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SYMBOLIC NUMBER

The first characteristic of the Heavenly Jerusalem is completeness. As a symbol of the entire universe it should display in its dimensions the number representing every god, power, or tendency in nature. Some of the principal numbers in the scheme have here been identified; among them are 3168, 1080, 1224, and 1746, and there is reference also to 864 and 666. All these numbers were applied by gematria to important names and phrases in the sacred texts of early Christianity, which provides clues to their symbolism, and further inferences are derived from their astronomical and other associations. They exemplify the manifold significance that the ancients discovered in certain numbers, which caused them to make use of those numbers for codifying their knowledge of the world.

1224, the number of Paradise,
and the 153 fishes in the net

The total width of the New Jerusalem diagram is equal to the diameter of the earth plus two diameters of the moon, or 12,240 miles. Thus the number 1224 refers to the cosmological city, image of God's creation. This interpretation accords well with the gematria of 1224.

- 1224 = ὁ κυριος ὁ θεος, the Lord God
 = κτισις θεου, God's creation
 = κυκλος θεου, divine circle
 = ἡ φυτεια, the plantation (Matthew 5:13), an early
 Christian synonym of paradise

Similar meanings are found in the gematria of the numbers on either side of 1224.

- 1223 = ἡ ὁδος παραδεισου, the way of paradise
 1225 = Ὁ παραδεισος θεου, God's paradise (Revelation 2:7)
 = ἐγω εἰμι ἡ ὁδος, I am the way (John 14:6)
 = ἀρχηγετης, founder of the city
 = ἡ δικαιοσυνη θεου, the righteousness of God
 (Romans 3:22)
 = ἐν ὄλον ὄλων, the entirety of creation (literally, One
 Whole of Wholes), Plato's phrase in *Timaeus*
 for the unique sphere of the cosmos embracing all
 its parts.

Several of the incidents and parables in the New Testament story of Jesus are known to have been adapted from earlier writings, and some of these have hidden meanings that the Christian gnostics interpreted using the same cabalistic methods that the Jews apply to the exegesis of their own scriptures. Most obviously numerical is the tale of the miraculous catch of 153 fishes, which occurs in the last chapter of St. John's Gospel. Why there should have been exactly 153 fishes in the net that the Apostles cast into the Sea of Tiberias is a question that has puzzled commentators from early Christian times. A clue that previous writers have noticed is that two of the key words in the story, ἰχθυες, fishes, and το δικτυον, the net, each have the value by gematria of 1224, and 1224 is 8 times 153.

Following up this clue we are led on to reconstruct the figure of sacred geometry that must originally have accompanied the story of the

153 fishes. It develops in three stages, reflecting the order of events in John 21.

After the Crucifixion, Simon Peter went fishing from a boat in the Sea of Tiberias, taking with him six of the other disciples. They fished all night but caught nothing.

In the morning they saw the risen Jesus on the shore but failed to recognize him. He called out that they should cast their net on the right side of the boat. Having done so, they were unable to draw it out for the multitude of fishes in it.

John then recognized Jesus and told Simon Peter, who put on his fisher's coat and jumped into the sea. The other disciples followed him in the boat to the shore, which was about 200 cubits away, dragging the net with the fishes. When Simon Peter drew it to land it was found to be "full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken."

The number of $\Sigma\mu\omega\nu \delta \Pi\epsilon\tau\rho\varsigma$, Simon Peter, is 1925, so Peter can be represented by a circle with circumference 1925 and diameter $612\frac{1}{2}$ or 612. This is appropriate because 612 is the number of $\delta \pi\omicron\iota\mu\eta\nu \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\omicron\varsigma$, the Good Shepherd, and that is the title which Simon Peter inherits when, following the incident of the 153 fishes, he is told three times by Jesus, "Feed my sheep."

Six more circles of the same dimensions are drawn for the six other disciples, and the seven are packed together in the most economical way (figure 67) and placed inside the circular boat, like the coracle of the Celtic saints, the diameter of which is 1224.

The disciples are told to cast their net on the right side of the boat. This is done geometrically by placing the compass point on the circumference of the circular boat and drawing an arc of another circle with the same radius, containing a Vesica Piscis (vessel of the fish). The rhombus within it is divided up into sixteen smaller diamond shapes (figure 68). Its width being 612, each of its sixteen divisions has a width of 153. They represent sixteen small fishes making up a greater seventeenth, and here again the number 153 is brought out, for 153 is the sum of the numbers from 1 to 17. The measure around the four sides

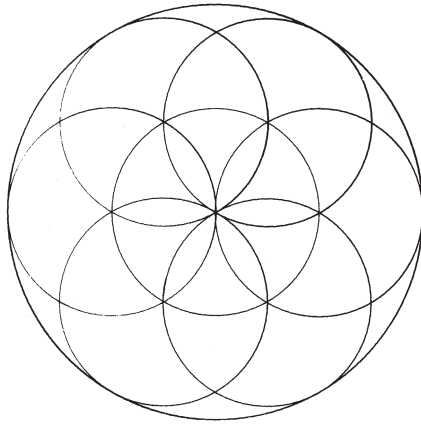


Figure 67. Seven circles, representing six disciples with Simon Peter at their center, pack into the circular boat of diameter 1224.

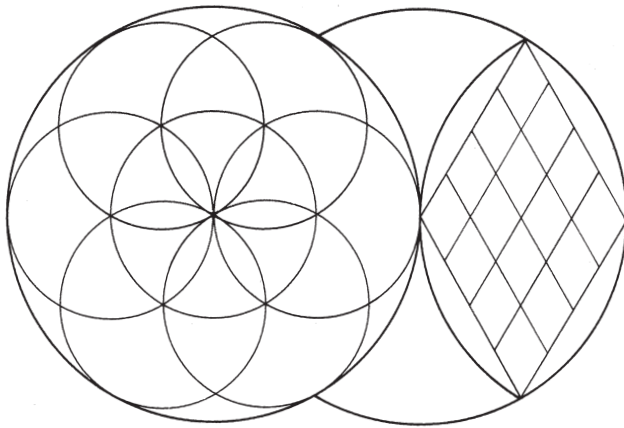


Figure 68. A net formed by a rhombus within a Vesica Piscis is cast on the right side of the boat, catching 153 fishes.

of the greater rhombus-fish is 2448 or $1224 + 1224$ or το δικτυον, the net, plus ιχθυες, fishes. Thus the net full of 153 fishes is illustrated in number and geometry.

It is a traditional practice among teachers of esoteric philosophy to set forth their doctrines in the guise of simple parables, which amuse children, enrich popular mythology, and, for those who understand

the science of interpreting them, illustrate various cosmological processes. The themes that are adopted by hagiographers and composers of sacred legends are those that occur spontaneously in different times and cultures and can therefore be called archetypal. Thus the founders of Christianity took certain episodes in universal folklore and made Jesus their central figure. In the tale of the 153 fishes he plays the part of the shamanic man of miracles whose traditional functions include bringing good luck to hunters or fishermen. By interpolation of names and numbers this story was made to reflect the construction of a geometric diagram with cosmological significance, by reference to which the gnostic masters were able to demonstrate to initiates the basic truth behind the Christian legend.