

Your message burns in my heart and bones, and I cannot keep silent.

(Jeremiah 20:9)

by – Stuart H. Pouliot

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When the Saints Go Marching In

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

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

These are part of the lyrics of the American gospel hymn often called *When the Saints Go Marching In* that was made into a popular jazz tune by Louis Armstrong in the 1930s. For obvious reasons, it has special meaning to Christians who are longing for the coming of the Lord. I particularly like these verses. Frankly, until searching for its lyrics in order to write this issue, I only knew of the first verse.

Now, I am sure you are asking why I am writing an issue on this song.

Well, the answer is simple: On **April 30, 2010**, at **exactly 1:53 am**, I heard this tune being played on a trumpet. This is no joke; I believe the Lord sent a trumpeting angel to play *When the Saints Go Marching In* for my encouragement, and I trust for the encouragement of others.

I share this experience to encourage those with hearts that are longing to meet the Lord personally and to see His kingdom established among the nations.

The evening of April 29, my wife and I went out for dinner. We went to a restaurant that serves a fish dish that I especially enjoy. Unfortunately, about half-way through the meal, my stomach did not seem to enjoy it as it had in the past. I didn't get sick but felt sort of a general discomfort. I didn't finish the meal as I usually would have done.

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When I went to bed that night, I felt that I had an overly acidic stomach. About an hour later, I was jolted awake with acid reflux; not a very pleasant experience. I felt I was going to choke, so I immediately jumped out of bed and decided to sleep in a recliner in our living room so that my head would be elevated. Perhaps this is more information than I need to share; nevertheless, it explains why I ended up sleeping in a recliner that night.

Sometime after midnight, I heard a trumpet playing *When the Saints Go Marching In*. I feel like Paul when he was snatched away to Paradise and could not say whether he was in the body or out of the body. I cannot say whether I was awake or not, or how long I had listened to the trumpet sounding. All I remember is hearing this song being played on a trumpet and me stretched out in a recliner as I wondered why someone was outside our house, specifically on the east side, playing this tune. I do recall sitting there with my eyes open as I looked to the east part of our living room. I thought it was strange, but it did not panic me nor make me anxious. I sort of enjoyed it. Then, I heard very clearly and demonstrably: **Look at the clock, NOW!** So, I did, and it was exactly 1:53 am as recorded on our atomic clock that was a few feet from where I was sitting. I have no doubt that this is significant; the Lord wanted me to know that there is a connection between the song and the numeric value of the time. The clocks in the other rooms of our house might not have been reading the exact atomic time at that moment. He wanted me to know that 153 is a precise number.

The key to understanding the meaning of what I experienced is discovered in the bitter stomach from eating fish, the trumpet, the song, the easterly direction, and the number 153. When all of this is put together, we are given the message that King Jesus is coming. Let me show you.

First, the bitter stomach is likened to John in spirit on the isle of Patmos: *I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter* (Revelation 10:9-10). The sixth trumpet had already sounded when John was given the book to eat and told that he must prophesy again of the bitter events to be faced by many people and nations and tongues and kings (Revelation 10:11).

Second, John was a fisherman by trade, and my stomach was made bitter by fish, which was sweet in my mouth but bitter in my stomach. But, as we will see, the number 153 also refers to a specific catch of fish that signifies the saints that will go marching in.

Third, after John's stomach settled, the seventh trumpet sounded and he heard the loud voices in heaven saying: *The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ* (Revelation 11:15). In other words, after eating the book and prophesying further, the kingdom arrived. My bitter stomach was a sign that more is to come, but more importantly, the glorious kingdom is not far behind. It is no coincidence that this verse is repeated quite often in my writings.

Fourth, I was asleep, at least part of the time, but the trumpet woke me, which refers to the sounding of the last or seventh trumpet. Those asleep (dead) in Christ will be awakened from their state of sleep by the sound of the trumpet, and they will rise from among the dead in resurrection and transfiguration (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:4-6).

Fifth, the song refers to the saints of the Most High receiving and possessing the kingdom for the ages to come (Daniel 7:18). The kingdom of Christ is the new world of righteousness as administered through His conquering saints.

Sixth, it could be said that the east is associated with *a coming* of the Lord: *For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be* (Matthew 24:27). Contextually, this verse refers to the coming of the Son to destroy Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD.

Seventh, the number 153 refers to the number of fish that were in the net that Jesus told His disciples to cast on the right-hand side of the boat: *Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn* (John 21:11). This took place after Jesus' resurrection, right before His last ascension to His Father. Elsewhere, I have written about this, but rather than link it, it is repeated below.

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; 1 Corinthians 15:46).

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.

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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.

Be encouraged; it won't be long until the manifestation of the sons of God.

Oh, when the saints go marching in; Lord, how I want to be in that number! May this be the song of your heart as well!