

“The Gospel of John: The Five Thousand”

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Scripture

John 6:1-15

“After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And **a great multitude followed him**, because **they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased**. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.”

4And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and **saw a great company come unto him**, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

“Philip answered him, two hundred pennyworth (or denarii) of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, ‘**There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?**’”

10And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So, the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost’. Therefore, they gathered them together, and **filled twelve baskets** with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, ‘**This is of a truth that the prophet that should come into the world.**’”

“When Jesus therefore perceived that **they would come and take him by force**, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.”

The Purpose for John’s Gospel

John 20:30-31

“Therefore, **many other signs Jesus also performed** in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

Last week, we saw that Jesus interacting with the Jews, bringing forth witnesses to Him being God

This week, Sign #4 -> The Feeding of the Five Thousand

- Water Into Wine -> Change physical properties of objects
- Healing the Nobleman’s Son -> Heal remotely from a great distance
- Healing the Paralytic of 38 years -> Heal with words alone and whenever He wants (Sabbath)

A change in time: big gap between chapter 5 and chapter 6 based on the feasts mentioned

- If the feast mentioned in John 5 is the Feast of Booths, it has been at least 6 months
- If the feast mentioned in John 5 is Passover, it has been a year between the chapters

At least a 6-month gap -> reading the other gospel accounts, you see many more events interspersed

John is focused on building evidence for Jesus **not about hitting every event along the timeline**

Multiple feedings of large groups:

Feeding of the Four Thousand

Matthew 15 and Mark 8 have a feeding of the four thousand as well as writing about the five thousand.

Matthew 15:32 (before feeding the 4,000)

“And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, “**I feel compassion for the people**, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.”

Matthew 14:14 (before feeding the 5,000)

“When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and **felt compassion for them** and healed their sick.”

John doesn't focus on Jesus's compassion in his account of the story

Why doesn't John stress that?

We must remember John's purpose for writing: **He is proving that Jesus is the Christ -> The Messiah -> God!**

John is focusing on something else in this story...

John 6:1-3

“After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And **a great multitude followed him**, because **they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased**. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.”



A change in location: John 5 in Jerusalem, John 6 in Galilee

Tiberias is just one of the towns around the Sea.

Capernaum and Bethsaida are there on the north, where gospel events take place

John 5 focused on the people in Jerusalem, mainly Jews who were connected

Now, Jesus is in the north in Galilee with less connected and more common people around

Jesus Draws a Crowd

“great multitude followed Him” -> Ministry of the Twelve (2 by 2) before this, according to Mark and Luke

Why were they following Him?

“because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased”

They were attracted to the miracle show!

John 6:4-5

“And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and **saw a great company come unto him**”

It was Passover which normally meant **crowds were on the move** to go Jerusalem

Jerusalem would swell **from 20-30K people upwards to 150K** during Passover

“a great company” -> a huge group of people notice Jesus

It's been a year since He started His ministry on Earth

They ran out of the cities once they knew He was in Galilee:

Mark 6:33-34

“**Many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities**, and outwent them, and came together unto him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and **was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.**”

Jesus knows that the group is lost one!

Perhaps living day by day, not knowing where the next meal is going to come from

His compassion is aroused in Him

Mark 6:35-37

“When the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, this is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, **shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?**”

Mark records that the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him to send them away

John records that Jesus has other ideas

A Disciple's Test

John 6:5-6

“He saith unto Philip, whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.”

“this He said to prove him” -> Jesus was **testing Philip** -> **Does Philip believe that Jesus can handle this Himself?**

“He Himself knew what He would do” -> He had a plan -> the Father’s plan and this was time for another sign

John 6:7-9

“Philip answered him, two hundred pennyworth (denarii) of bread **is not sufficient for them**, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, ‘**There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?**’”

A pennyworth (or Denarii) was a normal day’s wage

200 pennyworth was **8 month’s salary for an average worker**

Philip says, “even if we went a bought 8 month’s salary worth of food” – it wouldn’t be enough.

It may be that this was the amount of money they had with them -> **Judas kept the money, you never know**

Philip is looking at an earthly solution -> **“We cannot solve this problem!”**

Andrew finds a kid with a biblical day Happy Meal -> five barley loaves and two small fish

Barley was a poor man’s bread:

It was usually fed to horses

Gideon was compared to barley bread noting his poor upbringing and lack of ability

Three times cheaper than wheat (according to Revelation 6:6)

A barley loaf would be equivalent to a flat, pita bread to us

If it was a lad’s meal, five loaves would be five pieces of pita bread -> not much there

Two small fish -> think sardines

The Miracle

John 6:10-11

“And Jesus said, **Make the men sit down**. Now there was much grass in the place. So, the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, **he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down**; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.”

How did they know it was five thousand?

Mark 6:39-40

“And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And **they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.**”

Jesus commanded the men to sit down in groups of hundreds and fifties

Jesus wanted them (the people and the disciples) to easily be able to count how many were there

“the men sat down” -> obviously, families were there because a lad had his meal

The total number of people may have been round 20K fed, altogether

“Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, **he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down**”

The disciples handed to the men, the men would then take the food to their families

The NASB doesn't record this level of detail, but the KJV does -> **Jesus -> Disciples – then to the People**

Where is the miracle taking place?

Who is seeing the reproduction of bread?

Jesus is creating food right in front of the disciple's eyes -> **Can you imagine what they were thinking?**

The Reason for the Miracle

Jesus can create something out of nothing

Colossians 1:16

“**For by him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him, and for him**”

He did so in the beginning in Genesis

He did so with the loaves and the bread here

But the key is that the disciples would see His creative power

This is the Fourth Sign

The disciples are then told to pick up the leftovers:

John 6:12-13

“When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost’. Therefore, they gathered them together, and **filled twelve baskets** with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.”

Anyone want to guess why there were twelve baskets?

How many disciples were there?

Jesus gave them a visual reminder (in hand) as they walked away of His creative power!

John's Application

John 6:14

“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, ‘**This is of a truth that the prophet that should come into the world.**’”

Which men? The disciples? -> No

When the five thousand men heard of the miracle, they respond that the Prophet must be here

Who was the Prophet?

Moses wrote of the coming Prophet:

Deuteronomy 18:15

“The LORD thy **God will raise up unto thee a Prophet** from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken”

We will see this response from the people often

In the temple, Jesus was preaching, and the response was:

John 7:40-41

“Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, **“This certainly is the Prophet.”** Others were saying, ‘This is the Christ.’”

The Reaction of the People

John 6:15

“When Jesus therefore perceived that **they would come and take him by force, to make him a king**, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.”

Jesus was prophesied to sit on the throne of David:

Luke 1:31-33 (The Angel tells Mary)

“Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

Jesus’s reign will be in the Millennial Kingdom -> when He returns back to Earth

God will give Him the throne of David -> Not the people!

The people want to accelerate that reign

Not because Jesus is the Son of God, but because He fed them, as we will see more of next week

There is no social gospel here, though...

What do we learn from the Feeding of the Five Thousand?

- Jesus had compassion for the people -> **no limit on feeding the hungry**
- Jesus had unlimited creative power
- Jesus tested the disciples’ belief in Him
- The miracle was for the disciples first, then the people saw afterward
- The people recognize Jesus as the Prophet, want Him to make Him king now

Prayer

Benediction