

The Feeding of the Five Thousand – The Fourth Sign-Miracle of the Gospel of John
(Matthew 14, Mark 6, Luke 9, John 6)

Our Lord's fourth Sign-Miracle of John's Gospel – the Feeding of the Five thousand is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. This gives to it an entirely unique importance.

In John 6:4 we read, "And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh" (i.e. at hand). From this we may conclude that the Feeding of the Five Thousand was on one of the early days of May A.D.32- exactly one year before our Lord died and rose again.

We learn from Matthew's Gospel that the day on which our Lord performed this sign-miracle was tinged with deep sorrow. It was on hearing that John the Baptist had been beheaded in prison by Herod that the Lord "departed thence by ship into a desert place apart" with His disciples. (Matt.14: 12-13). Mark and Luke inform us that this corresponded in time with the return of the Twelve Apostles from their preaching tour and that Jesus invited them to Join Him for a season of rest after their arduous activities (Mark 6:31 and Luke 9: 10).

The multitudes discovered where Jesus had gone and followed Him. Mark records this: "And Jesus, when He came out, saw many people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He begun to teach them many things". Jesus could not send them away without a practical expression of His compassion when it was in His power to meet their need. He, therefore, says to His disciples, "Give ye them to eat". A lad was found who had "five barley loaves, and two small fishes". Jesus took "and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples". In the account we are informed that "twelve baskets" of fragments were taken up of that "which remained over".

This great event was prophetic of action by our Lord at the end of the Christian Dispensation. The Feeding of the Five Thousand, like the first sign and the second sign registered in John, supposes the failure of this Dispensation and the necessity of our Lord meeting the occasion by a display of His sovereign grace and power to bring about a recovery before He appears "a second time".

From the book The Restored Vision by A.E. Ware.