

Peter's Commissioning

John 21

“So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, Do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My lambs.’”

255

The Commissioning of Peter



Sequence of Jesus' Later Appearances

6. To **seven disciples** (at Tabgha?) John 21:1-25

7. To **five hundred followers on a mountain** (in Galilee)

Matt 28:16-20; 1 Cor 15:6

8. To **James**, Jesus' brother (in Jerusalem?) 1 Cor 15:7

9. To the **apostles and Jesus' followers** (in Jerusalem)

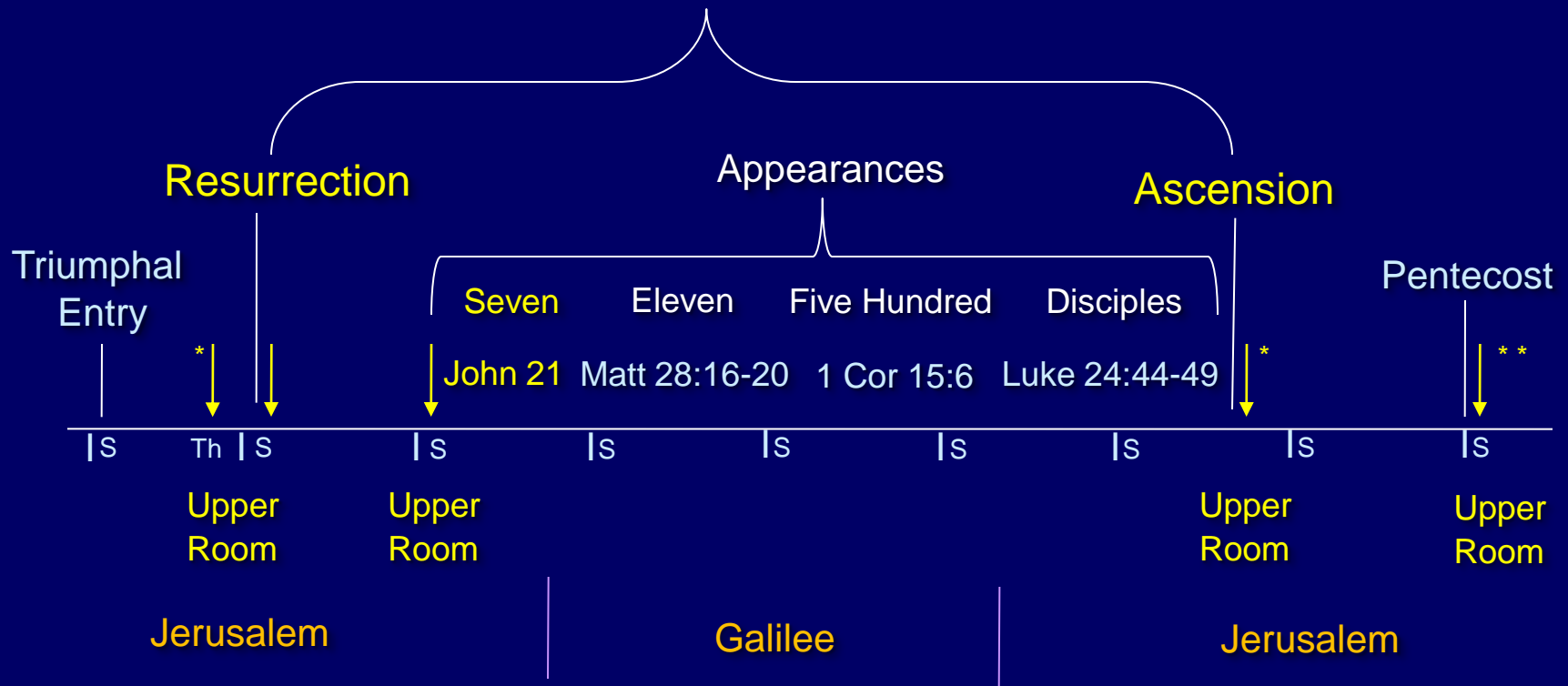
Luke 24:44-53

10. To **Jesus' followers on the Mount of Olives** (in Jerusalem)

Act 1:3-8

“The Forty Days”

“ . . . appearing to them over a period of forty days, speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God.”



* “Upper Room” so identified in the text

** Resurrection + 50 days

John 21:1

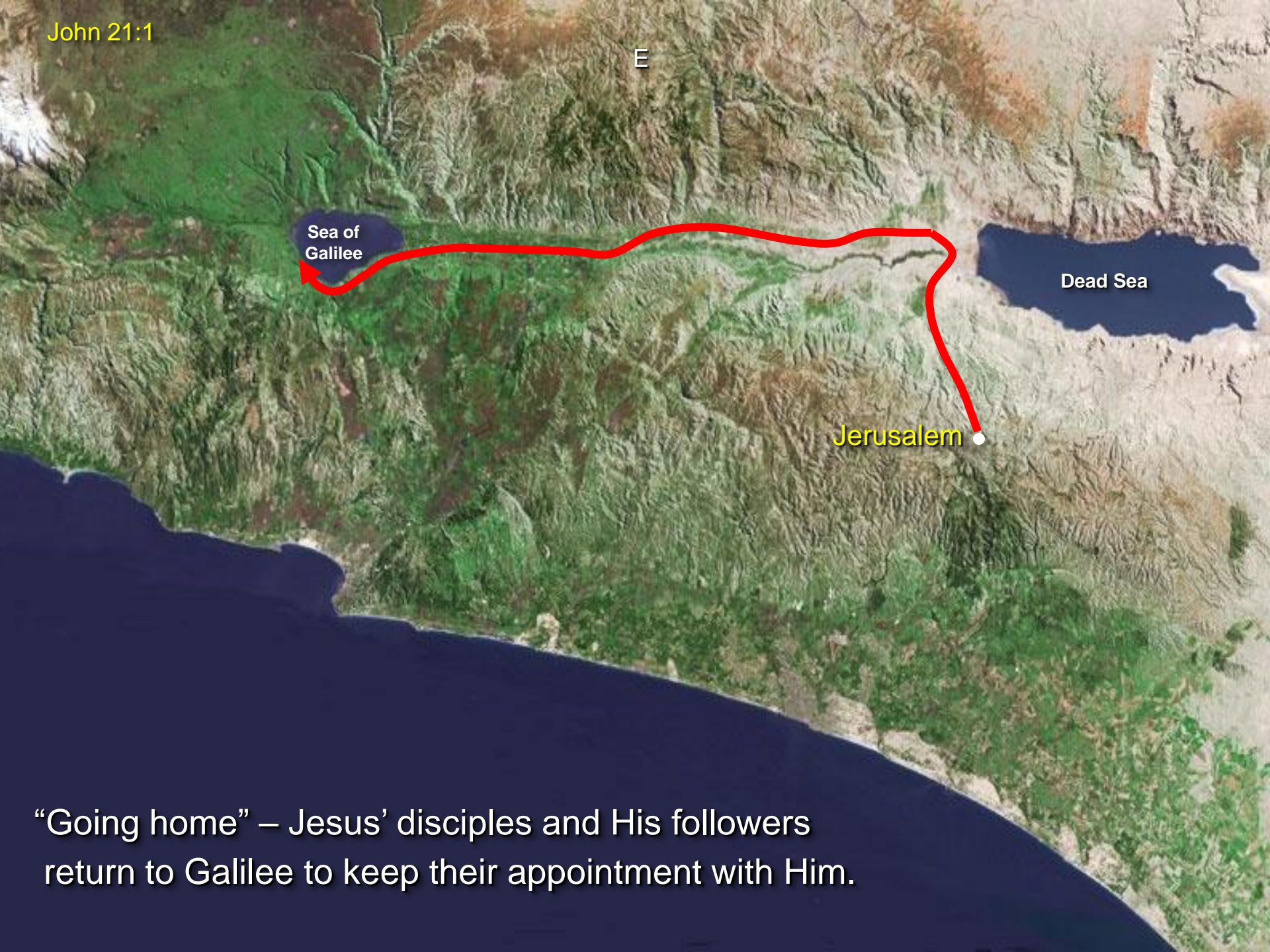
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Sea of Galilee

Dead Sea

Jerusalem

“Going home” – Jesus’ disciples and His followers return to Galilee to keep their appointment with Him.





Bethsaida

E

• Kursi

The Sea
of Galilee

“After these things Jesus
manifested Himself again
to the disciples at the
Sea of Tiberias.”

• Capernaum

• Tabgha

• Migdal

Jesus' followers from Galilee return "home" from Jerusalem to the familiar north shore of the lake and wait for Him to meet them.

NE

Golan Heights

Bethsaida

Capernaum

Tabgha

Jesus probably met with His disciples near **Tabgha** where He had called the four fishermen.

The Reunion in Galilee



The Context of the Galilee Meeting

Jesus: “Strike down the **Shepherd** and the **sheep** of the flock **shall be scattered.**” *Matt 26:31, a quotation of Zech 13:7*

Jesus: “I will go before you to **Galilee.**” *Matt 26:32*

Gethsemane

■ Angel: “But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going before you into **Galilee.**’” *Mark 16:7*

■ Jesus: “. . . Go and take word to My brethren to leave for **Galilee**, and there they shall see Me.” *Matt 28:10*

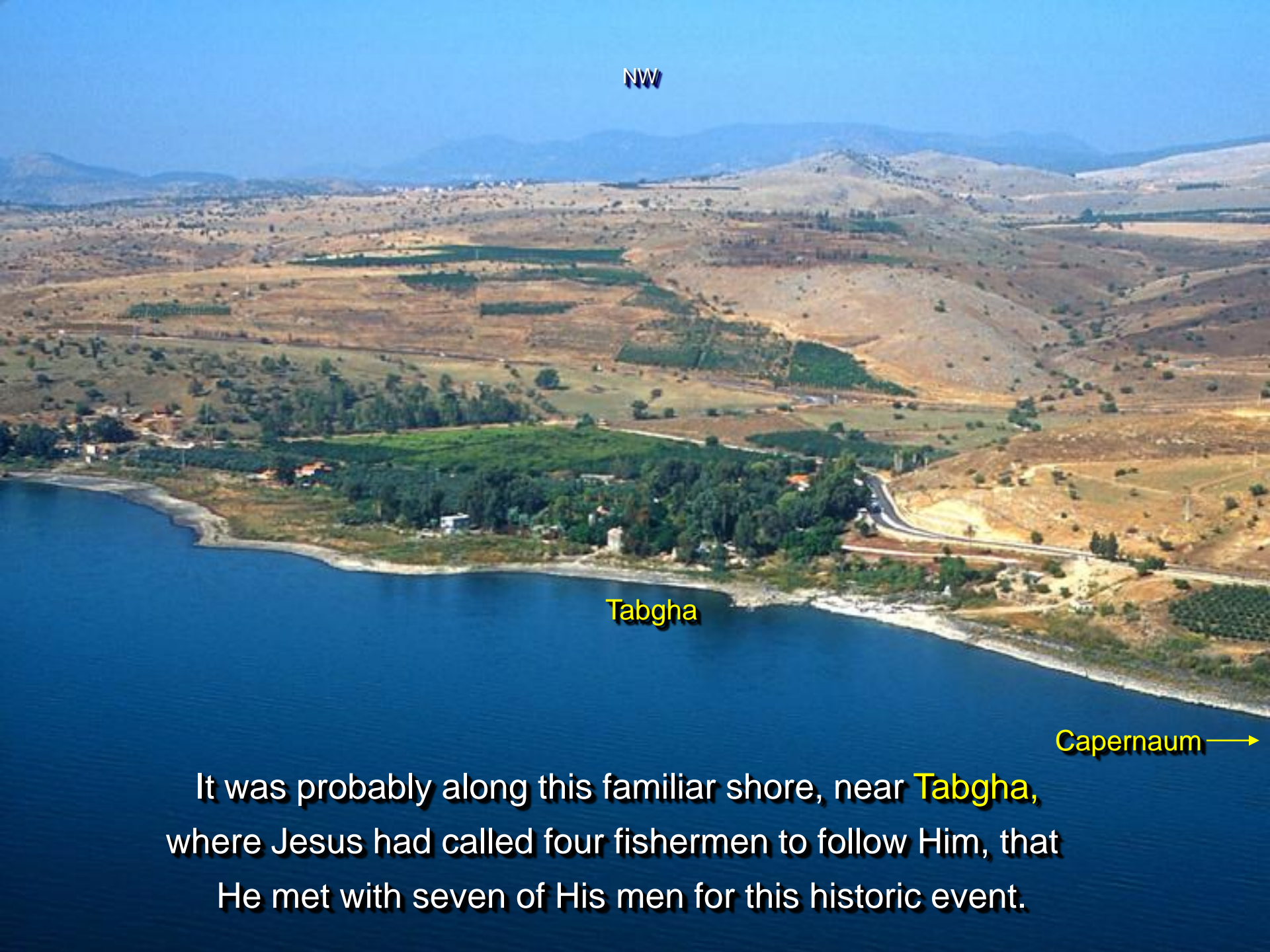
At the tomb

On the shore of **the Sea of Galilee** Jesus tested **Peter** three times and there He commissioned him to **shepherd** the “**scattered flock.**”

Purposes of the Meeting

- The appointment of Peter provided a leadership bridge between the Gospels and the book of Acts.
- It established the essential qualification for leadership in the Church: love for the Shepherd of the sheep.
- It assigned a new primary role to Peter – from a fisher of men to a shepherd of sheep.
- It provided opportunity for Peter to three times affirm publicly his love for Jesus after he had three times denied that he knew Him.
- It established, in the presence of the other disciples, Jesus' selection of Peter to lead the first generation of the Church in His absence.

NW



Tabgha

Capernaum →

It was probably along this familiar shore, near **Tabgha**, where Jesus had called four fishermen to follow Him, that He met with seven of His men for this historic event.

“Breakfast on the Shore”

Recorded by an eyewitness reporter

- Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, John and James + two: **Why?** v 1
- Fishing at night: **Why?** No catch: **Why?** v 3
- Jesus on the beach: **Why there?** Jesus' thoughts?
- John reflecting / Peter reacting: **Why? How?** v 7
- Charcoal fire, fish, bread and Jesus: **Linkage?** vv 6, 9, 13
- Peter beached the dragnet full of fish: **Linkage?** v 11
- Transition: from fishing → shepherding: Luke 5 – Acts 1-12
- Peter's destiny: “Follow Me.” **Why? Where?** vv 19,22
- Peter and John: **Linkages in Acts** (and beyond)

Would Peter have remembered . . .

- that **other catch of fish** from his boat after that night of unsuccessful fishing near the same place? (Luke 5:1-11)
- that **other charcoal fire**, the one in Caiaphas' courtyard, and the events of that night? (John 18:12-23)
- that **other occasion** (the previous day) when Jesus had multiplied the bread and the same kind of little fish (Gk. *opsarion*) to feed the multitude at Bethsaida? (John 6:9-11)

Why did Jesus ask Peter . . .

- “Do you love Me more than you love **these fish**”
(and the fishing business)? or
- “Do you love Me more than you love **these men?**” or
- “Do you love Me more than **these men love me?**”

Peter, “Follow Me . . .”

- As a **fisherman**, you will be catching men. (Luke 5:10)
- As a **shepherd**, you will be leading My Church. (1 Pet 5:1-5)
 - “Tend My lambs”
 - “Shepherd My sheep”
 - “Tend My sheep”
- As a **witness**, you will die by crucifixion. (John 21:18,19)
 - **Jesus commissioned Peter**
 - not to an office but to a ministry,
 - not to rule but to serve,
 - not to build a kingdom but to bear fruit.

Peter’s change of verbs (from *agapao* to *phileo* = “love,”) may have reflected his apparent irritation with Jesus’ asking this question for a third time.

A New Role for Peter

■ Fishing for men

- Model: Jesus
- Purpose: evangelizing
- Role: evangelist
- Function: preaching

“Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matt 4:19)

“And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.’” (Luke 5:10)

■ Shepherding sheep

- Model: Jesus
- Purpose: discipling
- Role: shepherd
- Function: leading

“Tend My lambs.”

“Shepherd My sheep.”

“Tend My sheep.”

(John 21:15-17)

Transition: From Fishing to Shepherding

Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” . . . “We will come with you.”

- What did Peter expect to happen when he returned to Galilee?
- What did Peter expect Jesus to do/say when He appeared?
- Why did Peter respond as he did when he saw Jesus?
- What would Jesus’ questions and commands mean to Peter?
- Would Peter have chosen shepherding over fishing?
- Contrasts: **ruling** in a **kingdom** vs. **shepherding** in the **Church**

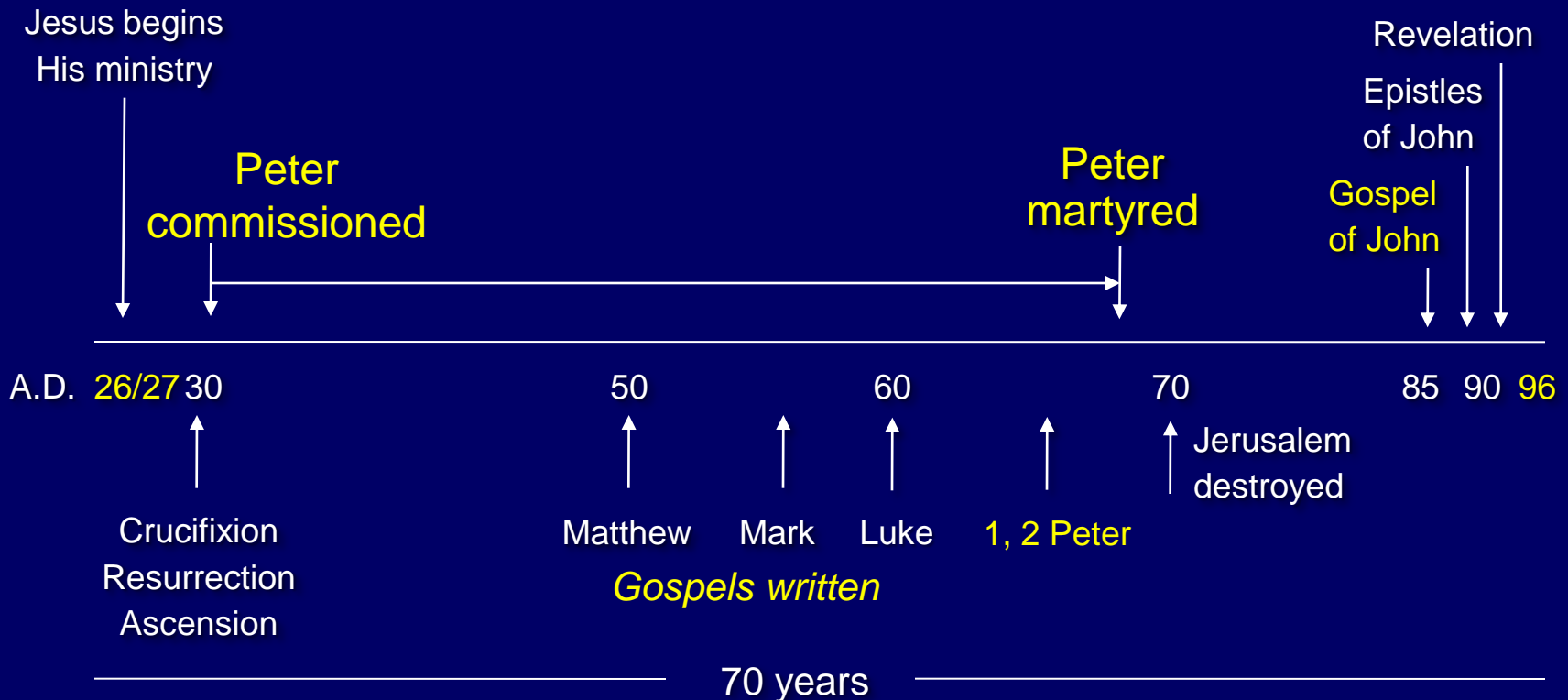
“Tend My lambs”

“Shepherd My sheep”

“Tend My sheep”

From catching fish to shepherding sheep

“Do you love Me more than these?”	“Yes, Lord”	“Tend My Lambs.”
“Do you love Me?”	“Yes, Lord”	“Shepherd My sheep.”
“Do you love Me?”	“Yes, Lord”	“Tend My sheep.”



- **Luke 5:1-11:** He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret . . . He said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water, and let down your nets for a catch.” And Simon answered, “. . . We worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at your bidding I will let down the nets.” And when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish. But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus feet, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not fear, from now on you will be **catching men.**”

Two years later: same place, same men

- **John 21:3-7:** So Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” “We will come with you.” And that night they caught nothing. But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach, “You do not have any fish, do you?” They answered Him, “No.” “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find a catch.” They cast therefore, and they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. So when Simon Peter heard it was the Lord . . . he threw himself into the sea. After breakfast: “Simon, Do you love me more than these? . . . **Shepherd My sheep.**”



Tabgha Harbor

Traditional site of Peter's commissioning

Along this northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, where two years before Jesus had called Peter to become a **fisher of men**, He commissioned him to **shepherd the sheep** of His new "flock," His Church.

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The shore at Tabgha



The shore at Tabgha

“The Rest of the Story”

Remembering Tabgha – 30 years later

Thirty years after his commissioning on the beach at Tabgha, now living in the shadow of his own cross, the seasoned shepherd counseled another generation of shepherds:

“Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock, and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

The Shepherd's Last Words

*Therefore I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and as partakers also of the glory that is to be revealed, **shepherd the flock of God among you**, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be **examples to the flock**.*

*And when the **Chief Shepherd** appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*

Humble yourselves therefore, under the might handy of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, *casting all your anxiety upon Him*, because He cares for you. *Be sober of spirit, be on the alert*. Your adversary, the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

But resist Him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

Points to Ponder

- Believers are Jesus' sheep, bought with His blood.
- Love for Jesus, the Great Shepherd, must motivate our ministry.
- Feeding the flock and tending the lambs is essential for the health and growth of the Church.
- Shepherding involves feeding and protecting the flock.
- Shepherding can be messy.
- Ministry is a life; not a career.
- Jesus not only has purposes for our lives but also time parameters.
“ . . . signifying by what death he would glorify God.” (John 21:19)



Sunset over the Sea of Galilee