

Feeding Of The Five Thousand

1. This is the fourth sign of Jesus John has recorded with details in his gospel.
 - a. He had recorded the two miracles Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. (Jn. 2:1-11; 4:46-54).
 - b. He had also recorded the healing of the man who had been crippled for 38 years. (Jn. 5:1-9).
2. This miracle is the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all 4 gospels. (Matt. 14:13-21; Mk. 6:30-44; Lk. 9:10-17; Jn. 6:1-14).
3. This was a very impressive miracle that got the close attention of all the gospel writers.

Jn. 6:1 After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias).

1. "After these things" is vague and is not clear chronologically exactly what it followed.
 - a. Chapter 5 ended with Jesus in Jerusalem, but here Jesus is pictured as going "to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.
 - b. It is evident John chose to skip over the activities between John 5 and 6 recorded by the other gospels.
 - c. One should keep in mind John did not claim or seek to record everything Jesus did or taught. (Jn. 21:25).

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.

- d. What John reports here may have been as much as a year after Jesus had healed the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda.
2. "The Sea of Galilee" was also known as "the Sea of Tiberias" (Jn. 6:1; 21:1).
3. It was also known as lake Gennesaret (Lk. 5:1), and it was sometimes called "Chinneroth" (Josh. 12:3) or "Sea of Chinnereth" in Numbers. (Num. 34:11).
4. The "other side" is not defined by John, but it is elsewhere.
 - a. Luke indicated it was near Bethsaida, a small town at the north end of the Sea of Galilee. (Lk. 9:10).

Lk. 9:10 When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida.

- b. Jesus came to the northeastern shore of the sea where the hills rose close to the sea or lake.

Jn. 6:2 A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.

- Matthew indicated He met “a great crowd” when He came ashore. (Matt. 14:14).

Matt 14:14 When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.

- Matthew also reported that Jesus “healed their sick.”

1. Though John only recorded 7 signs of Jesus, he alluded to many other signs. (Jn. 2:23; 3:1).
2. The teachings and signs of Jesus were creating great excitement among the multitudes.
 - a. They thought for sure the time of their liberation from Roman slavery had come.
 - b. The words the kingdom was “near” or “at hand” made them even more confident Jesus was the Messiah.
3. They had been longing for centuries for the coming of the Messiah.
4. They hated the yoke of Rome and believed the Messiah would free them and lead them to victory over their Roman oppressors.

Jn. 6:3 Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples.

1. This “mountain” was on the eastside of the Sea of Galilee [Tiberias].
2. Mark added Jesus “began to teach them many things.” (Mk. 6:34).

Mk. 6:34 When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

Jn. 6:4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near.

1. This was the second Passover of Christ’s ministry. See Jn. 2:13.
2. John 5:1 was not affirmed to be a Passover as many have assumed, but was “a feast” of the Jews.
3. It should be observed that Jesus would die at the next Passover - one year from this time.

Jesus Asked Philip A Question

Jn. 6:5 Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?"

1. “Bread” is from the Greek word “artos” [**ahr** tahs] meaning “bread, loaf.”
 - a. The singular form is translated “bread” or “loaf” in Matthew 6:11. See also Matt. 26:26; 1 Cor. 11:23.
 - b. The plural form of the same word is rendered “loaves” in John 6:9.
2. This word is translated “bread” or “loaf” in the singular, and “loaves” in the plural.
3. It would be an impossible task to purchase this much bread very quickly.
4. John records Jesus asking Philip where enough bread could be purchased to feed the multitude.

Jn. 6:6 This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.

1. The Greek word translated “test” means “to tempt, test, prove.”
2. Jesus was not tempting them in a bad sense of tempting them to do evil, but He was testing their faith in Him and His power.
3. He wanted to see how they would answer the problem of feeding the multitude. (Jn. 6:5).

Philip Replied To Jesus

Jn. 6:7 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little."

1. This amounted to 200 days wages. (Matt. 20:2, 9, 13).
2. Even that amount of money would buy only “a little” for this hungry multitude.
3. They did not have the money for the bread, and even if they did the people would still be hungry since “two hundred denarii” would buy only a little bread for the hungry multitude.
4. It takes a lot of food to fill a large multitude of thousands of people.

Andrew Replied To Jesus

Jn. 6:8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him,

1. Andrew was first mentioned in John 1:40.
2. He had brought his brother Peter to Christ. (Jn. 1:40-42).

John 1:40 One of the two who heard John {speak} and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

John 1:41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).

John 1:42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

3. He became one of the twelve apostles. (Matt. 10:2,3).
4. Andrew and Philip told Jesus about the Greeks wishing to see Him. (Jn. 12:20-22).

John 12:20 Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast;

John 12:21 these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and {began to} ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

John 12:22 Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus.

5. He spoke up again in John 14:8.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

John 14:7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

John 14:8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

John 14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and {yet} you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how {can} you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Jn. 6:9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?"

1. It is not known how Andrew learned about this boy or young man because it probably came after Jesus had commanded His disciples to feed the hungry multitude.

a. Jesus had earlier commanded the disciples to feed the hungry multitude. (Matt. 14:16).

Matt 14:16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away; you give them {something} to eat!"

b. They located a lad with "five loaves and two fish." (Matt. 14:17).

c. This may have been by accident or it may have come after a search for food.

d. It is possible this boy volunteered his food.

e. Matthew indicated the disciples reported the limited amount of food among the people. (Matt. 14:17).

Matt. 14:17 They said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

f. Philip was more specific and indicated "a lad" had the food.

1) "paidarion" [pi **dah** ree ahn] is the diminutive form of the Greek word "pais".

2) It denotes "a lad, a boy, a child."

2. John has Andrew making this statement. (Jn. 6:8, 9).

a. It would seem John was emphasizing the primary spokesman.

b. All the disciples had somehow gained knowledge of the boy's food and reported this to Jesus.

3. Loaves referred to thin cakes of barley bread.

4. The fish were probably cooked or dried.

Jesus' Instructions To The Multitude

Jn. 6:10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

- "Sit" literally means "to recline."
- Matthew indicated it was a "desert" [uninhabited place]. (Matt. 14:15).
- He also stated it was late. (Matt. 14:15). NASB has "And when it was evening" or NIV has "As evening approached"

1. "The men" numbered about 5,000.

2. If you include women and children, the number could have been 2 or 3 or even 4 times the 5,000.

3. Matt. 14:21 and Mk. 6:40 brings out some more interesting details.

Matt. 14:21 There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.

Mk. 6:40 They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties.

Jn. 6:11 Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.

1. This distribution of food was done by the disciples. (Matt. 14:19).

Matt 14:19 Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed {the food,} and breaking the loaves **He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples {gave them} to the crowds,**

2. John used “eucharisteo” [yoo kah ree **steh** oh] meaning “to give thanks.”

3. The Synoptic writers used “eulogeo” [yoo lah **geh** oh] meaning “to bless” (Matt. 14:19; Mk. 6:47; Lk. 9:16)." but it was used with the meaning of “to give thanks.”

4. The words were often interchangeable.

a. This is made very obvious by the words used to describe the feeding of the 4,000. (Matt. 15:56; Mk. 8:6).

b. The meaning is Jesus gave thanks for the food that He was about to miraculously multiply.

Jn. 6:12 When they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost."

1. John states “they were filled” with food as the context reveals.

2. Jesus ordered that “the leftover fragments” be gathered up.

a. Feeding of 5,000 (Matt. 14:20; Mk. 6:43; Lk. 9:17; Jn. 6:12).

b. Feeding of 4,000 (Matt. 15:37; Mk. 8:8).

3. John added the words “so that nothing will be lost.”

4. Mark mentioned they also gathered the fish. (Mk. 6:43).

Mk. 6:43 and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish.

5. Luke also added this detail. (Lk. 9:17).

Lk. 9:17 And they all ate and were satisfied; and the broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, twelve baskets full.

6. “Basket” is from “kophinos” [**kah** fee nahs] denoting a large heavy basket that varied in size. (Matt. 14:20; 16:9; Mk. 6:43).

Jn. 6:13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

1. This reveals a great miracle had occurred.
2. The multitude ate until they were full (Jn. 6:12; Matt. 14:20; Mk. 6:42; Lk. 9:17), and there was much bread and fish left over.
3. They only started with 5 loaves and 2 fish. (Jn. 6:9).

Effects Of The Sign

Jn. 6:14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

1. See Deut. 18:15,18; Jn. 1:21; 11:27

Deut. 18:15 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

Deut. 18:18 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him

Jn. 1:21 They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

Jn. 11:27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even* He who comes into the world."

2. Acts 3:22,23; 7:37

Acts 3:22 "Moses said, '*The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed* to everything He says to you.

Acts 3:23 'And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

Acts 7:37 "This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, '*God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren.*'

3. Some thought "the prophet" would be the actual Messiah.

- a. Others thought "the prophet" would precede the Messiah. (Jn. 7:40, 41).

Jn. 7:40 Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet."

Jn. 7:41 Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?"

- b. Here the multitude believed Jesus was "the prophet," that is the Messiah.

- c. This is especially made clear by the fact the multitude wanted to force Him to be king. (Jn. 6:15)

Jn. 6:15 So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

- d. Jesus had not come to be an earthly king, but to be a heavenly king reigning at the right hand of God. (Jn. 18:36).
- e. He “withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.”

Some Lessons We Learn From This Account

1. Jesus had unlimited miraculous power.
 - a. This was a real miracle and recognized as such by the apostles and the multitude.
 - b. It was not a mere psychological event in which Jesus merely filled them with His teaching.
 - c. Jesus multiplied the food and the people ate until they were full.
 - d. Some have suggested there was plenty of food and even food left over because the unselfish boy prompted others to share there food. This is a feeble and futile attempt to explain this miracle.
2. He had compassion on the hungry multitude.
 - a. These people had probably been with Jesus for hours and must have been very hungry.
 - b. Jesus could see they needed nourishment.
 - c. He did not send them away to seek food, but He mercifully fed them.
3. Jesus taught us to give thanks for our food. (Jn. 6:11).
 - a. We are to give thanks for all our blessings.
 - b. Christians are often exhorted to give thanks to God. (1 Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2).
4. Jesus gave a lesson on not being wasteful. (Jn. 6:12,13; Lk. 9:17).
 - a. Too many today are quite wasteful with food and with all God’s blessings.
 - b. This is sinful when so many are hungry and have other needs.
 - c. The more we waste the less we have to share.
 - d. Many people waste more than they give to others.
5. Jesus was “the prophet.” (Jn. 6:14).
 - a. The word “prophet” means “a forth teller, a spokesman” and is used of one who speaks God’s message in regard to the past, present or future.
 - 1) Jesus was not merely “a prophet.”
 - 2) He is God’s Son “the prophet.”

- b. God speaks to men through His Son. (Matt. 17:5; Heb. 1:2).
- c. John revealed in John 20 that all of this was recorded to prove Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. (Jn. 20:30, 31).
- d. Jesus was and is a Prophet, Priest and King.

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