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## **FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND.**

I. QUAR., LESSON II., JAN. 13, MARK 6:30-44.

Parallel Accounts – Matt. 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14.

**Golden Text – "He hath filled the hungry with good things."  
– Luke 1:53.**

SOMEWHAT previous to the martyrdom of John the baptist, the Lord had sent his disciples out to preach the gospel of the Kingdom in the villages of Galilee, himself going also. The news of John's death and the possible effect upon their work of this sudden outburst of royal wrath seems to have brought them all together again to take counsel of the Lord. It was quite possible that the persecution might extend to the disciples of John and to Jesus whom he had baptized and introduced. Or, on the other hand, there was danger of a revolt against the government which had thus outraged the public sense of honor and decency; for John was generally regarded as a great prophet: and such a revolt might tend to the immediate advancement of Jesus to the kingly office; for his fame had spread abroad throughout the nation, and indeed throughout the world. – Matt. 4:23,24; Luke 4:14,15,37; 5:15; Mark 6:33; Matt. 14:1; 9:26,31.

Doubtless it was in view of these considerations, as well as of the necessity, on the part of his disciples for rest and spiritual refreshment from himself, that Jesus counselled their retirement with him to a rural retreat beyond the dominions of Herod, where they might rest awhile. [R1754 : page 10] Just so the Lord would have all his disciples come to him for counsel and for rest and refreshment. "He never asks of us such busy labor as finds no time for resting at his feet." Nor would he have us rest too long when other weary hearts are waiting for our ministries of love and consolation. His invitation is, not to the listless and idle, but to the active souls – "Come unto me, all ye that labor and

are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" – rest in the midst of your cares and trials and perplexities, a sweet rest of mind, and peace, which the world with all its delusive charms can never give, nor with all its sin and woe can ever take away.

In this case the season of retirement continued only until their boat landed on the opposite shore of the sea of Galilee, where about five thousand men, besides women and children (Matt. 14:21), awaited the Lord's ministry. Then came refreshment of their faith, the inspiring of their zeal and the revival of their hopes as they heard the Master's gracious words to the multitudes and witnessed his miracles of healing (Matt. 14:14) and finally the great miracle of feeding the whole multitude to their satisfaction on the five loaves and two fishes, so marvelously increased that twelve baskets of fragments were gathered after they had been fed.

While the chief object of the miracle was doubtless to reinforce and establish the faith of the apostles, its secondary object and actual effect upon the multitudes was very similar; for they said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." But "when Jesus perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." (John 6:14,15.) The Lord afterward on another occasion (Matt. 16:9,10) sought to further impress upon the minds of his apostles the lesson of faith which this miracle was given to establish in them specially.

It is further worthy of notice that the Lord's miracles of feeding and of healing were performed, not upon his consecrated disciples, but upon others. His followers having covenanted to share with him in the work of sacrifice, might therefore, like him, avail themselves only of the natural means of recuperation, relinquishing all right, claim and title to all restitution privileges. When Christ was weary, he rested (John 4:6); when he was hungry, he partook of food, and never in any case worked a miracle for his own present benefit, nor for his disciples.

(Matt. 4:2-4; 2 Cor. 12:8-10.) The disciples also followed his example (1 Tim. 5:23), any other course being inconsistent with their covenant.

The golden text is a part of the prophetic utterance of Elizabeth in her salutation of Mary prior to the birth of Christ. It has reference to the restitution blessings to be granted to all the meek of the earth through the Millennial reign of Christ. As in many other prophecies, the standpoint of the future is taken and the things are spoken of as accomplished facts. For examples of this method see Isa. 9:6; Rom. 4:17.

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