

## Miracles of Jesus 12-08-05b

We pick up our study now, we're looking at the feeding of the 4,000, and it's really a nexus, a junction, conjunction point for a lot of Scripture. We've looked at John chapter 6, where Jesus talks about himself as bread, and the eternal consequences, the eternal ramifications of his coming to Israel, primarily as their Messiah, as the fulfillment of the Old Testament covenant promises. God had his sheep, we have that also in Psalm 100, the make a joyful noise psalm, that many of you have probably memorized, as I did when I was a yonker.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands, serve the Lord with gladness, come before his presence with singing, know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves, we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. It's the basis of the doxology, Old 100, they call it that because it's, O enter then his gates with praise, courts unto, and all that, it's Psalm 100. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture, that's Israel talking, that's the people.

And sheep without a shepherd, they've lost their way, here's the green grass, it's Passover time, and yet they're hungry. And Jesus has compassion on them, so he feeds them, but he is something new, he has come down from heaven, this is the fulfillment. You're not just sheep eating grass now, you're the people of God, and here's the bread, and it's better bread than the manna.

You eat this and you won't hunger again, you eat this and you will live forever. The manna was a foreshadowing, a foretaste of that bread from heaven that would come and be the fulfillment. This is great in an Israel context.

Now, where has he been? Tyre and Sidon? What route did he take? Way around the north edge, came down in the Transjordan, passed through the midst of Decapolis, Decapolis, ten cities of the Gentiles. And he has cut through to the Sea of Galilee, and here is this crowd. They have stayed with him, not one day, but three days.

Now, after three days, he's going to give them something to eat. Three days. Hmm, ring any bells? Three days.

No sign will be given to this generation but the sign of Jonah. He was in the three days, three nights? Even so, this isn't going to transcribe well when I feed it to Dragon NaturallySpeaking. I am being elliptical.

But, three days. After three days. What is the most significant three days in human history? Son of man in the heart of the earth, three days and three nights.

After three days, Gentiles. Hmm, let's think about that. Four thousand.

What's the number four represented in Scripture? Universality, north, east, south, and

west. Four dimensions of space and, you know, we've got the height and the depth and the length and the breadth. Universality, Decapolis, Tyre and Sidon.

Just got through healing people over there. And seven loaves, the time of completion. This is the, everything is fulfilled now.

Seven loaves, the full orb. This is as much revelation as you're going to get for this time. And you've got a mix of Jewish and Gentile people in the crowd.

You've got the seven loaves and several fish. Jesus breaks them, passes them out to the crowd. And now, instead of the picnic baskets that you had back in Mark chapter 6, I thought I would go ahead and give you the Greek word for that in verse 42 of chapter 6. Kofinon, kofinon, dodeca, kofinon, pleromata.

You know what pleroma is, that's full, right? So they had 12 baskets full. And the kofinon, those are the small baskets. Now we've got spuridas, s-p-u-r-i-d-a-s, hepta spuridas, big hampers, big giant laundry basket, bushel basket size things.

Now, what about this? Well, what did we decide about the meaning of the fragments in the feeding of the 5,000? There's one picnic basket for each disciple slash future apostle, right? Apparently Judas isn't going to have a long-term career, so there will be another apostle. But in symbolism, you've got the 12 ministering to Israel. And the surviving 11 are going to continue to primarily minister to Israel, at least for the first several decades of the new dispensation.

Well, here we've got how many baskets, how many big bushels? Seven. Well, if Israel is going to be ministered to by disciples slash apostles, who is going to be the repository and the ministry source for the new age, the Gentiles? Who does Jesus write letters to in Revelation chapter 2 and 3? The church. And it's a bigger thing than one guy, isn't it? There's more there.

So this is what I think. I think this is proleptic. I think this is anticipatory.

I think this is prophetic. And Jesus is making a... Why are there two miracles? Oh, well, we've covered the 5,000. Let's move on.

Oh, my gosh. You're missing everything. It's huge.

It's huge. This is a picture of what's coming. You Jewish folks and your Pharisees and Sadducees, carping, give us a sign.

Remember what the apostle Paul says? We've come to you all, and you don't want it. We go to the Gentiles. Jesus saw this coming.

Jesus anticipates that, demonstrates it, illustrates it, fulfills it right here in Decapolis. Everything else you want to observe is still true. What does the bread represent? It's the

Lord Jesus.

But look how much more there is. Seven loaves, not just five. The law anticipated Christ, and that's most of it.

Five-sevenths of what you can learn about Jesus Christ is apparently in the law. But there is the completion. After three days, now we see it all.

Now we've got the perfect picture of deity in bodily form. We've got the Lord Jesus Christ revealed. So we are the Decapolis crowd.

We have the opportunity, even though we're not the sheep. He didn't say anything about sheep, and he didn't say anything about a green pasture, and there's no green grass, because it's not the national Israel phase. The sheep and the green grass, the 12 baskets, that's God's program for Israel.

And that will come back to be complete and completed. But for us, we're the parched earth crowd, and yet there is abundant provision made for us. And there are hampers of truth reflecting the Lord Jesus Christ available to us.

When Jesus says, Beware the leaven of the Pharisees, what is he talking about? It is the doctrine, right? The doctrine. After the feeding of the 4,000, what is the reaction of the people? You remember what happened in the 5,000. Jesus sent the disciples away in the boat.

He stayed by himself, and the crowd comes and tries to make him king. Confusion of the sheep and the green grass with, I am the bread of life that has come down from heaven. This is a spiritual truth.

My kingdom is not of this world. After demonstrating it, after illustrating it, after giving, Give us this bread always. Let's make the guy king.

We'll have the welfare state, and we won't even have to pay taxes. This guy, like the goose laying golden eggs, we'll just set him up, give him a chair, have a bread line, come up there, Jesus just hand you a tortilla, hand you a piece of crust, hand you a tortilla, hand you a piece of crust, give us this bread always. We'll make you king.

You be the king. You serve us. Funny how that works.

Talk about servant leadership. You be the king because you're the bread guy. Well, entirely different thing in Decapolis.

Nobody tries to make him king over there. We have noted in the past that without taking anything away from the royal lineage and the son of David status and the messiahship of the Lord Jesus Christ, to us as believers, he is primarily something more. I think it is a diminishment.

I think it is a misunderstanding when the church gets involved in adulation and adoration of Jesus as king. You're missing it. Yes, he is king, but not our king, not primarily.

Where does it say that Jesus is king to the church? And we compound the error of the Jews. At least they had the right idea. I mean, he is the king of the Jews.

He is the son of David, but you're trying to make him the wrong king in the wrong way at the wrong time. But they've got more on the ball than people who say, Well, we're doing this for the kingdom. We're going to make Jesus the king, crown him with many crowns.

We just have to be careful about that. It's not so much wrong as it isn't really right. I've been trying to explain to somebody in a completely different context this past week about the difference.

They passed a law in Germany where they don't want anybody circumcising baby boys. I got into a friendly debate about this with our secular humanist, progressively materialistic, shame on all you religious people, persons, who is applauding this and saying, Oh, me and my friends have been working on this for years, and now we've got to get the rest of these religious types to quit performing mutilation of their babies. And so we got into this thing where he is citing the medical community at large, and there is evidence to indicate that there is some disease control benefit for this, particularly with HIV.

In fact, the World Health Organization and UNAIDS and the governments of 14 African countries have been promoting and encouraging circumcision of adults as well as infants. They've written a manual on it that you can download as a PDF where people are worried that it's done without anesthetic, here's how you do the anesthetic, step by step, here's how it's done, because it seriously cuts the incidence of HIV. Well, his point was no major medical body anywhere in the world recommends it.

Of course, he's wrong, and I quoted the WHO, and he said, well, okay, that's one, nobody else. Come on, it's continent-wide, 14 countries wrote a manual. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the medical authorities in 14 countries, well, that's just one, name me another.

But one of the aspects of this debate is he said, well, all the major medical bodies in the world discourage circumcision for male infants. And I said, look, they're not recommending it because why would they recommend it? They would recommend it if it had profound medical, you know, they put whatever that is in the eyes of babies, they give them a vitamin K shot when they're born, they give them a heel stick and test their blood, they do all kinds of things to newborn infants because this has been demonstrated to have natural medical benefits. And so they said, we're going to do this to a baby, we're going to stick a needle in their heel because this is beneficial.

Well, you know, the pain level is probably about the same. But, hey, we believe in this, so we're going to recommend that you do this. And, you know, babies undergo all kinds of indignities when they're born, but they recommend that this be done because there are medical benefits.

Well, okay, they don't recommend anymore, they used to, but they don't recommend circumcision anymore. The evidence is equivocal and they've gotten a lot of abuse from the, ooh, genital mutilation crowd, so they don't do it. Well, so he says because they no longer recommend it for preventative reasons, they're discouraging it.

The fact that you don't recommend a thing doesn't automatically mean you discourage it. There's a difference. Not recommending something isn't the same as saying boo on that thing.

There's a difference. And this is a subtle distinction. Well, we need to be sensitive to this kind of thing.

I am not discouraging recognizing the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ, but for us in the Church, I don't recommend it. I don't think it is recommended in Scripture. The Apostle Paul never once calls Jesus King.

The Apostle John, in writing to the Church, never once calls Jesus King. The Apostle Peter, in his epistles, never once calls Jesus King, nor does James, nor does Jude. That pretty much gives you your New Testament.

Nor does Luke in Acts. Nobody does it. So I would think it would be something not recommended.

If you want to do that, I wouldn't discourage it. But I think there is a better way. I think there is a better emphasis, and I think you see it here.

Look at these copious baskets of fragments to the 4,000, the universal, what I would think is the Church crowd who is still with the Lord Jesus. After the three days, they are there. The three days have passed, and they are there, and He feeds them.

And they don't try to make Him King. There is a better way. Well, in conclusion, in summary, what do we see in all of these? And not forgetting the multiplication of fish on the shore at the end, the conclusion of John.

You remember the episode at the lake. John 21, verse 5. When the morning had come, Jesus stood on the shore. The disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

How many disciples were there in total? There were 12 disciples. And Jesus, after the three days, the people who knew Him before, who knew Him when He was promulgating the message of the kingdom to Israel, they have difficulty recognizing Him. The two men

on the road to Emmaus don't recognize Him.

Women in the garden don't recognize Him. The disciples at the lake, when they look at the shore, they don't recognize Him immediately. His appearance is different.

This is significant. He doesn't look exactly the same because His aspect, His presentation, His revelation is different after the resurrection than it was before. He says, Children, do you have any food? They answered Him, No.

Right away, we didn't bring any bread. Whoops. Thought we'd catch some fish.

Have you any food? No. Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. So they cast and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord. Who's the first guy to figure it out? The guy that wrote the revelation. He's the guy that figures it out.

That's the Lord. Isn't it interesting that Peter, who has done this net thing before, remember? Depart from me, I'm a sinful man. Peter isn't the first one to jump on this.

It's John. John, the apostle who does move forward and reveal to us the church age program in the revelation. The one Israel apostle that seems to wear two hats.

He pins the letters to the seven churches on Jesus' behalf. He's the Lord's amanuensis. So, John figures it out.

When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he didn't see that it was the Lord, he heard that it was the Lord. Right? From John. He didn't see it for himself, but he respects John enough to know that he's right.

He put on his outer garment and plunged into the sea. The other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from land, 200 cubits, dragging the net with fish. As soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there and fish laid on it and bread.

You can't help but link these together. Fish and bread. You know, ding, ding, ding.

Pay attention here. Jesus said to them, Bring some of the fish which you have just caught. Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land full of large fish, 153.

I was thinking about this the other day. I couldn't remember the exact number. I had Patty go check it for me because I was otherwise occupied and I was thinking while I was doing something else.

Can you check that number? 153. I thought, 153, 153. Wow, what kind of a biblically significant number is 153? And as I was musing on it, being the English major that I am, it takes a while to process numerical data.

But what can you say about 153? Well, this is my observation. What's 12 times 12? 144. What's 3 times 3? 9. What's 144 plus 9? 153.

You've got the number of Israel squared and you've got the number of God squared added together. And I'm not a great, you know, metaphorical, metaphysical, allegorical interpreter guy. But it is, and you can string it out.

You know how you do prime factors or whatever it is and you say, well, 12 is 2 times 2 times 3. So you've got 2 times 2 times 2 times 2 times 3 times, you know, it's all twos and threes all the way through to get to 153 when you add those two numbers together. But 12 exponential, 3 exponential, Jesus is there on the shore and the culmination of the program for Israel and God in Christ intervening in human history, this is really the launching point for the preaching of the gospel to the world. So Jesus says, bring the fish.

And this time the loaves are not numbered. Always in the previous times it was the loaves that we got five loaves the first time and two fish. Second time we don't even know how many fish.

But this time, huge amount of fish and it's the fish that are numbered. And we're given this number. Why? I ask myself.

Tell us how big a miracle it was. Well, what about the other miraculous catch miracles? We didn't find out how many, you know, they counted these fish. You figure, you know, they got finished and I wonder how many fish are in that net.

They said, well, let's see, we ate, you know, there's four or five of us here. We ate fish. Jesus ate a couple of fish.

Let's count the rest. They count the bones, count the heads, whatever. And, wow, 153 fish.

And John writes it down. Years later, when John's putting this gospel together, he writes down, he remembers the number of fish. Why is that? Well, it's got to be important.

So, not so much the bread, much more the fish. And we talked last time about what is the significance of bread versus fish. Bread is what was put in those baskets.

Now, there is one place where it says they took up fragments of bread and fish. I think in the feeding of the 5,000, Mark maybe says they took up fragments of bread and fish. Everybody else says the baskets were full of bread.

When Jesus rehearses the miracle, he says, how many baskets of fragments did you take up? And it's primarily the bread. He says, how many loaves? How many baskets? How many loaves? How many baskets? And the fish kind of get short shrift. Here, the fish are the main idea.

The bread that he has, he doesn't say he had one piece of bread and behold, it fed the whole boat full of disciples. It's the fish. And there's way more fish than there are disciples.

You think, well, how many disciples are there? You look back at verse 2, there's Simon Peter, Thomas the twin, Nathaniel of Cana, the sons of Zebedee, that's James and John, and two others of his disciples were together. How many disciples? Count the disciples. Seven.

Seven disciples. Seven baskets at the feeding of the 4,000. And these are present.

Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land full of large fish. Although there were so many, the net was not broken. Conservation didn't lose any.

The number of fish is important. None were lost. Jesus said to them, Come and eat breakfast.

Yet none of the disciples dared ask him, Who are you? Knowing that it was the Lord. What an odd thing to say. I don't go over to my brother's house, come over to Ken's house, and say, Well, I don't dare ask who you are because I know it's you.

It's just, you know, one too many sci-fi movies, pod people cloning, androids made in the form of other, you know, it just doesn't occur to me to refrain from asking who you are when I see you because your appearance tells me who you are. Why would this question come up in the minds of the disciples? Jesus does not look the same. They know it is him by his actions and by his words, not by his appearance because he looks way different.

People say, Oh, he has no former comeliness. The crucifixion's so distorted. No, this goes way beyond the abuse that he suffered.

You know, you can see somebody pretty mangled up and still recognize who they are. They don't get any clues as to who he is from the way he looks. Peter heard it was the Lord and swam to land.

John deduces who he is when they start getting this full net. He figures it out. This is the IFF at the human level.

The identification friend or foe. There's like an invisible signal that passes. This is the Lord.

I recognize him not based on the evidence of my eyes, based on the evidence of words and deeds. Isn't that what the church does? We do not see the Lord Jesus. We don't identify him because we see him and he's doing miracles in our presence.

We hear him. We come to know him and love him not having seen. What does Jesus tell Thomas in the upper room? You believe because you're looking at me and you're sticking

your finger in the holes.

Blessed are those who not having seen identify the Lord Jesus for who he is, believe in him for who he is, trust him and live their lives in the light of his glory and presence and eternal future kingdom not having seen. There's a reason why Jesus didn't look the same. There's a reason why Scripture records it.

There is a reason why you have those two separate and distinct crowds being fed. God has a program for the 5,000. God has a program for the 4,000.

There is a time for everything under the sun. There is a season. We are in the season of grace.

We are in the season of the church. We are in the season where we have been given an abundance and that abundance is located in the fellowship, the assembly of believers. That's what the big basket represents.

Jesus didn't say, okay, everybody get a picnic basket and take some bread home with you, either time. For Israel, they look to their leadership. They look to their tribal chiefs.

They look to whoever it is that is a spiritual authority in the structure of the nation. For us, the place of nourishment, the place of restoration, the place of blessing, the place of the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ on a fresh basis. This is what you see on the shore.

In the feeding of the 4,000 as well as the feeding of the 5,000, the fish are not fresh. There is no body of water nearby. They didn't say, well, we've just got a couple of fish we caught.

The place where you have the fresh fish is at the end, still wiggling in the net. Peter has just dragged the thing to land. Fresh fish.

And that's the abundance. It's fresh. And it is a reminder that we need a fresh look at the Word of God.

We need a daily meal. Jesus told the disciples, when you pray, give us this day our daily bread. But if you think about it, He was speaking back in the age of Israel when He was presenting the kingdom to the sheep of the pasture.

Pray for bread. What is the mission for the church? What is the symbol that identifies Christians to one another in the early church? Ikthus. The fish.

This is a living, fresh nourishment. Fish doesn't keep. You get it daily.

Our fish are fresh daily. Stores advertise that. We need a daily renewal, a daily exposure.

Jesus is more than bread to us. There is truth that is centered in Him and that radiates

from Him and it is eternal life. Jesus said, I am the bread that comes down from heaven.

But you notice when the Israelites got to the land of promise, the man has stopped because it was a temporary provision. When that which is complete is come, the land flowing with milk and honey, the place where you can grow your crops and pasture your herds, that's a better thing than manna. We have something better than just bread.

We have this living truth, but we come to get it in our fellowship. This is what we have, the record of the Lord Jesus. We don't see Him bodily, but we know His words and His actions from what these very men wrote for us.

John is there. Peter is there. James is there.

The son, the brother of John and not the half-brother of the Lord that's going to write the book of James, but I think he's going to be one of the two witnesses in the tribulation. I personally think the sons of thunder are going to be the two. These men have a future ministry to the Lord Jesus, both in their lifetimes and beyond.

There are gates in Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem named for the twelve apostles, even as you have gates for the twelve tribes. And they are the link. They are the bridge.

So what do we conclude from all of this? There is a need for nourishment. Jesus has compassion on us and He feeds us with bread from heaven. We need to know where it is.

We need to avail ourselves of it. We need to stick around for it. We need to recognize its value and its pertinence.

And we speak the truth to one another in love. This is, as we saw Friday night, the comfort with which we are comforted is something we can pass on to others. And that is the comfort of God's presence, the comfort of God's truth.

And in all three cases, 5,000, 4,000, and the seven disciples at the seashore, that food comes from the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. It never gets to them without Him touching it and blessing it first. It is sourced in Him.

It is blessed by Him. It is given by Him. No disciple goes and tries to give it to the people out of his own pocket.

It goes to the Lord. The Lord hands it back. Now it is effective.

Now it is beneficial. Any gift that we have, any effort that we undertake as believers, we dedicate to God. God will bless it.

When God is in it, little is much. And there is blessing for others beyond us. And there is always something left over, something to take back and chew on later, something to think about in the future.

If it had been perfect provision and there was nothing left, we can say, well, maybe that's rejection. Well, maybe it is also a reminder that there is future application from present application. There's future benefit from what happens in the day.

And it can be both. Well, fascinating miracle, wonderful truths from the Word of God that are illuminated and illustrated and brought out by these details. And we are privileged to have the record of these and to see the pertinence and application for ourselves.

But it takes thought. It takes some time meditating and analyzing and thinking about. And we've by no means exhausted the meaning of the details here.

So it's something worth thinking about in the days ahead, even as we might take a picnic basket along with us when we leave. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for the provision that You make for us on a daily basis. The manifest evidence of the reality and the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom not having seen, we love, we trust, we rely upon the person of the Lord Jesus as well as His work on our behalf and the truth that is communicated to us through the intermediate agency of the scriptures, the inspired apostles as they set these things down, and the ministry of Your Holy Spirit making it real and pertinent and applicable to each one of us. We pray that as we spend the time that remains to us, that it will be an investment in the future as well as an application in the present and that in all things the Lord Jesus will be glorified and that we will be thoroughly equipped to perform those good works that You have ordained for us both now and in the ages to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.