaphors to simply sit uncomfortably together.”¹⁴ In fact, many modern scholars, while acknowledging the differences and the long debated historical-source questions, they also allow the two episodes to bring out their distinct theology and pericopes and point to the missiological function of the Church. As Culpepper writes:

The two stories unite the preaching mission of the Church in gathering new converts and the sacramental mission of the Church in nourishing believers with the body of Christ and the presence of the Risen Lord.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., 148.

¹⁵ Alan Culpepper, “Designs for the Church in the Imagery of John 21:1-14” as quoted in Reynolds, “Recasting a Fish Story,” 148.

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