

In this passage we have the miracle of Jesus feeding five thousand men, and some number of women and children. In Mark 8 we will read of His feeding four thousand. So the Spirit gives us accounts of two separate events differing only in small details. This may be a clue how to resolve differences between what appears to be the same event described in two gospels: They are actually two *separate* occasions despite their similarities.

The bread and fish here remind us God's provision of manna and quail to His people in Exodus and Numbers. Both are a miraculous food supplied by God in a desert locale where no provisions could otherwise be found.

But something is new in this miracle: **Leftovers!** Both the text and the Lord make much of the twelve baskets of bread and fish here and the seven baskets of chapter 8. Jesus's words: "*When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?*" They said to him, "Twelve." "And the seven for

**Questions:**

1. The disciples (or as they are now called, apostles) report to Jesus all they have done and taught. Can/should we do the same?
2. How does Jesus react to the crowd intruding on His planned time of rest with the disciples?
3. How do the disciples misunderstand their Teacher? Do we make the same error?

*the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"* Compare this to the manna in Exodus 16:18: *But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.* Everyone had enough but none left over.

The leftovers speak of the greater blessing we possess in the present age. Luke 6:38 proclaims the overflowing blessing for the generous: *Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.*

Ephesians 3:20 celebrates *him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think.* Jesus promises in John 10:10, *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.* All that you need and basketfuls extra.

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4. Jesus turns the meager supply of bread and fish into a huge banquet. How does this apply to us?
5. Jesus delegates the distribution of bread to the disciples instead of doing it Himself. What does He delegate to us?
6. John 6:15 explains why Jesus withdraws after the miraculous feeding. What is the reason?
7. What do the baskets of leftover food tell us about God's blessing?
8. Why would Jesus make his disciples head toward Bethsaida in the boat when He know the winds were against them?
9. Has Jesus ever said to you, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."?