



Rev

# Adult Education Lesson 5

## A prophecy of the Spread of the Gospel

The loaves and the fishes (John 6:4-15)

Collect

ARTICLE NO.  
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Joh. 6:4-15

### Jesus chastises the disciples for their failure to understand the feeding stories

(Mark 8:14-21) ... “perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? **When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.** And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?”

Obviously Jesus meant something other than understanding the “facts” of the stories, which are plain to see and easy to comprehend, so what was it that the disciples missed? Are we “in the same boat” with them? The Church Fathers spent many days/months meditating on these two stories and varied were their interpretations.

St. Augustine: by the five loaves are understood the five books of Moses; and rightly are they not wheaten but barley loaves, because they belong to the Old Testament. And you know that barley is so formed that we get at its pith with difficulty; for the pith is covered in a coating of husk, and the husk itself tenacious and closely adhering, so as to be stripped off with labor. Such is the letter of the Old Testament, invested in a covering of carnal sacraments: but yet, if we get at its pith, it feeds and satisfies us. A certain lad, then, brought five loaves and two fishes. If we inquire who this lad was, perhaps it was the people Israel, which, in a childish sense, carried, not ate. For the things which they carried were a burden while shut up, but when opened afforded nourishment. And as for the two fishes, they appear to us to signify those two sublime persons, in the Old Testament, of priest and of ruler, who were anointed for the sanctifying and governing of the people. And at length Himself in the mystery came, who was signified by those persons: He at length came who was pointed out by the pith of the barley, but concealed by its husk. He came, sustaining in His one person the two characters of priest and ruler: of priest by offering Himself to God as a victim for us; of ruler, because by Him we are governed. And the things that were carried closed are now opened up. Thanks be to Him. He has fulfilled by Himself what was promised in the Old Testament. And He bade the loaves to be broken; in the breaking they are multiplied.



Glen Miller

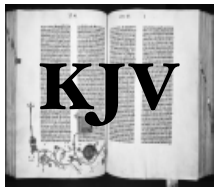


See also (Matthew 14:11-23) for the same story, with differences.

John 21:1, 2) After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples (Andrew and Philip).

**Much of this tract is commentary - don't take it as Gospel. It is here to encourage meditation and study. Use your gift of discernment, to find the truth.**

The “loaves and the fishes” (John 6:4-15)



“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, 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 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? 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. 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. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth **that 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.”

Another Similar Story (Matthew 15:33-39)

“And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.”

Would they not also have sat on the ground, rocks, sand? - grass may mean something spiritual.

Parables told by Jesus

Harrington, Wilfred J.

Alba House

0-8189-0296-5

References

St. Augustine cont.) Nothing is more true. For when those five books of Moses are expounded, how many books have they made by being broken up, as it were; that is, by being opened and laid out? But because in that barley the ignorance of the first people was veiled, of whom it is said, "Whilst Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts;" for the veil was not yet removed, because Christ had not yet come; not yet was the veil of the temple rent, while Christ is hanging on the cross: because, I say, the ignorance of the people was in the law, therefore that proving by the Lord made the ignorance of the disciple manifest.

St. John Crysostom - *Homily 42 on the Gospel of John*  
... But why gave He not the bread to the multitudes to bear, but (only) to His disciples?" Because He was most desirous to instruct these who were to be the teachers of the world. The multitude would not as yet reap any great fruit from the miracles, (at least they straightway forgot this one and asked for another,) while these would gain no common profit. And what took place was moreover no ordinary condemnation of Judas, who bore a basket. And that these things were done for their instruction is plain from what is said afterwards, when He reminded them, saying, "Do ye not yet understand--how many baskets ye took up?" (Matt. xvi. 9.) And for the same reason it was that the baskets of fragments were equal in number to the disciples; afterwards, when they were instructed, they took not up so many, but only "seven baskets." (Matt. xv. 37.)

Tertullian c.198 "We little fishes ... are born in water."

**Bold type names** were the great missionaries

Joh 1:41

John and James met Jesus early on but went back to fishing and were later recruited by Jesus.

Jo 1:43

Jo 1:46-47

Nathanael not mentioned in Mt 10:2

But they were recorded by others to be with Jesus at the end of His ministry.

Canaanite = merchant

Judas, bro. of James not mentioned in Mt 10:2

Judas Iscariot "The son of perdition"

See also the Parable of the Talents Proper 28A for what the Apostles accomplished in their missionary work.

References

Origen c. 250: his comments on these verses have not survived, but he had much to say about the type of "food" needed by different people.

The new born converts desire the rational pure milk, as did the Corinthians who were being childish. The weak man eats vegetables because he does not believe.

Solid food is for the perfect ... who can discern good from evil.

The unreasonable need grassy spiritual food. [perhaps this explains the mention of grass in a desert place, perhaps Jesus thought the crowd unreasonable].

A rational spiritual man needs spiritual bread.

Jesus said: "I have meat to eat you do not know"

Philo (Jewish Philosopher from Alexandria) states that *barley loaf* is a metaphor for a type of rudimentary knowledge

Another modern writer reminds us that "man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that comes out of the mouth of YHVH", and that the number five represents incompleteness, so that by feeding the followers with bread, which represents the body and blood of the savior, is a partial redemption. The fish has always been associated with Jesus Christ, so the redemption is to be completed through the gifts of the spirit of God through Jesus Christ.

And so on....

The breaking of the loaves could be a precursor of the Eucharist, but the Eucharist was to be reserved until after a disciple was initiated into the mysteries (after baptism), and here the crowd is mostly of unbelievers, and there is no suggestion of repentance and baptism, and in Mark the crowd is *sent away*, so I don't see a parallel here.

What follows is my own idea of what the stories might mean. A "conjecture for contemplation."

1 Cor. 3:2

Ro. 14:2  
Heb. 5:14  
Ps. 22: 1-3  
Ps 103:15  
cf. Joh. 4:34

Baptism in the desert was provided for under the rules. It did not need running water.

The Views expressed here are strictly those of the author and probably disagree with what you have previously thought. Read other commentaries - meditate on the original KJV.

The Son of Man or contributions to the study of the	Abbot, Edwin A.	Cambridge	ISBN

But this simple interpretation came to me by meditation on the words. It may not be the correct interpretation, but it should bring to light the fact that there are underlying messages in all such stories.

The verses themselves point to this story as a prophecy, because Jesus is called a *prophet*.

*This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*

So, what we have always called a miracle, is also a prophecy by Jesus of what will happen to his “investment” in the seven Apostles.

Now, Andrew said: There is a lad here (does he mean Jesus?) who has 7 sources to feed the people ( five barley loaves and two fishes). The five *barley loaves* represented God’s investment in the five Apostles who had been baptized by John the Baptist and already been **trained in the rudiments** and who were now “ready to feed the people”.

These were Peter, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, and Thomas. They were the first of the Apostles just as *barley*, a **rudimentary food**, is the “first crop” to be harvested.

The two fishes were, perhaps, the investment in those two Apostles that Jesus personally fished for (from a fishing boat with the help of Peter ) - the sons of Zebedee, John and James.

Jesus could be implying that from the seven that are now with him, there will come thousands of disciples, but in the end only the twelve, that God the Father has given Him, will persevere (*the fragments that remain*).

And this is, of course, what happened. After his death, the disciples scattered to save themselves from a similar fate (because Jesus had warned them when they were recruited that they must expect to die on the cross, like him), and at the end there were only twelve, and some of these quickly left Judea for the safety of Galilee. But even before this, at his arrest, his “converts” were nowhere to be seen, only the twelve Apostles were with Him in Gethsemane (even Judas was there for a time). But even they went backwards and fell away from him (though in John this event is misapplied to the soldiers - E.A.. Abbott *Son of Man*) When He prayed to the Father, He said these twelve He had not lost.

*“Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost”.*

“*fragments*” meaning what was left of His investment - the twelve Apostles (though Judas Iscariot was “doomed to destruction” in order to fulfill scripture, he was not a bad investment - his role had been planned from the beginning).

The other five Apostles had not yet been recruited and according to John’s Gospel, he thought them not significant enough to name.

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**Judas Iscariot not lost**

(John 18:8, 9) Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

(John 17:11, 12) And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition [is lost so] that the scripture might be fulfilled.

(perdition = one doomed to destruction - NIV)

Joh 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Joh 6:39 And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Joh 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

**The Loaves and the Fishes In order of recruitment(?) Jesus investment - the seven Apostles who “fed” the “5000”.**

These were the great evangelists, who spread the Gospel throughout Judea, Syria, and throughout the near East to northern India.

**1. Andrew**, (Simon Peter’s brother) follower of John Baptist, before Jesus arrived, brought Peter to Jesus home.

**2. Peter** (named **Simon**, also S. Barjona or son of Jona/John/Johanen, Cephas), a fisherman, follower of John Baptist before Jesus arrived and partner to James and John, fishermen. Jesus healed his mother.

**3. James** “the greater”, a son of Zebedee, a “son of thunder”, “Boanerges” older brother of John, mother Salome, fishing partner of Peter - recruited by Jesus while “fishing” with Peter.

**4. John**, (St. John the Evangelist) a son of Zebedee, a “son of thunder”, “Boanerges”, fishing partner of Peter and recruited by Jesus with Peter’s help while fishing. Mother Salome.

**5. Philip**, of Bethsaida of Galilee found by Jesus the next day after meeting Peter, baptized by John Baptist

**6. Nathanael**, of Cana in Galilee found by Philip, previously baptized by John Baptist

**7. Thomas**, which is called Didymus (no history - but took gospel to India).



Church of the seven Apostles at Capernaum

.Because of John’s Gospel, some commentators say there were only seven Apostles. But others agrees there were twelve, and perhaps more at some point in the ministry as fourteen names appear in the various books.

The Son of Man or contributions to the study of the	Abbot, Edwin A.	Cambridge

## More Insight

The others below are **not** even mentioned as “**disciples**” in John’s gospel.

8. Matthew - Levi the publican (recruited by Jesus in Capernaum).
9. Bartholomew (in some commentaries he is thought to be Nathanael, though Zacchaeus is also thought to be Nathanael)
10. Simon the Patriot,-Zealot - Zealotes (also, the Canaanite),
11. Thaddaeus (also called Labbaeus)
12. Judas the brother of James
13. James the son of Alphaeus, a publican like Matthew.  
Then comes Judas mentioned by all the Evangelists.
- 14? Judas Iscariot (man of Kerioth), Simon’s son according to John and Simon as his father is mentioned 4 times (either Simon Peter or Simon the Zealot - both Apostles - see list of Simon’s following pp.). Judas is mentioned many times as being “one of the twelve” - he was the treasurer and a disciple, but never named as an Apostle.

### Regarding sitting down on the grass:

Philip asks how so few could “feed” so many. Jesus looked up to God in heaven, prayed and then he consecrated (blessed) the Apostles. Then Jesus told them they were to teach the disciples. “*Make the men sit down*” to sit down means to learn or to teach. Jesus taught His seven Apostles. Later they taught the seventy, and these went on various missions. By the end of the ministry “5,000” people had repented and been baptized, and five Apostles had been added.

There was *much grass* in the place. The Greek word also means court or garden so perhaps it is alluding to a cool shady place to listen to the word (very welcome in the desert). Perhaps to sit down in *green grass* (Mr. 6:39) is a reflection on *green pastures* where a man’s soul can be restored. (Ps. 23).

Amori Christi et Ecclesiae –  
Glen C. Miller OSV

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## More Insight

Mt 14:19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the **grass**, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

Mr 6:39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green **grass**.

Joh 6:10 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.

see p.2 above

(Psalms 23:2, 3) He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

As I said, there are many ways to interpret the story, which may very well have been based on an actual event, and the event then used by the writer to explain a mystery. John is very careful to stress that he is telling the truth. In some ways he is attempting to put the record straight. He had been able to read the other three gospels before he put pen to paper. He and Matthew were the only Apostles to have been with Jesus, and so their record should be eye witness accounts, but Matthew’s original Aramaic gospel has never been found, and what references there are to it made by the Fathers, indicate that it differs in places from the Greek gospel we now have. So John’s gospel is the only gospel that we are sure was written by an eye witness (and probably written in Greek also). This does not mean it is any better as a witness of the spiritual truth. But it is considered to be special by the Eastern Churches. It is mystical, and does require more effort to understand than the other gospels. But it is worth the effort.

I mention Judas Iscariot here because the subject is a hot topic now as a result of the recent release of the movie “The Gospel of Judas” and simultaneously the publication of three books about the translation of the recently found codex (written 250-350 A.D., discovered 1970, but translated only within the last five years into English).

The Gospel of Judas recounts the story of a friendship between Judas and Jesus, and of their collaboration over the betrayal events. The Gospel had been suppressed by the early Christian Fathers (Irenaeus c. A.D. 180) and copies thought to have been all destroyed. The codex is the oldest extant mss., perhaps 100 years older than the Greek texts from which the modern corporate Bibles have been translated. It is considered a document of a Gnostic sect, and we are told that it cannot contain any truth. But it makes for much speculation, and anything that stimulates you to research the scripture even for the purpose of refuting the statements in the Gospel of Judas, is a good use of your time.

See also my paper on “Heresies”, and the proper on the final wedding.

### Recommended Books

	ISBN		
Parables told by Jesus	Harrington, Wilfred	Alba House	0-8189-0296-5
The Son of Man or contributions to the study of the	Abbot, Edwin A.	Cambridge	

## All The Simon's in the Gospels

## Simon/Peter the Apostle

Mr. 14:37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, **Simon**, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?

Lu 4:38 And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into **Simon's** house. And **Simon's** wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

Lu 5:3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was **Simon's**, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Lu 5:4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto **Simon**, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

Lu 5:5 And **Simon** answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

Lu 5:8 When **Simon** Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Lu 5:10 And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with **Simon**. And Jesus said unto **Simon**, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

Lu 6:14 **Simon**, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

Lu 7:40 And Jesus answering said unto him, **Simon**, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

Lu 7:43 **Simon** answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

Lu 7:44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto **Simon**, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

Lu 22:31 And the Lord said, **Simon, Simon**, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:

Lu 24:34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to **Simon**.

Joh 1:40 One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, **Simon** Peter's brother.

Joh 1:41 He first findeth his own brother **Simon**, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

Joh 1:42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art **Simon** the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

Joh 6:8 One of his disciples, Andrew, **Simon** Peter's brother, saith unto him,

Joh 6:68 Then **Simon** Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

Joh 13:6 Then cometh he to **Simon** Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

Joh 13:9 **Simon** Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.

Joh 13:24 **Simon** Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

## Simon/Peter the Apostle (cont.)

Joh 21:3 **Simon** Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

Joh 21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when **Simon** Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

Joh 21:11 **Simon** Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Joh 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to **Simon** Peter, **Simon**, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

Joh 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, **Simon**, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Joh 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, **Simon**, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Joh 13:36 **Simon** Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

Joh 18:10 Then **Simon** Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Joh 18:15 And **Simon** Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

Joh 18:25 And **Simon** Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples? He denied *it*, and said, I am not.

Joh 20:2 Then she runneth, and cometh to **Simon** Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

Joh 20:6 Then cometh **Simon** Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

Joh 21:2 There were together **Simon** Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

## References

### Simon the Canaanite/Zealotes

Lu 6:15 Matthew and Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, and **Simon** called Zelotes,

### Simon the Cyrenian who carried the cross

Lu 23:26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one **Simon**, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear *it* after Jesus.

### Simon the Father of Judas (Simon Peter or Simon Zealotes)

Joh 6:71 He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of **Simon**: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

Joh 12:4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, **Simon's son**, which should betray him,

Joh 13:2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, **Simon's son**, to betray him;

Joh 13:26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of **Simon**.

## Jesus the Prophet

Joh 1:21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

Joh 4:19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Joh 7:40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. them all that I shall command him.

Mt 21:11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

Lu 7:16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

Lu 24:19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

Ac 3:22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Ac 3:23 And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

Ac 3:24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

Ac 7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

