



Online Bible Study Lesson Two

The Miracle Jesus Feeds 5,000

Truly, truly, I tell you, he who believes has eternal life. **I am the Bread of Life.** Your father's ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, that anyone may eat of it and not die. I am the Living Bread which came down out of heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. **John 6:47-51** NHEB.

Has there ever been a time when you wondered why God uses food like the bread and wine of communion to bring understanding of who and what He is? In our study today we will learn there is more to this miracle of feeding the 5,000 than just another meal. God wants us to connect to the real bread of life, His Son Jesus. We are to remember at every meal we eat that Jesus is the provider of everything we will ever need. So, sit back and enjoy this study of Jesus feeding the 5,000! Also remember to share these studies with a friend. Blessings!

Please read one or more of the Gospel accounts;

Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15

This period was the time of Jesus' greatest popularity amongst the Jews. Jesus had everyone talking about him and his signs, great works, and wonders. God's plan of redemption was in full swing. Jesus spent most of the day teaching the people from his seat on a hillside. He was teaching the masses about the Kingdom of God by the wonderful method of parables. The people were amazed at Jesus' teaching and his healing of the sick amongst them. There was so much joy sweeping through the crowd, much celebration, and so much hope. The people's long-awaited Messiah had finally arrived. The real Jews, who lived by faith in their Messiah, were ecstatic. They praised the Lord. God expects you to join in this celebration on the Bethsaida hillside.

Are you there yet in your imagination?

Has God's Spirit brought your soul to this remarkable event?

Jesus Feeds 5,000 - the Miracle

The busy day quickly passed. If you've ever done work in ministry you feel for Jesus and his disciples at this point. Teaching alone wears out a person's spirit, and don't forget his healing miracles. Jesus was exhausted! Tired, hungry, and with no recourse, the disciples approached Jesus with great concern about the needs of the crowd. They reminded him of the late hour and the fact that people required daylight to purchase food and find shelter for the evening. Jesus already knew God's plan for this group but, as usual he wanted to test his disciple's faith. He

asked Philip, *"Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?"* Philip disappointed Jesus with his thoughtless reply, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to buy the bread to feed them!" Another disciple chimed in, "There is nothing to eat in this remote place!" Jesus, calmly working the moment to full teaching benefit, seriously challenged them, **"You feed them."** The disciples looked around at each other, dumbstruck. One of them inquired, "With what?!" Jesus asked them all, *"How much bread do we have? Go, and find out."* They searched and searched. Walking through the crowd, asking for food, they looked, they hunted, but walked back disappointed in what they found.

Would you give your food to these men?

Jesus sat silently, waiting for someone to speak. Finally, Andrew shared the meager results of their scavenger hunt, "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?" Motioning to the loaves and fishes, Jesus finally spoke, *"Bring them here"*. Jesus then instructed his disciples, *"Tell them all to sit down in groups of fifty people each"*.

The disciples spread the word; and the people sat down on the grassy hillside in groups of 50. The disciples counted the crowd at 5,000 men, plus their families (**Mark 6:44**). Realistically, there were probably around 15,000 people in attendance counting men, women and children. Jesus took the loaves and fishes in his hands, looked up to heaven, and blessed the food. Jesus took the loaves and began breaking them. He handed them to the disciples to disperse. They continued until every person had all the bread they wanted. Jesus then took the fishes and divided them, so every person in attendance could receive their fill. Every soul in attendance was satisfied.

Jesus Feeds 5,000 - The Crowd's Reaction

The work wasn't quite complete for the disciples. Jesus gave them one last instruction, *"Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted"*. Jesus' disciples spread out and gathered all of the leftover bread and fish they could find.

Why do you think Jesus had them gather up the left over's?

Soon, they accumulated twelve baskets of leftover food. So, not only were nearly 15,000 people fed, but there were leftovers! The thousands of people listened to Jesus' wise teaching. They watched Jesus heal many people. Now, multitudes of people were directly involved and addressed by Jesus Christ's miracle. Jesus feeds 5,000+ people with five loaves and two fish! Amazing! **This was one of Jesus' greatest miracles.**

The people were in awe. They shouted, "Surely, he is the Prophet we've been expecting!" With renewed strength from their meal, they became aggressive and tried forcing Jesus to be their king. The Jews always clamored for such a man to lead them, but they missed the point, which frustrated Jesus. Many sought an earthly king, not a heavenly Messiah. Jesus noticed the

momentum building to make him king, so he snuck away into the dark hills alone. No one knew where he went. Jesus often did this to rest and commune with his Father.

Would things now calm down?

Did Jesus only have one big miracle in his arsenal? Let's find out.

Jesus Feeds 4,000 - The Miracle

Please read **Matthew 15:32-39** and **Mark 8:1-10**

Immediately after the "Jesus feeding 5,000 miracle event", he performed another great miracle, which happened on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus frightened his disciples late the same evening. The disciples were resting in their boat, still trying to grasp the true significance of Jesus feeding the 5,000. They knew Jesus was always teaching them, and they knew there was more behind this great miracle.

Mark tells us that their hearts were too hardened, too blind to understand the truth(s) Jesus was teaching them. Watching five loaves and two fish feed nearly 15,000 people before their very eyes was simply too much to fathom (**Mark 6:52**).

That's what makes miracles, miracles!

Two gospel books share the similar account of Jesus feeding 4,000 men, or roughly 12,000 people (counting men, women and children). Jesus healed a deaf man in Decapolis, and the event brought a large crowd out to see him. Jesus taught the people for 3 days and noticed they were becoming hungry. Jesus told his disciples, *"I feel sorry for these people. For they have nothing left to eat. If I send them home hungry, they'll faint along the way."* He asked the disciples, *"How much bread do you have?"* This time they **found seven loaves and two small fishes**.

As before, Jesus looked into heaven, communed with his Father, and received a blessing on the food. He divided the bread loaves and fishes, relying on the disciples to serve the entire crowd, which was estimated at about 12,000 people. Everyone ate until they were full and strengthened. Once again, Jesus told the disciples to gather the leftovers into baskets, which they did. This time they collected seven full baskets of leftovers (**Mark 8:8-10**).

How many baskets did they gather total in two miracles, feeding 5000 and 4000?

How many people were fed in total?

Jesus Feeds 5,000 & 4,000 - The Meaning

Read: **Matthew 16:1-12**

Shortly after this, in Capernaum, an exasperated Jesus told the crowds that they only followed him because he fed them by means of a miracle (**John 6:25-26**). Then some Pharisees and

politicians encircled Jesus, demanding, "Show us a **miraculous sign** if you want us to believe in you. What can you do?" The religious hypocrites kept badgering Jesus, "After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat' (**John 6:30-31**). Jesus was incensed, "*I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. **My Father did.***" Jesus always knew the source of all good and great things come from His Father in heaven. Jesus added, "*And now He offers you the true bread from heaven. The true bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world*" (**John 6:32-33**).

The darkened, unbelieving hearts of the people saddened Jesus, "*Why do these people keep demanding a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, I will not give this generation any such sign*" (**Mark 8:12-13**).

Through this amazing miracle, where Jesus feeds 5,000, and then another where Jesus feeds 4,000, God the Father anointed Jesus as the authority over salvation. **These two miracles authenticate Jesus' position as the sole Savior of all mankind.** There was not, is not, and never will be another Savior. "There is no other name under the heavens by which a person can be saved" (**Acts 4:12**).

The Bread of Life - Jesus Christ

Please read **Mark 8:11-21**

What do you think the bread of life means?

Jesus' miracle on the hillside, feeding the crowds with bread and fish, was a sign pointing to himself. The Bread of Life. The bread symbolized Jesus. People who eat this spiritual Bread live eternally. Jesus continued to elaborate on the meaning of the food miracles, but this time he only shared with his disciples. The disciples were arguing amongst themselves about who failed to bring some food to eat. Suddenly, Jesus had enough of their shallow bickering, "*Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod.*" Jesus grabbed their attention! They stopped whining about their momentary need of food.

Jesus asked, "*Why are you arguing about having no bread?!*" *Are your hearts too hard to understand? Can't you see what I'm doing?!* *Can't you hear what I'm saying?!* *Have you already forgotten that I fed 5,000 with five loaves of bread, and had leftovers?!* *I also fed 4,000 with seven loaves, and how many baskets of leftovers did you pick up?!*" The humiliated disciples sheepishly responded, "Seven."

Revisiting Jesus' statement, "*Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod,*" gives us tremendous insight into the meaning of the manna and bread miracles. Jesus was telling his disciples, and you and I by association, who and what we are to trust for eternal life. It's a remarkable statement. Let's discuss the meaning in clear detail.

Religion wants people to trust in their particular organization.

Jesus represented organized religion by the statement, "*the yeast of the Pharisees.*" The bread of religion is made with the yeast of hypocrites. This bread will not allow you to live eternally. In other words your denomination affiliation does not save your soul, only Jesus can!

Government wants people to trust in their provision and protection.

Jesus represented government by the statement, "*the yeast of Herod.*" The bread of government is made with the yeast of corrupt politicians. This bread will not allow you to live eternally. This is a message about material food verses spiritual food: mammon verses manna. Material food keeps you alive momentarily. It fills your stomach, but then passes through your system. Spiritual food keeps you alive forever.

Which do you seek to fill your real purpose in life?

Do you see past this short, but important life; or, can you only see to your next meal? Remember Esau in the Bible (Genesis 25:29-34) gave up his birth right for a small bowl of lentil (pea) stew. What price do you put on your eternal soul?

Let's continue to spiritually reason through the message behind this incredible miracle. The source of both the manna, and the loaves and fishes, is found in heaven. These foods, on these particular occasions, are spiritual, being signified by a miraculous display of power and authority. Thus, the two miracles use food to ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. These miracles are for us, gifted by God the Father.

The Bread of Spiritual Death

When people eat at the tables of religion and government they remain hungry - there is never enough to please a hungry soul. . Not only does this worldly bread leave you unsatisfied; but, there are never leftovers.

Religion leaves the hungry soul spiritually unfulfilled. National and world governments are incapable of fulfilling one's physical and spiritual hunger. They are horrible bakers - making nothing but mammon. Jesus says, "*No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon*" (**Matthew 6:24**).

Why did God feed the Hebrews manna?

Why did Jesus feed 5,000? Why did Jesus feed 4,000?

God fed the Hebrews, and Jesus fed 5,000 and 4000 to show you that God ALONE can satisfy the spiritual hunger of anyone who seeks him and his righteousness. Dining on the Bread from heaven will lead to eternal life with the Lord.

How does a person "eat" the Bread of Life?

Great question and as always, Jesus provides the definitive answer. *"As it is written in the Scriptures, "They will all be taught by God. Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me... I tell you the truth anyone who believes in me has eternal life. Yes! I am the Bread of Life!" (John 6:45-48).*

When God feeds people there are baskets full of leftovers - more than enough for all who love to eat heaven's Bread of Life. Eat until your heart is content, and then, share with other hungry people. Jesus loves a big crowd, and he loves proving that he can feed them ALL. He loves you, my friend. Trust him to feed you what is right. AMEN!!!!