

PETER THROWS HIMSELF INTO THE SEA: DISCIPLESHIP, GRACE, AND JOHN'S USE  
OF LUKE 5:1-11 IN JOHN 21:1-14

**Introduction**

Upon reading John 21:1-14 and Luke 5:1-11, one cannot help but notice the main commonality the two stories share: a miraculous catch of fish.<sup>1</sup> This has led to much debate about the relationship between John and Luke, and contributes to the larger debate surrounding John's relationship to the synoptic gospels. There are broadly three positions in the debate surrounding the relationship between John and the synoptic gospels: (1) that John is literarily dependent upon the synoptic gospels, (2) that John was literarily independent of the synoptics, and (3) that John is aware of, and conversant with, but not literarily dependent upon the synoptics.<sup>2</sup> After briefly outlining these three positions, we determine that the third, mediating position is best. We conclude, however, that John does draw on Luke 5:1-11 John 21:1-14. We show this first by determining the purpose of John 21 in light of its being written by the same author as John 1-20. One of the primary purposes of John 21 is to complete the arc of Peter's discipleship by showing his reconciliation with Jesus. In light of this purpose, we then present evidence from John 21:1-14 that John consciously used Luke 5:1-11. We conclude that John uses Luke 5:1-11 order to further show Peter's growth since his earliest days of discipleship. To this end, John alludes to the separate Lukan account of the miraculous catch of fish in order to contrast Peter's response to Christ after the first catch of fish with Peter's second response to Christ after this second miraculous catch. In our conclusion we also note an implication of this study: that John uses Luke as scripture.

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<sup>1</sup> Frans Neiryck, "John 21," *NTS* 36.3 (1990): 322–23: "There is... no doubt that the similarities between Luke 5 and John 21 are important and that some kind of relationship can hardly be denied."

<sup>2</sup> James D Dvorak, "The Relationship Between John and the Synoptic Gospels," *JETS* 41.2 (1998): 201–02. Dvorak provides a good summary of these three views, the primary proponents of each, and the history of the discussion. With us, Dvorak holds to the third "mediating" position, finding in John and the synoptics "an interlocking tradition—that is, they mutually reinforce and explain each other" (213).

## John and the Synoptics

One cannot enter study of the relationship between John 21 and Luke 5 without discussing the state of the debate concerning John's relationship to the Synoptics. The three positions described above each deserve brief consideration.

### Johannine Dependence

This view argues that John makes use of other sources in writing his gospel, and that among these sources are not only the tradition behind the synoptics, but the synoptic documents themselves. C. K. Barrett, for example, argues that it is "probable... that John was familiar with Mark, and probable also, though in a smaller degree, that he knew Luke."<sup>3</sup> Barrett lists a series of ten passages "which occur *in the same order* in both Mark and John," and argues that in several "there are close verbal resemblances."<sup>4</sup> Richard Bauckham also notes a relationship between John and Mark, though acknowledges that "John is not dependent on Mark in *the same way* that, according to the Two Source theory, Matthew and Luke are dependent on Mark, i.e. with a high degree of verbatim agreement."<sup>5</sup> Closer to our purposes, Frans Neiryck argues that in several places in John, chapter 21 among them, "the text known and used by John is... that of the Gospel of Luke, and not that of a common source or a pre-Lukan tradition."<sup>6</sup>

There are several potential problems with this understanding of John. One is that adherents to this position often assume that John, or even an anonymous "Fourth Evangelist" did not write John 21. Rudolph Bultmann, for example, believes that even if "the beloved disciple" authored the

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<sup>3</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, Second. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), 15.

<sup>4</sup> Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 43–44. Emphasis original.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Bauckham, *The Christian World Around the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 181. Emphasis original. Similarly, Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 16. It should be noted that Bauckham elsewhere states that he believes "the author of the Gospel of John knew Mark's Gospel and expected many of his readers to know it, although this is not the same as claiming that he used Mark as a source." Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 127.

<sup>6</sup> Neiryck, "John 21," 336. While not everyone believes that John knew Luke, Bishop Cassian, "John 21," *NTS* 3.2 (1957): 133, claims "there is a close parallelism throughout the Fourth Gospel with the Gospel of St Luke." This straightforward assertion wants some backing up. If only we were skilled enough to read Cassian's more thorough paper delivered originally in German and translated later... into Greek (132, footnote 3).

Gospel, “the Gospel as we have it was edited and provided with this supplementary chapter after his death.”<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Barrett finds it unlikely that the author of John 1-20 would add on chapter 21 “in so clumsy a manner”.<sup>8</sup> Often coupled with such views is a late dating of the Gospel of John or an earlier edition of the Gospel without John 21, which contradicts the known evidence we have for John’s gospel.<sup>9</sup>

Regardless of one’s choice of author, Johannine dependence upon the synoptic Gospels often implies redactional activity on the part of John. When Neiryneck argues, “the text known and used by John is, I think, that of the Gospel of Luke,” he means that John manipulated the text of Luke 5 in order to fabricate his story of the miraculous catch.<sup>10</sup> Michael D. Goulder also assumes Johannine dependence upon the synoptic gospels. While with him we agree that John knew the synoptic gospels, Goulder sees John with his “imaginative gifts” using elements from each to imaginatively create his own patchwork Galilee post-resurrection appearance in John 21 from elements of Mark 6, Matthew 14, and “especially [Luke 5].”<sup>11</sup> There is a destructive urge in such views. John does not often function in a symbiotic relationship with the other gospel writers. He corrects and seeks to claim superiority over the other gospels by twisting their words to suit his own purposes.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, ed. G. R. Beasley-Murray, R. W. N. Hoare, and J. K. Riches (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), 702.

<sup>8</sup> Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 577. Barrett claims that the internal evidence to the author of John reveals “not that the gospel as it stands is a first-hand historical document but that those responsible for it were seriously concerned about the meaning and authority of the apostolic witness to the history of Jesus,” 119.

<sup>9</sup> All manuscript and patristic evidence indicates that the Gospel of John was never circulated without chapter 21. For patristic sources, see Charles E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 96, 118. For manuscript evidence, see Juan Chapa, “The Early Text of John,” in *The Early Text of the New Testament*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 141, <http://search.ebs.cohost.com/lo gin.aspx? direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=462589&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>10</sup> Neiryneck, “John 21,” 336.

<sup>11</sup> Michael D. Goulder, *Luke: A New Paradigm*, vol. 1 of *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 20* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 323–24.

<sup>12</sup> Edward F. (Edward Ferdinand) Siegman, “St John’s Use of the Synoptic Material,” *CBQ* 30.2 (1968): 197; Benedict Viviano, “JOHN’S USE OF MATTHEW: BEYOND TWEAKING,” *RB* 111.2 (2004): 217; Chris Keith, “The Competitive Textualization of the Jesus Tradition in John 20:30-31 and 21:24-25,” *CBQ* 78.2 (2016): 337. Against this view, Birger Gerhardsson, *The Reliability of the Gospel Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 139: “Nothing here indicates that the Gospel of John was intended to be the only acceptable gospel. The spirit in these notices is not exclusive. The Gospel of John has not come to displace but to complete the others.”

Lastly, it should be noted that the language of dependence is itself inaccurate, even considering the qualified definition of dependence given by Bauckham. While John may at times use vocabulary similar to the synoptics in sequences similar to the synoptics, “dependence” argues for too much influence of the synoptics upon John.<sup>13</sup> John’s unique style throughout is proof that John did not “depend” on any of the sources he used to the extent of mimicry. Dependence implies a level of reliance upon other material that is not found in John. With Chris Keith, we find it preferable to speak of in terms of John’s “knowledge of” or “familiarity with” another text.<sup>14</sup>

### Johannine Independence

The theory of John writing independent of the synoptics can be addressed briefly. It functions as a helpful corrective to Johannine dependence. Those who hold to this position find the same evidence cited by those holding to Johannine dependence points better to substantial independence. D. Moody Smith, Jr. represents this desire to temper one’s reading of John in light of the synoptics when he says, “While we can never exclude the possibility that John knew the Synoptic gospels... the evidence that he did not use them as a principal source, if he knew them at all, has been mounting” such that the burden of proof lies on those who hold to Johannine Dependence.<sup>15</sup> While we disagree with his overall assessment, Smith is right to remind scholars that to call the synoptic gospels a “principal source” for John is difficult in light of John’s unique style which we have already noted above. It is better to not overstate John’s dependence upon the synoptic gospels.

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<sup>13</sup> Leon Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 16–17, argues, for instance, that Barrett’s list of passages that occur in the same sequence in John and Mark “is not...very impressive” given that most of the events, like the ministry of John the Baptist or events dealing with Jesus’ passion, necessarily occurred in the same sequential order.

<sup>14</sup> Chris Keith, “The Competitive Textualization of the Jesus Tradition in John 20:30-31 and 21:24-25,” *CBQ* 78.2 (2016): 321, footnote 2.

<sup>15</sup> D Moody (Dwight Moody) Smith, “John 12:12ff and the Question of John’s Use of the Synoptics,” *JBL* 82.1 (1963): 64.

### Johannine Interlocking

This theory mediates between the previous two theories. Those who hold to it argue that neither literary dependence nor literary independence has been proved.<sup>16</sup> Leon Morris argues “There is a great deal of evidence shows that each [gospel] needs the other for its complete understanding.”<sup>17</sup> This “interlocking” relationship between John and the synoptics accomplishes something significant for the purpose of this essay. If one holds that John explains the synoptics, and the synoptics explain John, one can read both John 21 and Luke 5 as text which mutually reinforce each other. This view allows for us to read these stories and consider how John’s account draws from and incorporates Luke’s material in a way that builds upon Luke’s account. We must acknowledge, however, that while we hold generally to this mediating position which seeks to not be overly dogmatic about where John does or does not depend upon the synoptics, we posit with Neiryneck that in the case of John 21, John interacts with the text of Luke itself.<sup>18</sup> What Neiryneck lacks is an approach to the two texts that allows for John to build on Luke allusively and constructively. Before we analyze the text, however, we build our case for John’s constructive use of Luke by discussing John’s purpose in writing John 21.

### The Purpose of John 21

#### A Note on Authorship

In discussing the purpose of John 21, we must briefly comment on the authorship of the final chapter of the fourth gospel. It has previously been noted that there is no manuscript evidence for the gospel being transmitted without John 21. Nevertheless, many consider John 21 the work of a redactor or editor. This redactor is attributed different levels of skill. Barrett’s redactor adds material in “so clumsy a manner,” and Raymond E. Brown’s redactor “artificially tack[s] on” the narrative of John 21.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, Patrick E. Spencer’s redactor appends his epilogue to a

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<sup>16</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 51.

<sup>17</sup> Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, 41.

<sup>18</sup> Neiryneck, “John 21,” 336.

<sup>19</sup> Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 577; Raymond E. Brown, S. S., *The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI*, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman, Anchor Bible 29A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), 1080.

previous form of the gospel so skillfully that what he interpreted intertextually was then read by audiences afterwards intratextually due to the seamless nature of his writing.<sup>20</sup> The character and skill of this anonymous redactor unknown. His work either sticks out like a sore thumb or blends into the Johannine corpus. Either way, his identity is unknown. He may even be the gospel writer himself!<sup>21</sup> Those who see a redactor or editor here find that John 21 departs “from the spirit of [John 1–20].”<sup>22</sup>

Many reasons are cited for attributing the gospel to another author. Bultmann made much of the linguistic differences between John 21 and the rest of the gospel.<sup>23</sup> More recently, both critical and evangelical scholars acknowledge that linguistic arguments are not final grounds for an argument.<sup>24</sup> A greater argument for another author comes from the seemingly perfect conclusion to the gospel in John 20:30-31. After John says, “these things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,” (John 20:31, ESV) why write more? Many believe that there the gospel “reached its conclusion.”<sup>25</sup> Behind this argument is the assumption that the epilogue lacks purpose. Carson makes a helpful argument against this opinion by comparing the gospel to a ‘whodunit’ novel. If an author masterfully draws the mystery in his book to a climactic conclusion, is it wrong for him to provide further narration that completes the story arc of other characters?<sup>26</sup> To draw another comparison to literature, do we think that the long conclusion to Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is without warrant, because at a number of other points the narrative could sufficiently conclude? We might if the narrative, as it stands, concludes poorly, but it does not. Likewise, if John 21 ended poorly, we might find more warrant

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<sup>20</sup> Patrick E Spencer, “Narrative Echoes in John 21: Intertextual Interpretation and Intratextual Connection,” *JSNT* 22.75 (2000): 49–68.

<sup>21</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Second., WBC 36 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1999), 396.

<sup>22</sup> Gerard S. Sloyan, *John*, Int (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 230.

<sup>23</sup> Bultmann, *John: A Commentary*, 700.

<sup>24</sup> Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 577; Carson, *John*, 665. Carson notes, “Most of these [unique words to John 21] are so tied to the subject matter that they cannot be viewed as particularly significant” (665). This is especially the case with all vocabulary related to fishing, only mentioned here in John.

<sup>25</sup> Bultmann, *John: A Commentary*, 700. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 576, states that John 20:30-31 “mark the conclusion of the gospel as at first planned.” A new development necessitated the writing of this “addendum.”

<sup>26</sup> Carson, *John*, 666.

to conclude that the chapter is a later addition. But the details we receive about the identity of the Beloved Disciple, as well as the revelation of him as the writer of the gospel are themselves masterful touches on the conclusion of the book.<sup>27</sup> The Beloved Disciple can confidently remain the author the entire book. With this understanding in place, we can now begin to discover what is the Disciple's purpose for the conclusion of his gospel.

### The Story Arc of Discipleship

While not the only purpose of John 21, one primary purpose it has is to complete the narrative of prominent disciples in the gospel. When one reads John 21, one cannot help but notice that this chapter is <sup>28</sup>“mainly about Simon Peter.” Peter initiates the fishing trip (21:3), responds to the Beloved Disciple's realization by throwing himself into the sea (21:8), hauls the fish to shore (21:11), is questioned and restored by Jesus (21:15-19), and initiates the concluding discussion about the Beloved disciple (21:20-23).<sup>29</sup> Perhaps of greatest interest to John's readers would be Peter's restoration, which is not detailed elsewhere in the gospels, or even in the rest of the New Testament. John enables his audience to see Peter's character development since his denial of Christ. Writing after the completion of the synoptic gospels,<sup>30</sup> he fills in the gap for the sake of the church in his day.<sup>31</sup> The scriptures Even more, as part of this restoration, Peter's death is foretold. According to patristic sources, Peter died under Nero in the mid-60s AD.<sup>32</sup> John writes to remind

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<sup>27</sup> To this we might add that double endings are a characteristic of Johannine literature. See Rodney A. Whitacre, *John*, IVPNTC 4 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 489.

<sup>28</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 1026.

<sup>29</sup> Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 1026.

<sup>30</sup> Carson, *John*, 82–87, argues for a date between 80 and 85 AD. The tradition range for the dating of John among evangelical scholars is sometime between 80 and 98 AD, see William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of John*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), 31.

<sup>31</sup> Hendriksen, *John*, 475.

<sup>32</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Eusebius: The Church History*, trans. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2007), 75.

his readers of Peter's faithful death and encourage them to follow his example as the next generation of disciples. Peter's arc then becomes an encouragement to faithful discipleship.<sup>33</sup>

The Beloved Disciple also makes several significant appearances in the chapter. Though not listed in the list of disciples who went fishing, he is first recognizes Christ after the catch of fish and tells Peter (21:7). Just as his speech brings the narrative's attention to Peter's response, so later Peter's question to Jesus brings the focus back upon the disciple (21:20), on which it will remain until the last verse. The personalities and relationship of Peter and the Beloved Disciple are thus highlighted in the conclusion to John. We may conclude that one function of John 21 is to "provide an edifying end to the story of these two men."<sup>34</sup>

In fact, John concludes his gospel with an account of these disciples that in several ways mirrors John 1. Jesus refers to Peter as "Simon, son of John" when restoring him, drawing attention to the first words Jesus spoke to him (John 1:42).<sup>35</sup> Christ's three questions for Peter constitute a new beginning for them. Neiryck also points out that Peter turning and seeing the Beloved Disciple following in John 21:20a "looks like a rephrasing of [John] 1:38," where Jesus turns and sees the unnamed disciples following him.<sup>36</sup> With him we suggest that 21:20a and 1:38 form an inclusio of allusions to the Beloved Disciple.<sup>37</sup> John 21 itself functions with John 1:35-42 as an inclusio of discipleship that bookends the gospel.<sup>38</sup> Jesus' first calling of his disciples has ongoing

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<sup>33</sup> Carson, *John*, 667. More than faithful discipleship, Peter's restoration may give Christians under persecution a template for testing and restoring those who temporarily denied Christ to avoid persecution.

<sup>34</sup> Paul S. Minear, "The Original Functions of John 21," *JBL* 102.1 (1983): 91. By edifying, we also imply a harmonious, though contrasting relationship between the two disciples. See R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 121; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 395. Often it is claimed that John asserts the superiority of the Beloved Disciple over Peter in this passage. See Neiryck, "John 21," 336; Goulder, *Luke*, 325. Goulder also over-reads an issue between Johannine and Petrine churches into the text.

<sup>35</sup> Minear, "Original Functions," 92.

<sup>36</sup> Neiryck, "John 21," 331-32. The passages in Greek read, ἐπιστραφεῖς ὁ Πέτρος βλέπει τὸν μαθητὴν . . . ἀκολουθοῦντα" (21:20a), and "στραφεῖς δε ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ θεασάμενος αὐτοῦ ἀκολουθοῦντας (1:38). Neiryck further notes that "in both passages the verb ἀκολουθεῖν can be understood in its literal meaning (to walk behind)" as opposed to the "'following' of discipleship" (332). See also Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 128, who sees this same parallel as evidence for an "inclusio of eyewitness testimony" in John.

<sup>37</sup> Neiryck, "John 21," 332.

<sup>38</sup> Majella Franzmann and Michael Klinger, "The Call Stories of John 1 and John 21," *SVTQ* 36.1-2 (1992): 7-15, describe these parallels in terms of two different "Call Stories" and argue that "the first and final scenes of the Gospel complement each other consciously," concluding from this that John 21 is written by the same author as the rest of the gospel (15).



significance for them as they prepare for discipleship in the post-resurrection era. Readers of the gospel should both recognize the growth and development in the disciple's lives over the course of the book and also trust that they too will grow. The last chapter of the gospel points disciples back to their beginnings as it points back to Peter and the Beloved Disciple's beginnings in the company of Christ. With the purposeful focus on discipleship and growth demonstrated in John 21, we now proceed to argue that John makes use of Luke's account of miraculous catch of fish to show further how Peter has developed since his early days of discipleship.

### **Evidence for John's Use of Luke 5:1-11 in John 21:1-14**

John, as we have argued above, likely knew Luke's gospel by the time of his writing between 80 and 98 AD. Luke most likely was written before Acts, which, due to its ending shortly after Paul arrives in Rome, can be dated to around 64 AD. This dating places Luke some time before this, either in the 50s or early 60s AD.<sup>39</sup> If it is true, as Bauckham has argued, that "the early Christian movement was not a scattering of relatively isolated, introverted communities, but rather a network of communities in constant close communication with one another," it is likely that John became acquainted with Luke's gospel in the twenty or more years between Luke writing and John writing.<sup>40</sup> This does not prove that Luke *is* a source in John, but it shows that Luke *can be* a source. With this in mind, we shall turn to considering textual proof for John's use of Luke's gospel.

### Textual Evidence

At the outset, it should be noted that if John uses Luke, we should expect him to use Luke in the same way he uses Old Testament scripture. John echoes and alludes to scripture; he is free

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<sup>39</sup> William F. Arndt, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), 23; Robert J. Cara, "Luke," in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*, ed. Michael J. Kruger (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 95.

<sup>40</sup> Richard Bauckham, "The Audience of the Fourth Gospel," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 102.

in his citations; nevertheless his knowledge of the Old Testament is comprehensive.<sup>41</sup> We should recognize that John likely would treat synoptic material in the same manner.

***Subject Material: Primary Narrativial Parallels***

The two accounts tell similar stories: Simon (Luke 5:3; John 21:2), among others (Luke 5:2, 7); John 21:2), fishes all night and catches nothing (Luke 5:5; John 21:3), and then is told by Jesus to cast his nets again (Luke 5:4; John 21:6); obeying the command (Luke 5:6; John 21:6), the fishermen's nets are filled to almost bursting with fish (Luke 5:6; John 21:6), and the disciples in the narrative respond both with words (Luke 5:8; John 21:7) and deeds (Luke 5:8; John 21:7). Both narratives conclude with disciples following Jesus (Luke 5:11; John 21:20a). Without needing redactional activity to explain the similarities, we do not need to find an abundance of exact wording to find it possible that John wrote his narrative aware of the narrative in Luke 5. If Bauckham is right that John knows Mark but does not quote him verbatim, then if John knew Luke, he would be just as likely to use him without quoting him verbatim.<sup>42</sup>

***The List of Disciples (John 21:2)***

John lists seven disciples who were present at Jesus' third appearance: Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the Sons of Zebedee, and two unnamed disciples. In our discussion of the purpose of John 21, we noted that John hearkens back to the beginning of the gospel to form an inclusio of discipleship. Here we should note again the presence of Nathanael, who also appears in the discipleship narrative of John 1. Likewise, two unnamed disciples make an appearance, pointing back to John's two unnamed disciples (John 1:35, 37).<sup>43</sup> Due to the Beloved Disciple's identification with the unnamed disciple in other parts of the gospel, many argue that the author cannot be one of the sons of Zebedee mentioned here.<sup>44</sup> This is not necessarily the case. John likely uses the two unnamed disciples to refer back to his early calling narrative. There we learn that one

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<sup>41</sup> Carson, *John*, 51; Ruth Sheridan, *Retelling Scripture: "The Jews" and the Scriptural Citations in John 1:19-12:15* (Leiden: BRILL, 2012), 11, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rts/detail.action?docID=842210>.

<sup>42</sup> Bauckham, *The Christian World*, 181.

<sup>43</sup> Neiryneck, "John 21," 332. Commentators are slow to pick up on this connection, though see Francis J. Moloney S.D.B., *The Gospel of John*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington S. J., SP 4 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 549.. Köstenberger merely notes that it is "not uncommon to leave disciples unnamed" and references 1:35-39. Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 588.

<sup>44</sup> Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 436; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 398.

of the unnamed disciples is Andrew, Peter's brother (1:40). The other disciple has "commonly... been thought of as the Beloved Disciple."<sup>45</sup> Because in both places the disciples are mentioned in general terms, it is likely that John means to make this connection between the pairs of unnamed disciples. Nothing requires for them to be the two same unnamed disciples. John wishes for his readers to recognize that he bookends his gospel with the theme of discipleship.

The reference to the "the sons of Zebedee" only occurs here in the book of John. While some have used this as proof of another author of John 21,<sup>46</sup> the use of James and John's patronymic here likely reveals a Johannine echo of the synoptic gospels. This patronymic, found ten times in the synoptic accounts, is found only once in Luke, in the parallel passage of the miraculous catch of fish.<sup>47</sup> This similarity might not stand out, were it not for the similar subject matter of the two accounts: a narrative of a miraculous catch of fish. We also have an argument from absence in both accounts: the absence of Andrew.<sup>48</sup> In the calling narratives in Mark and Matthew we find Simon and Andrew, as well as the Sons of Zebedee (Mark 1:16; Matt 4:18). Only in Luke is Andrew absent. Though it would seem likely for Peter, Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee to be together while fishing in John 21, we again find Andrew absent.<sup>49</sup> In both accounts, the absence of Andrew allows us to focus attention on Peter. Though Andrew was likely involved in both scenes, in both he is left unnamed in order to bring Peter to the fore.

***Subject Material: Temporal Inclusio on Discipleship***

We have already touched on the related subject material found in the miraculous catch of fish, and we have noted that the names involved in both stories allow us to focus on Peter. This points back to the purposes of John 21 which we discussed, one of which was to provide a literary inclusio in John's gospel that emphasized the theme of discipleship. John 1:41-42 we find John's

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<sup>45</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 26. While true, this reference is debated, Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 121.

<sup>46</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), 1401.

<sup>47</sup> Zebedee is also mentioned in the parallel accounts of the calling of the first disciples (Matt 4:18-22; Mk 1:16-20).

<sup>48</sup> Neiryneck, "John 21," 328.

<sup>49</sup> For this reason, we find it likely that one of the unnamed disciples is likely Andrew, who went unnamed in John 1 as well for several verses.

account of Peter's call to discipleship. We find another Petrine call to discipleship in Luke 5:1-11. While some contrast the different calls of Peter with each other and seek to determine which one is most legitimate,<sup>50</sup> it is more likely that the Peter's calling took place in stages.<sup>51</sup> John 1:41-42 and Luke 5:1-11 present two different events in the life of Peter which take place during early stages of his development as a disciple. John forms a literary inclusio by alluding to the former passage in John 21, and a thematic, temporal inclusio by alluding to both the former and the latter passages. It is a thematic inclusio, because what is included is the theme of Peter's discipleship, and it is temporal in that instead of spanning a specific literary unit, this inclusio spans Peter's time as a disciple, and does so intertextually. While the term "inclusio" is not the best technical word to describe this, the term helps make the point that what John is doing literarily within his gospel, he does just as intentionally by alluding intertextually to Luke.

### ***The Beloved Disciple's Confession of Faith (John 21:7)***

As the disciples are hauling in the catch of fish, the Beloved Disciple says to Peter, "It is the Lord!" (John 21:7). This has commonly been used to point out Peter's dullness in contrast the Beloved Disciple's spiritual insight.<sup>52</sup> While the Beloved Disciples' perceptiveness and Peter's impetuous action no doubt reveal John's accurate portrayal of each disciple's personality,<sup>53</sup> there is no necessary animosity being presented here. Rather, the Beloved Disciple and Peter "act in conjunction" with each benefiting from the other's personality.<sup>54</sup> Others have noticed the similarity between the Beloved Disciple's perceptive confession of faith here and Peter's perceptive words in Luke 5:8.<sup>55</sup> While he may be contrasting the two confessions, what is worth more consideration is why John has this revelation. No doubt, the apparently miraculous nature of the event would make him think of Jesus. It is even more likely that John would remember that something similar

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<sup>50</sup> See Samuel O Abogunrin, "The Three Variant Accounts of Peter's Call: Critical, Theological Examination of the Texts," *NTS* 31.4 (1985): 587-602.

<sup>51</sup> Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, 52-53.

<sup>52</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 121; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 395.

<sup>53</sup> Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 177.

<sup>54</sup> Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 660.

<sup>55</sup> Ernst Haenchen, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John*, ed. Robert W. Funk and Ulrich Busse, trans. Robert W. Funk, vol. 2 of *Hermeneia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 223.

to this event happened earlier in his life. This is a natural explanation to why John would recognize Jesus Christ as the figure on the shore.<sup>56</sup> John's confession likely shows that in his mind at the time was the previous miraculous catch of fish. It would no doubt naturally lend to John referencing the story in some way as he narrates the second miraculous catch.

***Peter's Response to John's Confession (John 21:7)***

Peter responds to the Beloved Disciple's confession by throwing himself into the sea. Here we come to the most surprising element in the story. While above we noticed that some draw a comparison between Peter's words in Luke 5:8 and John's in John 21:7, the better comparison is that of Peter's response to the miraculous catch in each story. At the outset of Peter's time with Jesus, the mere occurrence of a miracle has led Peter to a holy dread of Jesus. Peter falls to his knees; he asks Christ to depart from him, and confesses that he is a sinful man. In contrast to the Beloved Disciple's confession of faith, Peter's is more a confession of fear. One might expect a similar fearful reaction here. Robert T. Fortna, arguing against John's dependence upon Luke, cites the absence of this confession in John's account as an "especially puzzling" omission: "Peter's protestation of sinfulness is widely viewed as surprising in its Lukan context but would be highly suitable in [John 21], following as it does Peter's denials in [John 18:11], yet it does not appear in the Johannine text."<sup>57</sup> While we disagree with Fortna's conclusion that John does not know Luke, he points out how surprising both of Peter's reactions are. In Luke 5:8, Peter sees himself as utterly unworthy of Jesus' presence when Jesus has performed a simple miracle. Yet in John 21:7, after Peter has denied Jesus, instead of requesting physical separation between him and Jesus, Peter throws himself into the water "in order to reach Jesus as quickly as possible."<sup>58</sup> Clearly, Peter has changed. The effect is not very strong if John is only showing Peter's development within his Gospel. The upcoming threefold restoration (John 21:15-17) ties closely back to John's account of Peter's denial (John 18:15-18, 25-27). Peter's dive into the sea has no parallel in John's account. Peter has no marked response to Andrew or Jesus when he is initially brought to Jesus (John 1:40-

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<sup>56</sup> Hendriksen, *John*, 480.

<sup>57</sup> Robert T. Fortna, "Diachronic/Synchronic: Reading John 21 and Luke 5," in *John and the Synoptics*, ed. Adelbert Denaux (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 390.

<sup>58</sup> Bultmann, *John: A Commentary*, 702. See also Beasley-Murray, *John*, 400; Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*, 661. With Neiryck, "John 21," 326-27, it is doubtful that we should read Peter's "nakedness as an occasion of shame and his swimming as a reference to repentance." Even more extreme than this is Fortna, "Diachronic/Synchronic," 391, who argues that Peter "covers his nakedness and jumps into the water... evidently to avoid Jesus."

42). Peter is not mentioned in John's account of Jesus walking on water (John 6:16-21), though in Matthew's account, Peter tries to walk on water (Matt 14:28-31).<sup>59</sup> The closest parallel to John 21:7 is Peter's vivid response to Jesus in Luke 5:8. The powerful effect of such an intertextual allusion to Luke's Gospel cannot be denied.

Here Peter's development as a disciple is given center stage. At the first miraculous catch, the slightest sign of Christ's divinity frightened him, even in light of his paltry self-knowledge. Now, with the awareness that he has denied his Lord three times, Peter still swims to Christ. This one act, more than any other, reveals that Peter has grown. So many commentators comment on Peter's "impetuosity,"<sup>60</sup> that they fail to notice "how ardently Peter longed to be with Jesus."<sup>61</sup> Peter does not doubt Jesus love for him, and now knows, though he has failed, that he truly does love Jesus. When Christ later restores Peter, Peter's answers reveal that he is both confident of and humble in his estimation of his love for Christ. "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you" (John 21:17). His confidence is not in the great depth of his love but in the fact that his Lord knows the sincerity of his love. We see this confidence in Peter's jumping out of the boat. Although he and Christ have not reconciled, he knows that he wants to be with Christ, and that Christ will want to be with him. Peter's trust in Christ draws him to shore. He knows that Christ is gracious. So as the rest of the disciples sail the boat to shore, Peter is drawn to Christ, reeled in by grace. Christ has caught Peter by his miraculous grace; now Peter will be able to effectively catch men, just as Christ promised him in Luke 5:10. But first he must begin by being obedient to Christ and hauling the net full of Christ's other miraculous catch (John 21:10-11).

### Conclusion

We have argued that in John 21:1-14, John consciously alludes to Luke 5:1-11. While it cannot be definitively proven that John is using the gospel rather than a shared tradition or even

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<sup>59</sup> Goulder, *Luke*, 326, sees evidence of a "pre-Johannine tradition" of Peter leaping out of the boat that is shared with Matthew here. While Goulder's redactional and confrontational understanding of John's use of the synoptics is not to be preferred, perhaps John hints here at what he and Peter might have joked about as "that other time Peter tried to walk on water and almost drowned!" Here no such overconfident attempt is made. Peter will swim.

<sup>60</sup> Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*, 1407; Carson, *John*, 671; Hendriksen, *John*, 482; Neiryneck, "John 21," 326; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 177.

<sup>61</sup> Haenchen, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 223.

his own memory, it can be confidently asserted that John has in mind the earlier miraculous catch which took place at the beginning of his and Peter's time with Jesus. It has been shown that John in his prologue emphasizes the development of the disciples, chiefly himself and Peter. The presence of a literary *inclusio* involving the disciples in John indicates that John has early discipleship material on his mind as he writes the conclusion of his gospel. It cannot be proven from this that John must have drawn upon Luke 5:1-11 in order to accomplish his purposes. We do profess however that if John had chosen to allude to a synoptic gospel, he could not have done so in a more masterful way than he does here. Should this be the case, we see John using Luke much like he uses Old Testament scripture. He assumes his readers have a knowledge of it, he makes subtle allusions to it, and he weaves his it into his narrative in a manner that compounds the meaning of his gospel.

If Luke 5:1-11 is the backdrop for John 21:1-14, Peter's contrasting responses to Jesus at the beginning and the end of Jesus' earthly ministry add several layers of meaning to John's narrative. Peter's arc from fearful fisherman to eager follower is completed across multiple gospels. Peter also becomes the great example for the dismayed of a penitent, humble sinner who still loves his Lord. Most importantly, in Peter's headlong dive into the sea, we see him witnessing to the love that is in Christ Jesus the Lord.

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