

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God

IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

#09-1512

by – Stuart H. Pouliot

February 7, 2015

Sons of God—153 Fish

To begin; a word about the biblical meaning of the number 153 that appears only once in scripture: *Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three (153); and although there were so many, the net was not torn* (John 21:11). There has been a lot of speculation about the meaning of this great catch. For example, Lieut.-Col, F. Roberts found that amongst the multitudes who received direct blessing from Christ there are recorded exactly 153 individual cases. But what does this mean?

There has been a lot of speculation about the meaning of this great catch. For example, Lieut.-Col, F. Roberts found that amongst the multitudes who received direct blessing from Christ there are recorded exactly 153 individual cases. But what does this mean?

In the book *Number In Scripture* (Kregel, 1967), E.W. Bullinger notes that the number 153 is a factor of 9 times 17. The number 9 signifies *the fruit of the spirit*, and the number 17 signifies *victory*. Significantly, he notes that **the expression *sons of God* occurs 7 times in Hebrew and, by gematria, equals the number 153**; the expression *joint-heirs* (Romans 8:17) by gematria is 1071, which is a factor of 7 times 153; and the expression *the creation of God* by gematria is 1224, which is a factor of 8 times 153. Within the miracle of the 153 fish, the word for *fishes* by gematria is 1224, which is a factor of 8 times 153, and the word for *the net* by gematria is 1224, again a factor of 8 times 153. Notice the repetition of the number 7, which signifies *completeness* or *spiritual perfection*, and the number 8, which signifies *new birth* or *new beginning*.

There is an obvious thread woven through all the above words, but the most direct and significant meaning of 153 is discovered through it being the gematria of the expression *sons of God*, which speaks of those who will be counted worthy to reign with Christ in His coming kingdom. I submit that this is the message of the 153 fish in this parable.

The casting of the net is much greater than initial salvation. It speaks of the glorious day when the Son of God Himself will cast the net to gather together His prized possession that will reign on earth and among the celestials as a kingdom and priests, according to the order of Melchizedek. It is the gathering of the called and chosen of Christ, the elect company, the joint heirs with Christ, the many sons brought to glory (Hebrews 2:10), the sons of the resurrection (Luke 20:36), the sons of God who are transfigured (transformed into spirit-animated bodies).

This great company will come from two groups: first, those asleep in Jesus who will rise from among the dead in the *out-resurrection*; and second, the chosen and faithful in Christ that are alive and remain when the Messiah comes. Together, they will be transformed into new bodies (ones reserved in heaven; 2 Corinthians 5:1-2), animated by the spirit of God, no longer animated by blood, but fully conformed into the likeness of Jesus' body (Philippians 3:21). This occurs when Christ snatches away His conquering body to meet Him in clouds (a witness) in air (atmosphere; earthly event) (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Thus, the 153 represent the sons who will escort King Jesus to earth to openly manifest His kingdom over the nations of earth.

Along this line, there is another way to explain this glorious event. Within the text of John 20:19-21:17, there is a hint that the number 153 is representative of the sons that will experience tabernacles (receiving new booths) at the soon coming of God's anointed. It may even give a hint of the timing of events. According to Leviticus 23:33-43, we know that the first day of the month of Tishri is the beginning of the fall feasts, starting with the Feast of Trumpets (day 1), followed by the Day of Atonement (day 10), followed by the Feast of

Booths or Tabernacles (days 15-21), and concluding with the great day, the eighth day (day 22). I would add day 23 as the commencement of the kingdom on earth. This is based on the account of Solomon finishing the temple and sending forth his people rejoicing and happy on the 23rd day (2 Chronicles 7:8-10).

By comparing this to John's text, we discover that after Jesus' resurrection, on the first day of the week, He privately appeared to His disciples and breathed on them so that they received the holy spirit, which empowered them to go forth with the good news of His kingdom. Then eight days later, Jesus appeared to them again in the same fashion in order to convince and teach Thomas. But most significantly, Jesus proclaimed: *Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed*. The 153 fish represent the blessed ones taught by the Lord with His law written on their hearts. Carrying the story forward, the seven disciples went fishing, catching nothing until Jesus told them where to cast the net. Then, He fed His disciples and sent them forth, especially Peter who was commanded to tend the lambs and to shepherd and tend the sheep. Perhaps this is the pattern of what will transpire some year in the month of Tishri as the Lord appears to His people and sends them forth to the nations to manifest and establish His kingdom on earth.

We are given more intimation of tabernacles in John 7:1-38 when Jesus went up to the temple midweek of the feast and taught. If Jesus breathes the full measure of the spirit into His disciples on the first day of Tabernacles, perhaps midweek He will fully write His laws on their hearts (Hebrews 8:10). Then, on the eighth day or the last day, the great day of the feast (John 7:37), He will present His chosen and faithful brethren to His Father. On the 23rd day (2 Chronicles 7:10), they will be sent forth into the world, rejoicing and happy of heart for from their innermost being will flow rivers of living water (John 7:38). The world will begin to see *the* Christ in His body of conquering believers, the manifested sons of God, the new creation in Christ, the first fruits of the one new man. They will enter into the feast of the Lambkin and, as they do, will feed the multitude of the nations. Glory will begin to fill the whole earth.

Obviously, there is some detail and linkage lacking in some of this; nevertheless, the good news is that God has a plan to manifest His sons of glory.

In the middle of the night, on April 30, 2010, I heard a trumpet playing the old American gospel hymn often titled ***When the Saints Go Marching In*** that was made into a popular jazz tune by Louis Armstrong in the 1930s. As I listened to this song being trumpeted, I was told **to look at the clock now**; according to our atomic clock, the time was **1:53 am**. This was not some over-reactive imagination. I never saw anyone or anything in the room, but I believe the Lord sent a trumpeting angel to play this song and to link the number 153 to the saints or the sons of God. The Lord could have sent a heavenly choir, but instead, He sent a trumpeter so that I would not miss the point. A trumpet sound is coming that will call the saints into the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ in order to establish a new world order through the one new man, the sons of God. Here are some verses to this song.

Oh, when the saints go marching in
 Oh, when the saints go marching in
 Lord, how I want to be in that number
 When the saints go marching in

Oh, when the trumpet sounds its call
 Oh, when the trumpet sounds its call
 Lord, I want to be in that number
 When the trumpet sounds its call

Oh, when the new world is revealed
 Oh, when the new world is revealed
 Lord, how I want to be in that number
 When the new world is revealed

Do you hear the sound of the trumpet? The Lord is coming very, very soon, and the conquerors, the first fruits of the sons of God, the saints or holy ones of the Most High, will go marching into immortality, and a new world order of righteousness, justice, peace, and impartiality will be revealed through them to all the nations.