

Lesson XII.

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND

March 20, 1904

Matt. 14:13-23, Commit to memory vs. 20, 21. Comp. Mark 6:30-56; Luke 9:10-17. Read John 6.

GOLDEN TEXT—Jesus saith unto them, I am the bread of life.—John 6:35.

13 When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

15 And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

Revised Version—1 Now when Jesus heard it: 2 withdrew from thence in a boat, to: 3 multitudes heard; 4 from the cities; 5 he came forth; 6 he had compassion on them: 7 Omit he; 8 even was come, the disciples; 9 The place is desert; 10 already; 11 multitudes; 12 food; 13 have no need to go away; 14 And he; 15 he; 16 the; 17 took up that which remained over of the broken pieces; 18 did eat; 19 he; 20 enter into the boat; 21 till he should send; 22 after; 23 the; 24 even was come.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—April, 29 A.D.; a plain near Bethsaida on the northeast shore of the Lake of Galilee.

Connection—Jesus was probably at Capernaum when the death of John the Baptist was told Him, Matt. 14:12. About the same time the Twelve returned from their missionary tour. It was immediately after this that the feeding of the five thousand took place.

I. A DAY OF BLESSING.—13, 14. When Jesus heard of it; of the death of John the Baptist (v. 12) and that Herod believed that He Himself was John risen from the dead, vs. 1, 2. Departed thence; from Capernaum, to find a quiet place of rest for the disciples wearied with their labors, Mark 6:31. Probably, also, it was dangerous for Jesus to remain near Herod, who had just put John the Baptist to death. Then, too, our Lord was full of sorrow for the loss of His friend and so would wish to get away from the crowds. By ship; Rev. Ver., "by boat." A desert place; not a barren, but a thinly inhabited region. People; Rev. Ver., "the multitudes." Followed Him on foot. They saw the direction in which the boat was going and followed it along the shore. Some of them reached the place before Jesus, Mark 6:33. Out of the cities; along the northern shore of the lake, from which the boat could be seen during its whole course. From Capernaum to Bethsaida was seven or eight miles. The crowds would be increased from among those going to Jerusalem at this time to keep the Passover, John 6:4. Went forth; from the place to which he had retired for rest. Moved with compassion. He was full of pity, not only for their bodily hunger and sickness, but also for the needs of their souls. Healed their sick; and also taught them, Mark 6:34; Luke 9:11. He thus denied Himself the quiet and privacy for which He had crossed the lake.

II. THE EVENING MIRACLE.—15, 16. Evening; the "first evening," from three to six o'clock,

18 He said, Bring them hither to me.

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.

20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

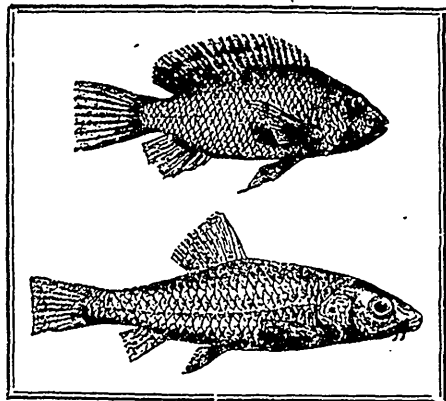
21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

is here meant; in v. 23 it is the "second evening," from six o'clock on. The time is now past; it is more than time to send the crowds away to get food. Give ye them to eat; a thing which seemed impossible to the disciples.

17-21 Five loaves and two fishes: a small supply even for Jesus and the Twelve alone. The loaves were round, flat cakes like large biscuits made of barley. John says that a lad brought them and the fishes, John 6:9. To sit down on the grass ("grassy places"). Mark (6:39, 40) and Luke (9:14) tell us that the people were arranged in regu-



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lar companies. The grass was green, it being Passover (spring) time (John 6:4), and the groups of people with their bright-colored clothing would look like garden beds. Blessed; "gave thanks" (John 6:11), as we do before meals. Fragments; not crumbs left by the eaters, but unused pieces broken by Jesus and the disciples. Twelve baskets. Each disciple would have one to hold provisions and other necessities. This was a common custom.