

FEEDING THE MULTITUDE

Quote:

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

John 6:27

John 6:1-14 - Feeding the Five Thousand

This miracle demonstrates the Lord's ability to nourish his followers with spiritual food sufficient for their needs. It is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels.

1. **Come - Rest A While** (John 6:1-4) - See Matt 14:13; Mk 6:31-33; Lk 9:10-11a.

John 6:1 - See Matt 14:8-12. Jesus had heard of the death of John, and desired a desert place to rest a while.

John 6:4 - The third passover of the Lord's ministry - 12 months from Jn 5:1 and 12 months from the Lord's own death. See Mk 6:35 and Exod 12:6 - at this time of day, the Passover lamb was slain, and they were about to partake of the bread of life (Jn 6:35).

"Feast of the Jews" - compare Exod 12:11 - it should have been yahweh's Passover.

2. **The Disciples Tested** (John 6:5-9) - See Matt 14:14-18; Mk 6:34-38; Lk 9:11b-14.

John 6:7 - **"every one of them"** - See allusion to Isaiah 55:1-2.

John 6:9 - **"five"** - number of grace.

"Two little fishes" - Fish speak of people (Hab. 1:14; Zep. 1:3; Luke 5:1-10; Ecc. 9:12). Therefore two fishes represent Jew and Gentile. It also reminds us of the two covenants of Law (fulfilled in Christ) and Grace (confirmed by Christ), the principles of which we partake.

Barley Loaves:

Spoke of the principles of Christ, which we are to take into our lives (Mk 14:22):

Food for the time of Passover (when leaven was excluded). It made flat bread, not palatable to the flesh, and required considerable mastication. Reminds us of the need to chew over the principles of our deliverance from bondage through Christ.

Barley is less esteemed than other grains. - typical of Christ - Isa 53:3; Dan 4:17.

- Solomon fed it to horses (1Kg 4:28).
- Food for the poor (Ruth 2:17; 2 Kg 4:42).

A cake of Barley upended the Midianites tent (Jud 7:13-15) - typical of the victory of Christ and the saints at armageddon.

Barley grains were used to define the standard measure of a cubit (1 cubit = 144 barley grains) - Christ is our standard by which we should measure ourselves.

The wave sheaf was barley (Lev 23:10-11). The wave sheaf of the first fruits represented Christ (1 Cor 15:23).

3. **The Miracle - Five Thousand Fed and Satisfied (John 6:10-14) - See Matt 14:19-21; Mk 6:39-44; Lk 9:15-17.**

John 6:10 - **“make the men sit down”** - this appears to be in rows of 50 (**Lk 9:14**) facing each other making 100 (**Mk 6:40**) in each group.

“About five thousand” - Typical of the thousands called by grace, and gathered in groups of ecclesias.

John 6:11 - the food increased in the hands of Christ, as his provision proved sufficient for all needs.

“Distributed to the disciples and the disciples to them that were set down” - a type of the means by which the gospel would be preached. The Apostles received it from Christ, and preached it to all the world (**Col 1:23**).

“As much as they would” - Lit ‘as much as they wanted’ see NASB, NKJV.

John 6:12 - **“filled”** - means ‘to fill with food’ or ‘to satisfy’.

John 6:13 - Having sacrificed a little, they found they now had abundance (**Prov 11:24-25**). This is the case in our work in the truth. The little we sacrifice now will find abundant reward in the future.

John 6:14 - They saw Christ as the greater than Moses (**Deut 18:15-18**).

The Fragments

These were collected “that nothing be lost” (see **Jn 6:39; 17:12**). These typical crumbs would provide sustenance for the Gentiles (**Mk 7:28**).

There were 12 baskets, reminding us of the Israelitish hope that we partake of through the Gospel (**Eph 2:12-13**)