

## My Favorite Resurrection Story

John 21:1-14, 15-17,  
1Peter 5:1-3

Last Sunday we celebrated Easter, and Pastor Dick told us the wonderful story of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This really made me think. What is your favorite resurrection story?



Is it John 20:14-17 when Mary meets Jesus outside the tomb and mistakes Him for the gardener until Jesus says her name? Mary then puts a headlock on Jesus so He can't get away. But Jesus says, "Mary don't cling to me. I have not yet ascended to my Father."

## John 20:3-8



Maybe you like John 20:3-8 where, when Peter and John were told of the empty tomb, they ran to see for themselves. John outran Peter, but John stopped at the door of the tomb. Peter just barged right in and saw the place where Jesus had lain.



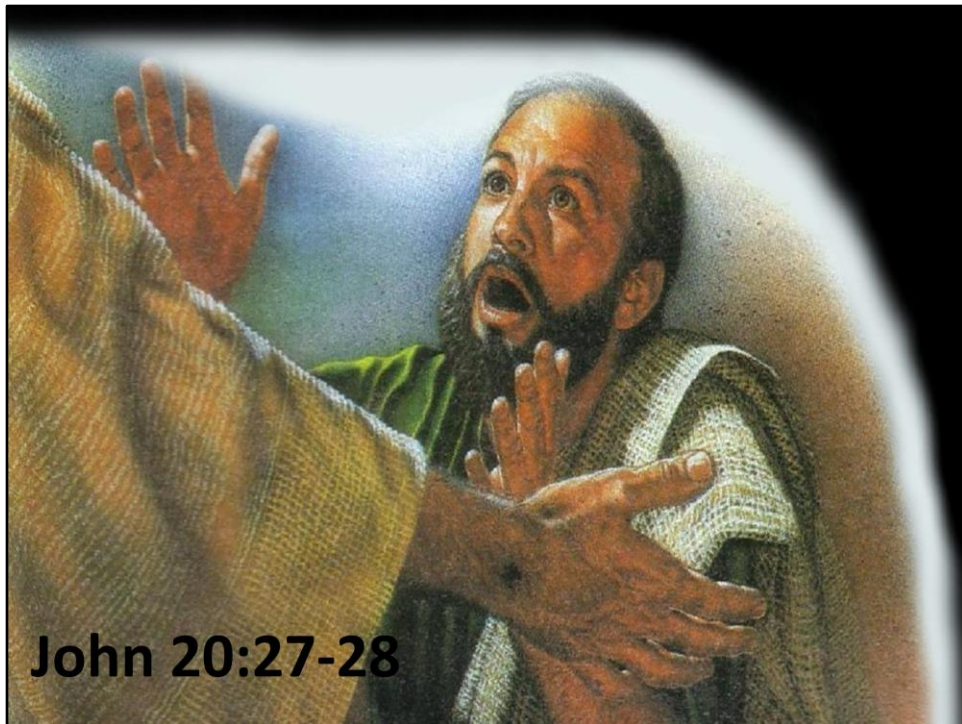
Maybe your favorite is the story of Cleopas and his friend on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35. While they are talking, Jesus comes to walk with them, but they are prevented from recognizing Him. Jesus asks them what they were talking about. They tell Him about how a man named Jesus of Nazareth, who they believed to be the Messiah, was put to death. They said how they thought He would redeem Israel. They also said the women had come and told them of the empty tomb and that they had seen angles who said Jesus was alive.

Jesus then says to them

***“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?”***

Then beginning at Moses and all the prophets, Jesus gives them perhaps the greatest Bible study ever on Himself. And they did not write it down for us! Later, after Jesus disappeared, they said to each other, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”





Or perhaps you like the story in John 20:27-28 of Jesus appearing to Thomas. Jesus told Thomas to put his fingers in Jesus' wounds and his hand in Jesus' side. Thomas responded by saying, "My Lord and my God."

These are all wonderful and inspiring stories.

However, my favorite resurrection story is found in the 21<sup>st</sup> and last Chapter of the Gospel of John.

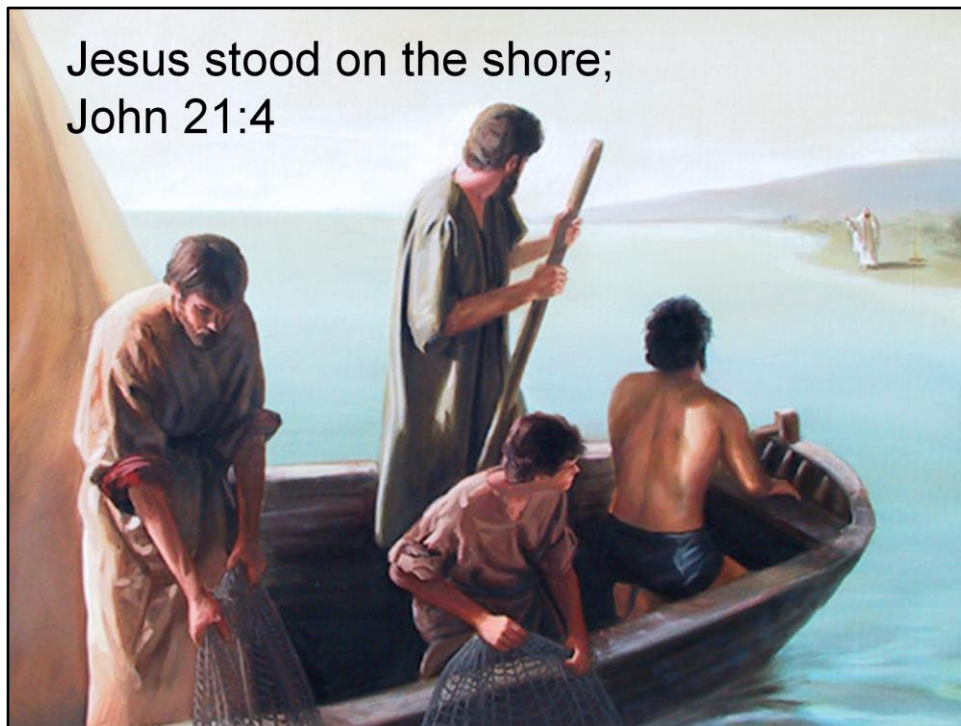
This chapter includes a number of miracles and speaks of provision, restoration, and divine commission among other topics. And there are many studies that one could teach from its material.

However, today I want to start by discussing a less frequently mentioned part of the narrative. This is something the Holy Spirit brought to my attention several years ago as part of a Men's Study I was attending. I was very blessed by it, and I hope that you will be blessed as well.



Now, after Gordon Schmiedt's and Pastor Dick's visual aids, I wanted to have a visual aid also. However, I didn't think anyone would appreciate me putting a big net full of fish on the platform. So, you will just have to imagine it.

Instead, I will just start by reading the beginning section of the chapter to give the background for the rest of the study. I want you to imagine yourself standing and reacting with the disciples in the story. Picture what it would be like from their perspective. I am reading John 21:1-14 from the ESV translation:



## John 21 (ESV2011)

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

1 After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way.

2 Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together.

3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

5 Jesus said to them, "**Children, do you have any fish?**" They answered him, "No."

6 He said to them, "**Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.**" So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.

7 That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.

8 The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

9 When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread.

10 Jesus said to them, "**Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.**"

11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn.

12 Jesus said to them, "**Come and have breakfast.**" Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.

13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.

14 This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.





So, let me ask you: Where did Jesus get the fish and the bread that He was cooking?

There are a few possibilities:

Jesus took some of the provisions that the others had brought and started breakfast. However, the disciples said they had no fish. Perhaps they had bread.

Jesus had brought a sack of food with Him and was cooking what He had brought. Seems unlikely, as we don't read in the Gospels that Jesus personally brought or carried any food with Him.

Jesus in a seemingly natural and unassuming manner prepared breakfast with fish and bread that He created on the spot.

If, as I believe, the third option is true, then Jesus did as great a miracle as the feeding of the 5,000 or the 4,000. Here, He fed seven of His disciples by creating the fish and the bread. Yet, it is stated so matter-of-factly that I did not even notice it despite having read the story many times before. I have never before heard a bible study on this aspect of the story.

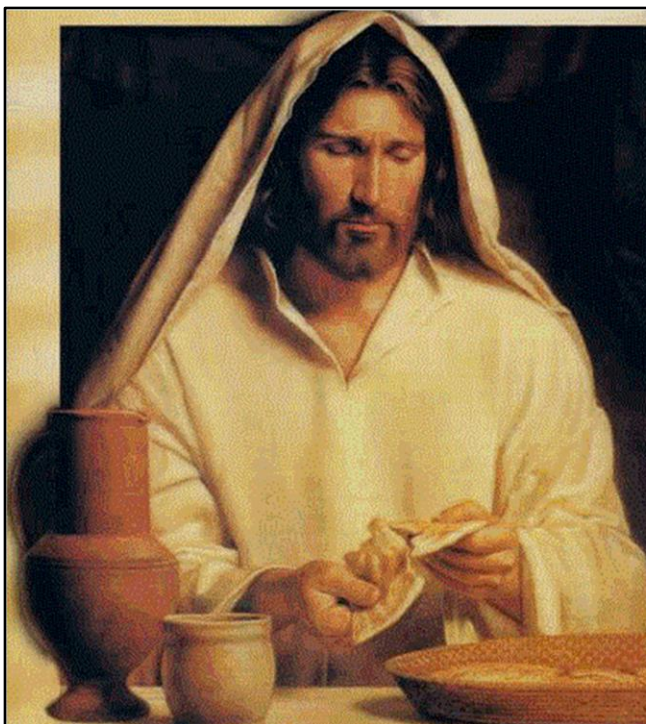
Jesus creating food (both plant and animal) and feeding His sheep (i.e. His disciples) is especially significant; because after breakfast, **this** is what Jesus would three times tell Peter to do (i.e. **"Feed my lambs."**) And Jesus not only cooked the breakfast, He also served the bread and fish to the disciples! This makes me think about Revelation 19:9, the marriage supper of the Lamb, and realizing that the Lord will serve us as it says in Luke 12:37.

***Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.***

Thinking of Jesus serving me both blesses me and is unsettling. How do you all feel about it?

When Jesus appeared to the disciples in Luke's Gospel, prior to this story in John, He asked them if they had any food (in Luke 24:41). This is very similar to His question in John 21:5.





***And the  
bread that  
I will give  
for the life  
of the  
world is  
my flesh.  
John 6:51***

Jesus seemed to be very interested in food and in feeding His flock. After all, in John 6:35, Jesus said, ***"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."***

Then later in John 6:48-51 Jesus said that He was the bread from Heaven:

***48 I am the bread of life.***

***49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.***

***50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.***

***51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."***



The more I considered this section of chapter 21, the more things the Holy Spirit brought to my attention. I don't have time to go through everything, but here are a couple of points:

By my count there are at least 6 miracles in this section of chapter 21:

Jesus stood on the shore. That is pretty good for a dead guy! And the text just says that Jesus "stood on the shore". He was suddenly there ... with no mention of His walking up.

The disciples did not know it was Jesus, even though they had lived with Him for three years, and they had recently seen Him appear to them.

He told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat, as He did in Luke 5:4, and they caught a great catch of fish.

Despite the large catch of big fish, the net did not break.

Jesus created the bread and fish on the coals.

Lastly, the disciples did not catch any fish all night! Jesus controlled the events before He even arrived!

Place:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Letter:	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט
Value:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Place:	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Letter:	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ
Value:	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
Place:	19	20	21	22	<b>Hebrew Gematria</b>				
Letter:	ק	ר	ש	ת					
Value:	100	200	300	400					

I always wondered why there were 153 fish. It is such a specific number. It is not divisible by 7, and yet the story makes particular mention of the 153 large fish. The Greek word used in the New Testament is meg'-as, which just means big. But there is another possibility.

Gematria is an alphanumeric code/cipher adopted into Jewish culture that assigns a numerical value to a word, name, or phrase. Each letter in Hebrew and Greek also has a numeric value. While not central to rabbinic literature, Gematria is essential to Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition

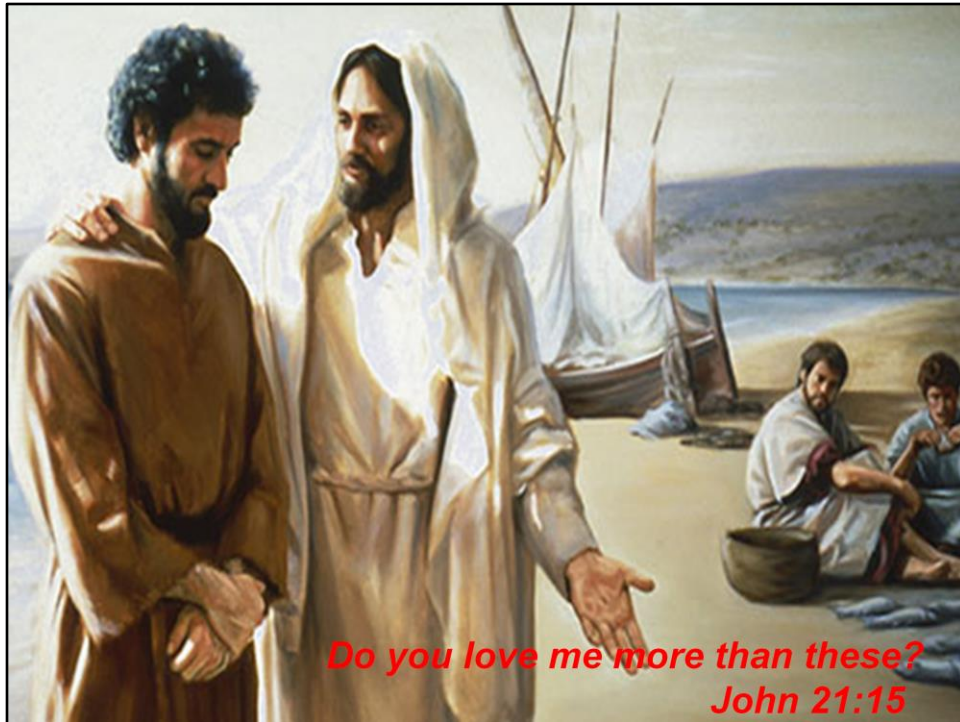
In Hebrew Gematria 153 (among other things) means "Fear God" or "The I am", the name God gave to Moses. After pulling in the fish, the story says that the disciples knew it was the Lord. So, possibly Jesus was making a statement of divinity even in the number of the fish He brought to the net.



Now let's turn our focus to the events that occurred after breakfast. First let me give some background for the story.

Remember, before Jesus was betrayed by Judas, that Jesus had warned His disciples that one of them would betray Him (in Matt 26:21). Then after the Passover meal, where Jesus introduced communion, the group went out to the Mount of Olives. At the Mount of Olives Jesus tells His disciples that all of them would abandon Him that night. The King James says they would all be "offended". Peter then tells Jesus that even if all other people were offended, he, Peter, would never be offended. Jesus then tells Peter that before the cock crows, Peter will deny Jesus three times. You know what happened. Jesus was arrested and taken before the Chief Priest, and Peter followed. However, while he was there, Peter was recognized three times as a follower of Jesus. And each time Peter denied he knew Jesus, even cursing at the end. Immediately after Peter's last denial, a rooster crows, and Jesus looks back at Peter. Peter then goes out sorrowing.





Now, let's return to chapter 21 of John's Gospel. Let me read John 21:15-17 in the ESV:

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

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

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

Who was Jesus referring to when He asked Peter, "...do you love me more than these?" There are basically two options: Jesus may have been referring to the fish. In essence Jesus may have been saying, "Peter do you love me more than fishing?"

Or, Jesus may have been referring to the other disciples. So, Jesus may have been saying, "Peter do you love me more than these other disciples do; a possible reference to Peter saying before that all might be offended but not him.

We don't really know which Jesus meant, and possibly He meant both. But, both would have significance to Peter. It also reminds us. What do we love more than Jesus? Don't answer too quickly! Search your heart and be certain.

Why was Peter grieved the third time Jesus asked Peter if Peter loved him? As you may be aware, there are different Greek words that are translated "love". Eros refers to sexual love, phileo is brotherly love or fondness, agape or agapao refers to wholehearted love such as God has for us.

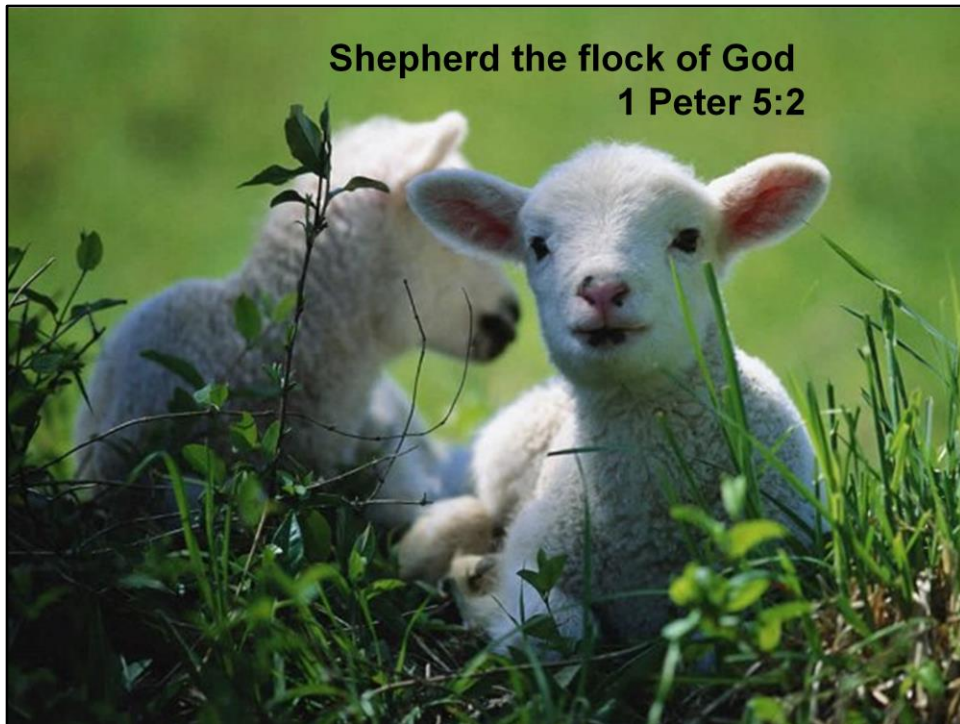
The first time Jesus asked Peter, Jesus said, "Peter do you agapao me?" And Peter replied, "Yes, Lord; you know that I phileo you" (i.e. I am fond of you).

The second time Jesus asked Peter, Jesus said, "Peter do you agapao me?" Again Peter replied, "Yes, Lord; you know that I phileo you" (i.e. I am fond of you).

The third time Jesus asked Peter, Jesus said, "Peter do you phileo me?" And Peter was grieved because Jesus had come down to Peter's level with His question. And once more Peter replied, "Yes, Lord; you know that I phileo you."

We can understand Peter's reticence in answering Jesus. Remember that Peter, after saying that he would never forsake Jesus, in fact denied Jesus three times as Jesus had predicted.

And yet now, Jesus lovingly forgave and recommissioned Peter by giving Peter the opportunity to express his love for Jesus three times.



One last point: When Jesus told Peter to “Feed my sheep.” was Jesus talking about food? We already mentioned that Jesus talked about food frequently. But was Jesus speaking to Peter about food like fish and bread?

The first and third time Jesus says to feed His sheep, He uses the Greek word *bos'-ko* (like the chocolate drink). *Bos'-ko* means to pasture. The second time Jesus says to feed His sheep, He uses the Greek word

*poy-mai'-no*. *Poy-mai'-no* means to tend as a shepherd. So it appears to me that Jesus, since He was going to the Father, was really telling Peter to continue to shepherd Jesus' flock.

We don't really have to guess, because we have Peter's own epistles, which tell us what He did with Jesus' command. Let's look at 1 Peter 5:1-3 again in the ESV:

<sup>1</sup> So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:

<sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

<sup>3</sup> not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Here, the word “shepherd” in verse 2 is the Greek word *poy-mai'-no*, which was translated “feed” in John chapter 21. So, clearly Peter felt that Jesus wanted him to be a loving shepherd to the believers under his authority. And this is exactly what he taught other elders in his own epistle. There is even more to tell in John 21, but that will have to wait for another time.

This is why the Bible is so great! There are always more and deeper things to discover about God's love for us and the exciting things He has in store for us.

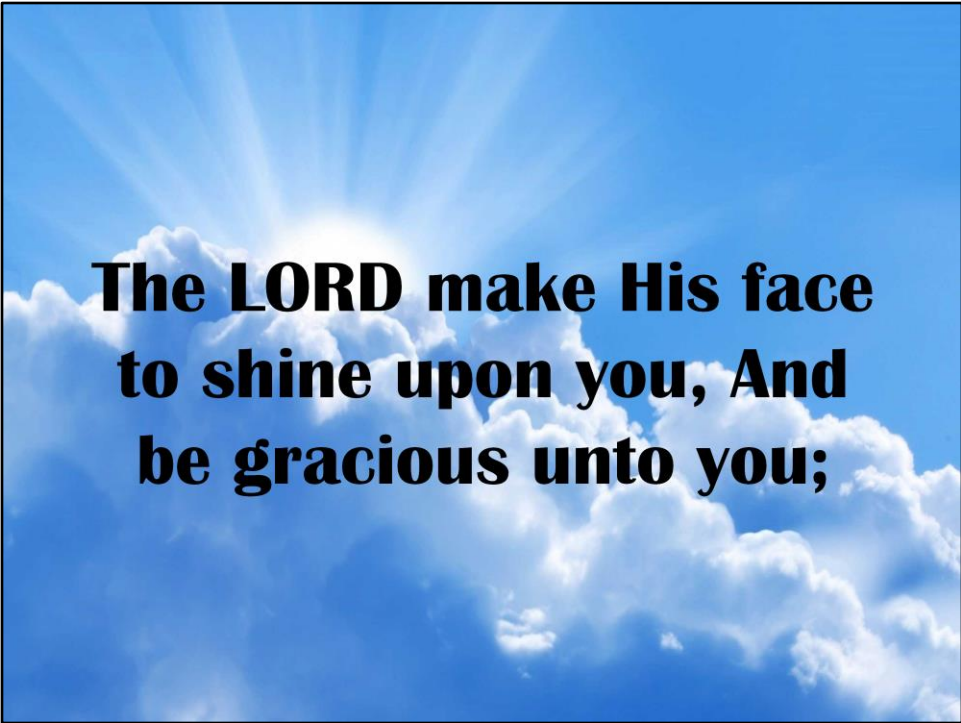


Let's pray.

Those of you who are familiar with Star Trek may think that I am now giving the Vulcan salute of "live long and prosper", but I am not. Leonard Nimoy was Jewish, and he knew that this symbol was the Hebrew letter "Shin". This symbol was made by the priests when they gave the Aaronic blessing over the people, known as the Birchat Kohanim, which I will do now:







**The LORD make His face  
to shine upon you, And  
be gracious unto you;**



**The LORD lift up His  
countenance upon you,  
And give you peace.**

