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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEEDING OF THE 5000 AND THE 4000

Of the four gospels, Mark's Gospel, dictated by the Apostle Peter, was the first one to be written. It is also the shortest of the gospels. Both, Matthew and Luke, were familiar with Mark's Gospel and used it as a framework for writing their particular gospel accounts. But I suspect that Luke had not seen Matthew's Gospel before he (Luke) wrote his gospel.

The Apostle John, on the other hand, was clearly familiar with all three of the Synoptic Gospels. Apart from events surrounding Jesus Christ's crucifixion, John repeated very few of the things that had already been recorded by one or more of the other three writers. When John does repeat something that has already been recorded by the other three writers, then there is ALWAYS A SPECIFIC REASON WHY JOHN REPEATS THE INFORMATION! The two most common reasons why John chose to repeat information already presented by the other writers are that John adds ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ESSENTIAL TO THE CONTEXT, or that John had come to A BETTER UNDERSTANDING of an event that had previously not been as clearly understood by the apostles themselves.

To illustrate: One of the most profound experiences John had during Jesus Christ's ministry was undoubtedly when he, together with his brother James and the Apostle Peter, witnessed "the transfiguration of Jesus Christ". Yet John chose to not even mention this vivid event in his gospel account, because it had already been adequately covered by Matthew and Mark and Luke. So when John DOES mention something all three of the other writers have also already discussed, THEN John had a specific reason for doing so, be it to set the record straight, or be it to add some vital information omitted by the others.

Now one event that is presented in all four gospels is THE FEEDING OF THE 5000.

First we'll examine the three synoptic accounts and then we'll look at John's discussion of this event. With the understanding we can gain from John's account, we can then also look at the real significance of the subsequent FEEDING OF THE 4000, which is only recorded in two of the gospels.

Before we get into these accounts, we should consider the following:

THE VALUE OF "OBSERVATIONS"

When people present us with a description of something that has happened or something they have experienced, then in most cases they not only give us a description, but they also add their own observations relating to what they are presenting to us. Their own observations do a number of things. First of all, such observations place what they are telling us into a certain perspective. Thus a five-year old child will present a description of his visit to his grandparents from a perspective that is totally different from the one that the grandparents would have in describing the same visit.

Furthermore, a narrator's observations also reveal his level of understanding of what has actually transpired. Someone who has a far better grasp of the real significance of an event than another observer will make observations that would not even occur to other people.

Put another way, people who don't grasp the real significance of an event they are witnessing will also make less personal observations than someone else who is acutely aware of implications that are not

that obvious to the casual observer, but are highly significant nonetheless.

Keep this in mind when we come to John's account. Let's now start by examining Mark's account, the first one to have been written.

MARK'S ACCOUNT OF THE FEEDING OF THE 5000

This is recorded in Mark 6:30-44. Notice verse 30.

And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. (Mark 6:30 AV)

This is a reference to the 12 apostles having returned to Christ from their local training mission. They knew exactly when and to where they were to return.

Let's continue this account.

And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. (Mark 6:31 AV)

The focus Mark presents here is: come and relax for a while.

Now the next two verses.

And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. (Mark 6:32-33 AV)

By way of explanation:

The Sea of Galilee is about 682 feet below sea level (compare this with the Dead Sea being 1292 feet below sea level) and it is surrounded by hills, which rise back up towards sea level and even a little above sea level. This sea (or lake) is also quite small, being from 4 to 7 miles wide and just over 12 miles long. So when Jesus Christ departed by ship for a three to five mile journey north-eastwards along the shore, it was easy for people on the surrounding hills to guess the ship's destination area, and to run there ahead of the ship.

Now let's see the next verse.

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. (Mark 6:34 AV)

The focus is that Christ was teaching out of compassion. Now let's carefully look at the next two verses.

And when the day was now far spent, HIS DISCIPLES CAME UNTO HIM, AND SAID, This is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed: Send them away, that they may go into the country

round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. (Mark 6:35-36 AV)

The Gospel of Mark here clearly states that THE DISCIPLES INITIATE THIS CONVERSATION, because THEY realize that the people had a need for food.

Let's continue.

HE ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO THEM, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? (Mark 6:37 AV)

Here Mark shows Jesus Christ RESPONDING TO A THOUGHT THE DISCIPLES HAD INITIATED. One of them referred to "two hundred pennyworth of bread".

Let's continue.

He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. (Mark 6:38 AV)

Christ is shown ASKING THEM TO FIND OUT how many loaves of bread they had available. The answer is: five loaves and two fishes.

Continuing ...

And HE COMMANDED THEM TO MAKE ALL SIT DOWN BY COMPANIES upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. (Mark 6:39-40 AV)

The fact that Jesus Christ COMMANDED them to make the whole multitude sit down in a very orderly fashion shows that Jesus Christ was very interested in the exact number of men involved in what would follow.

By way of explanation: If someone today at a huge open-air rally of perhaps 10,000 people or more gave the instruction to have everybody sit down in neat orderly groups of exactly 50 men and 100 men in each group, it might be quite chaotic for a while, because we are not accustomed to something like that. But since the days of Moses Israelites had been accustomed to the concept of having "rulers over hundreds" and "rulers over fifties" (see Exodus 18:21, 25), these numbers referring to MEN. And they were used to being grouped together as fifty men and as one hundred men. So I suspect that this process proceeded much more smoothly that it might today in our circumstances.

Anyway, notice that Jesus Christ wanted the exact numbers recorded ... He Himself already knew the exact number of men that were involved, because of the significance He would attach to this event.

Let's continue.

And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled. (Mark 6:41-42 AV)

Everybody was filled with enough food. Notice the last two verses in this account.

And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men. (Mark 6:43-44 AV)

Mark does not tell us at whose initiative the fragments were gathered up. There were 12 baskets of fragments of the bread, plus an undisclosed amount of fragments from the two fishes. And the total was 5000 MEN.

Now let's examine Matthew's account.

MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT OF THE FEEDING OF THE 5000

This is recorded in Matthew 14:13-21. Notice verse 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. (Matthew 14:13 AV)

The focus here is that Jesus was affected by the news of the death of John the Baptist (see Matthew 14:12), and that departing into the desert place was a response to that news.

Let's continue.

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

Jesus is shown as healing out of compassion, and no doubt also teaching at the same time (as Mark showed).

Let's continue.

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. (Matthew 14:15 AV)

The Gospel of Matthew here also clearly states that THE DISCIPLES INITIATE THIS CONVERSATION, because THEY realize that the people had a need for food. Matthew agrees with Mark.

Continuing ...

But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. (Matthew 14:16 AV)

In full agreement with Mark, Matthew also shows Jesus Christ RESPONDING TO A THOUGHT THE DISCIPLES HAD INITIATED.

Let's continue.

And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. (Matthew 14:17 AV)

Where Mark had shown Christ ASKING about how many loaves they had, Matthew shows the apostles VOLUNTEERING this information without being asked for it. Matthew also leaves out the question the apostles had raised in response to Christ's instruction "you give them something to eat".

The next verse shows Christ asking for these items to be brought to Him.

He said, Bring them hither to me. (Matthew 14:18 AV)

Let's continue.

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. (Matthew 14:19 AV)

While Matthew does not mention the orderly way in which they were to sit down, Matthew does make clear that this was at Jesus Christ's command.

Let's continue.

And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. (Matthew 14:20 AV)

This is the same information Mark gives us. We are not told whose idea it was to gather up the fragments.

Now let's look at the last verse in this section.

And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, BESIDE WOMEN AND CHILDREN. (Matthew 14:21 AV)

Matthew adds the fact that the number involved was 5000 men BESIDES women and children. Such "counting of men only" in the context of a large multitude was only possible because of the Old Testament system of grouping all the men under leaders of hundreds and leaders of fifties, where the women and children sat in the groups with their husbands and fathers. The concept was well-known to Jews at that time.

Now let's examine Luke's account of this event.

LUKE'S ACCOUNT OF THE FEEDING OF THE 5000

This is recorded in Luke 9:10-17. Notice verse 10.

And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. (Luke 9:10 AV)

Luke presents the same focus as Mark, which is: come and relax for a while.

Let's continue.

And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. (Luke 9:11 AV)

The focus is that Christ was teaching and healing, as was pointed out already by Mark and by Matthew.

Let's continue.

And when the day began to wear away, THEN CAME THE TWELVE, AND SAID UNTO HIM, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. (Luke 9:12 AV)

The Gospel of Luke here also clearly states that THE DISCIPLES INITIATE THIS CONVERSATION, because THEY realize that the people had a need for food.

Let's continue.

BUT HE SAID UNTO THEM, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. (Luke 9:13 AV)

[Comment: In the KJV "meat" refers to "food".]

Here Luke also shows Jesus Christ RESPONDING TO A THOUGHT THE DISCIPLES HAD INITIATED. As in Matthew's account, Luke also shows the apostles volunteering how much food was available to them, without Christ having to ask for this information.

Let's continue.

For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. (Luke 9:14 AV)

Where the reports of the Jewish eyewitnesses Matthew and Peter (who dictated Mark's Gospel) proceed chronologically with Christ FIRST commanding the multitude to sit down, a prerequisite for them being counted, before giving the total number of men involved, the non-Jew Luke reverses this process, first mentioning the number of men, before then recording the instruction for them to sit down in an orderly way. There is no problem with this at all, but it shows that Luke did not think the way a Jewish writer would have viewed this subject. This different way of thinking is also indicated by Luke mentioning the companies of "fifties" but not of "hundreds", which were nothing more than all the "fifties" paired into "hundreds", but which to a Jew at that time was an automatic way of thinking, going back all the way to the time of Moses. Luke simply presented this information in a way that was LOGICAL TO HIM, but not necessarily the way a Jew would have presented it.

Let's continue.

And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. (Luke 9:15-16 AV)

Now Jesus Christ feeds the 5000 men, plus women and children. Let's notice the last verse in this section.

And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets. (Luke 9:17 AV)

Again we see that 12 baskets of fragments were taken up, without any other information about these baskets.

That concludes the three accounts found in the Synoptic Gospels. Let's summarize what we have seen so far.

A SUMMARY OF THESE THREE ACCOUNTS

As already mentioned earlier, personal observations included in any account can reveal a person's level of understanding. Conversely, a lack of any personal observations is often due to a lack of any understanding beyond the immediately apparent information.

Here is what we have seen.

- 1) Mark's account was written first, and it is the longest account, giving more details than the other accounts.
- 2) Apart from very minor differences, ALL THREE ACCOUNTS ARE IN FULL AGREEMENT! Matthew and Luke felt the need to include this event, but felt that they did not really have anything to add to what Mark had already recorded, except that Matthew felt it important to spell out that the number of 5000 referred to ONLY MEN, besides women and children, in addition to all three of them clearly stating "5000 men".
- 3) Specifically, all three of these accounts are agreed that ...
 - A) THE APOSTLES INITIATED this conversation.
 - B) JESUS CHRIST ONLY RESPONDED to a thought they had initiated.
 - C) All three are silent as to WHO INITIATED THE GATHERING INTO BASKETS.
 - D) None of them give A REASON FOR WHY THE FRAGMENTS WERE GATHERED.
- 4) Their lack of details about the "12 baskets" shows that they did not perceive any specific significance in those "12 baskets".
- 5) If these three accounts were the only records of this miracle, then the whole thing would be nothing more than a very interesting miracle, but without any specific significance. It is simply recorded in its chronologically correct place, without any connections to what went before or after.

But that all changes when we examine John's account of this incident.

JOHN'S ACCOUNT OF THE FEEDING OF THE 5000

This is recorded in John 6:1-15.

When John wrote his gospel, he was writing about things that had happened 60 years earlier. During those 60 years he had undoubtedly made several thousand references, in his sermons and in his private conversations, to all the things he had witnessed during the ministry of Jesus Christ. By that time all or most of the other original apostles had been dead for close on 30 years. By then John understood very clearly that Christ's second coming was still a long way off. From the visions he was given (recorded in the Book of Revelation) John also understood that the first resurrection will consist of exactly 144,000 individuals (see Revelation 14:1-4).

By then John had also come to a far better and clearer understanding than the understanding he himself and the writers of the other three gospels had had 30 to 40 years earlier, when the other three gospels were written.

So John wrote his gospel from a completely different perspective to the synoptists. Their goal had been to present a basically chronological account of Christ's life and ministry, recording as many details as they felt would be helpful for God's people to know. In that process the three accounts complement one another, one account often adding details omitted by the other writers.

John's goal in writing his gospel was far different. He saw no need to repeat all the information already available through the other gospel accounts. It was John's goal to link together occasions that dealt with the same subject, even if that meant tying together events that were chronologically separated by a few months. If something applied to the same subject as something else that happened later, then John linked those things together, because that would make possible A BETTER UNDERSTANDING.

One example should suffice to illustrate this point:

In John 7:37 - John 8:1 John discusses the evening part of one particular Last Great Day. Then in John 8:2 - John 10:21 John discusses events that took place the following morning and afternoon, the daylight part of that same Last Great Day. Then, IN THE VERY NEXT VERSE, John jumps to a discussion that took place over two months later. So John 10:22 is over two months later than John 10:21. Why did John omit everything in between these two events? Because John wanted TO CONTINUE THE THOUGHT that had been presented in the previous section. In John 10:1-21 John shows Jesus Christ speaking about "HIS SHEEP". And over two months later, at the feast of the dedication in the winter, Jesus Christ AGAIN spoke about "HIS SHEEP"! So John linked those two occasions together, and ignored everything else that happened during the sixty-plus days between those two occasions. The other three gospels had already covered everything from that period that John felt needed to be told.

Where the writers of the Synoptic Gospels were concerned with presenting an accurate chronological record of what occurred during Christ's ministry, simply bearing witness to what had been said and to what had happened, John was concerned PRIMARILY with quoting Christ's words and deeds in such a way that it would provide ADDITIONAL UNDERSTANDING.

That already becomes apparent from the opening verse in John's Gospel: "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD ...". John was not concerned with the actual details of Christ's birth, which the other writers had already provided. John wanted to impart additional understanding about who Jesus Christ really was, by explaining that Christ has always coexisted with God the Father.

This is the approach we find time and again in John's Gospel, that he primarily quotes those sayings and those occasions that give us additional insight to what the other writers have already provided. But

sometimes that "additional insight" is not immediately apparent, and it may require a very careful examination.

So now let's examine John's account.

In the whole section preceding this account John provides the setting of PEOPLE NOT REALLY BELIEVING CHRIST'S WORDS. Notice the last three verses before this account:

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, HOW SHALL YE BELIEVE MY WORDS? (John 5:45-47 AV)

The next two verses read:

After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the* sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. (John 6:1-2 AV)

Notice that here we have nothing about the 12 apostles having returned from their training mission, and nothing about John the Baptist having just been killed, nothing about them needing to rest for a while. Instead, we have the scene set with people not really believing the things Jesus Christ was teaching.

Had John forgotten about all of them having gone out on that training mission, and about John the Baptist being killed at that time? Of course not. But John did not mention those things because they really had no bearing on what would follow, and they would only distract attention away from what was really important.

Let's continue.

And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. (John 6:3 AV)

"The mountain" was really a hill higher than the level of the Sea of Galilee, which is 682 feet below sea level, as already previously mentioned. This "mountain" may still have been "below sea level"? Anyway, we now have the setting for the feeding of the 5000.

Let's continue with the next verse.

AND THE PASSOVER, A FEAST OF THE JEWS, WAS NIGH. (John 6:4)

This is one of the most significant statements in this whole context! This is not a quotation of something Jesus Christ had said, nor is it a description of something that John saw or something that happened.

THIS IS AN OBSERVATION THAT JOHN HIMSELF HAS MADE!

Now WHY did John, sixty years after these events, make this particular observation? He made this observation because he had come to understand that WHAT FOLLOWED WAS INTIMATELY CONNECTED TO THE PASSOVER!

And why didn't any of the other three gospel writers make this same observation? They didn't make this observation because 30 and more years earlier none of them had understood the connection between the Passover and this event that now takes place.

It is one thing to mention something that takes place ON the Passover day, because the day itself has a certain significance. But what is "near the Passover"? Is it three days earlier, or five days earlier, or ten days earlier? When something happens a few days (3 or 5 or 10 or whatever number of days?) BEFORE the Passover, then it requires A PERSONAL OBSERVATION to link that event to the Passover. After all, why link THIS particular event to the Passover?

In John 6:4 the Apostle John has made an observation to give us ADDITIONAL UNDERSTANDING. This is not just some incidental meaningless reference. This statement tells us that John himself now tied this particular event very intimately to the Passover!

Let's continue.

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. (John 6:5-6 AV)

Here John clearly contradicts the other three accounts! Where they were agreed that THE DISCIPLES had initiated this conversation, John is setting the record straight. John was the disciple who was closest to Jesus Christ, and he had witnessed the whole incident. John shows that JESUS CHRIST HAD IN ACTUAL FACT INITIATED THIS CONVERSATION about "buying bread". The correct focus is not that the disciples came to Christ, but that Jesus Christ had something very specific in mind, and therefore He Himself initiated this conversation.

That is a different picture from the one we find in the other gospels. Not only does John tell us that Jesus Christ is the One who started this whole conversation, but John even provides A REASON for WHY Jesus Christ initiated this conversation: it was to test Philip.

This is John's second observation in this account, that Jesus Christ had a motive for starting this conversation with Philip. John also makes the observation (his third one) that from the very start Jesus Christ knew EXACTLY what He would do. Jesus Christ also knew in advance the exact numbers that would be involved ... 5, 5000 and 12, and He wanted these numbers recorded.

Let's continue.

Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. (John 6:7 AV)

Where Mark had recorded the reference to "two hundred pennyworth of bread", John shows that this comment was in fact made by Philip. In identifying Philip here, John is showing his undisputable familiarity with this occasion. John knew exactly what he was speaking about! He has presented his credentials in being an authority on what really happened at that occasion.

Let's continue.

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? (John 6:8-9 AV)

Again John is demonstrating his total familiarity with this whole event, by also identifying Andrew's part in this episode.

Let's continue.

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. (John 6:10 AV)

It was a large grassy slope that stretched from the lake upwards towards sea level, enough grass to allow a multitude of perhaps 10,000 people or more to sit down. John also states that this incident involved "about 5000 men". [At the time when he wrote this, John obviously also knew that about 60 years earlier the Church had very quickly grown to "about 5000 men" (Acts 4:4); John himself had been one of the top leaders at that time.]

Let's continue.

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. (John 6:11 AV)

Christ now feeds the 5000 men, plus the women and children. Let's continue.

When they were filled, HE SAID UNTO HIS DISCIPLES, GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN, THAT NOTHING BE LOST. (John 6:12 AV)

This statement by Jesus Christ is also not recorded in the other gospels. John wanted us to clearly understand that Jesus Christ Himself initiated the gathering up. Clearly Jesus Christ was interested in the outcome. John also records that Jesus Christ provided A REASON why He wanted the fragments gathered up ... it was so that "nothing be lost"!

Now if it was important that nothing would be lost, then this tells us that Jesus Christ still had a very clear use for those "fragments".

Notice also that Jesus Christ gave this instruction to "gather up" TO HIS DISCIPLES! It is the disciples who did the gathering ... 12 apostles and 12 baskets, one basket for every apostle.

Let's continue.

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. (John 6:13 AV)

The 12 apostles gathered 12 baskets full of fragments, one basket per apostle. Notice also that these 12 baskets represented the fragments of "the five loaves". The fragments of the fishes were also gathered up, but not included in those 12 baskets. John is very specific here. The volume of the fish that was left over is referred to in Mark 6:43 but not specified in any account. The fish in this episode have no particular significance.

Let's continue with John's account.

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. (John 6:14 AV)

While John records the words that were spoken by these men, the circumstances surrounding these statements made clear to Jesus Christ (and also to John) that these men WANTED ACTION! Theirs was not a respectful, over-awed response to this miracle; theirs was a response that indicated a revolutionary mood. That becomes clear from John's next statement.

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. (John 6:15 AV)

Again John's perception becomes clear. Where Matthew and Mark only tell us that Christ sent the multitude away and told His disciples to get into a ship (see Matthew 14:22-23 and Mark 6:45-46), John provides THE REASON WHY Christ departed into a mountain alone; it was to get away from a potentially revolutionary mob that threatened to get out of control. Luke, on the other hand, who had no personal experience of this episode, abruptly switches to discussing a totally different subject, one that appears only about two chapters later in the other gospels (i.e. Luke 9:18-20 is a brief equivalent of Matthew 16:13-19 and of Mark 8:27-29, Jesus Christ asking the disciples: "who do people say that I am?"), thus showing that Luke simply recorded an incident he had heard about, but without knowing all the circumstances involved.

It is John 6:15 which is the key to understanding WHY Jesus Christ walked on water. The crowds were likely to follow Him rather than His disciples. So Christ sent the disciples in one direction and He Himself departed into another direction, creating in the crowd an uncertainty as to where they should go. Then, when it was dark, Jesus Christ walked on water out to the ship, and in that way confused the crowd for a brief period.

John makes this quite clear when he tells us:

The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone; (John 6:22 AV)

Eventually the crowds again catch up with Jesus Christ, and then they ask how He had managed to get away from them. Notice John 6:25.

AND WHEN THEY HAD FOUND HIM on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? (John 6:25 AV)

Matthew, Mark and John record Jesus Christ walking on water, but only John grasped the reason why Christ had walked on water, which was to slip away from the crowds that just wanted "free food".

John 6:15 concludes the discussion of the feeding of the 5000. However, by the time John wrote his gospel, he realized that THE STORY STILL CONTINUED!

THE REST OF THE STORY

As far as Matthew, Mark and Luke were concerned, this story had come to an end. Thus Mark follows the feeding of the 5000 with the episode of walking on water and then the healing of people in the area of Gennesaret. This switch in subjects effectively ended the subject of the feeding of the 5000.

Matthew follows Mark's lead and presents the same picture, also effectively closing the subject of the feeding of the 5000. Luke follows the feeding of the 5000 with a discussion of who people thought Jesus Christ really was, likewise effectively closing the subject of the feeding of the 5000.

BUT JOHN SHOWS THAT THE STORY IN FACT CONTINUED!

In John 6:4 John had told us that the Passover was near. THEN John presented the feeding of the 5000. THEN John provided a reason for why Christ had walked on water. AND THEN JOHN SWITCHES TO A DISCUSSION ABOUT "BREAD FROM HEAVEN" WHICH TOOK PLACE IN CAPERNAUM. This discussion pertains to the Passover. And at the end of that discussion John switches to six month later, about the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2).

John's intent is not to provide a chronological record of everything that had occurred during Christ's ministry, but to provide additional understanding of things that had previously not been clearly understood.

So let's see how the story of the feeding of the 5000 continued.

After a brief discussion of walking on water, John shows the crowds again catching up with Christ, and Christ saying to them:

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but BECAUSE YE DID EAT OF THE LOAVES, AND WERE FILLED. (John 6:26 AV)

By quoting this statement, John is showing us that what He would now say Jesus Christ linked to the feeding that had taken place some days earlier. What John NOW presents took place in the synagogue in Capernaum (John 6:59). Thus John skips over the healings in Gennesaret, recorded by Matthew and Mark.

In His next statement Christ told the people to get their priorities right.

LABOUR NOT FOR THE MEAT WHICH PERISHETH, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. (John 6:27 AV)

That statement put the people on the spot, and so, in order to keep up a show of religious zeal, they asked:

Then said they unto him, WHAT SHALL WE DO, that we might work the works of God? (John 6:28 AV)

So Jesus Christ gave them an answer, one they didn't particularly like.

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. (John 6:29 AV)

The people were interested in more free food, and they clearly hinted at this.

They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? OUR FATHERS DID EAT MANNA in the desert; as it is written, He gave them BREAD FROM HEAVEN TO EAT. (John 6:30-31 AV)

God had performed many far more spectacular miracles for Israel when He brought them out of Egypt, but FREE FOOD is the one these people here had their minds on.

Jesus Christ then told them:

And Jesus said unto them, I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That YE ALSO HAVE SEEN ME, AND BELIEVE NOT. (John 6:35-36 AV)

When Christ said that He is "the bread of life", He was showing them that the bread He had created for them a few days earlier WAS IN SOME WAY CONNECTED TO JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF!

He continued to explain:

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. (John 6:40 AV)

The subject is HOW to attain unto "everlasting life", and IN SOME WAY the bread Jesus Christ had miraculously created a few days earlier is connected to "everlasting life" and to the resurrection.

Let's continue.

THE JEWS THEN MURMURED AT HIM, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. NO MAN CAN COME TO ME, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:41-44 AV)

The same people who a few days earlier had been fed by a miracle, and who had contemplated making Jesus Christ their king NOW grumble.

Also notice that this well-known statement that "no man can come to me ..." was made in the context of "bread from heaven" and of the feeding of the 5000. This is all still one and the same context; that is what John is showing us.

Now it is quite clear that Jesus Christ is here speaking about the Passover, as seen from the following verses:

I AM THAT BREAD OF LIFE. (John 6:48 AV)

I AM THE LIVING BREAD WHICH CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and THE BREAD THAT I WILL GIVE IS MY FLESH, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:51 AV)

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that EATETH MY FLESH, and DRINKETH MY BLOOD, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (John 6:54-56 AV)

After this discussion many of the people left and "walked no more with Him" (John 6:66). And only then, after a short reference to Judas Iscariot, did John conclude the discussion that had started with the feeding of the 5000.

Before we look at the significance of this event, let's now also examine the other similar event, the feeding of the 4000. This is only recorded by Matthew and by Mark. Let's examine Mark's account first.

MARK'S ACCOUNT OF THE FEEDING OF THE 4000

This is recorded in Mark 8:1-10. Notice the first three verses.

In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them, I HAVE COMPASSION on the multitude, because THEY HAVE NOW BEEN WITH ME THREE DAYS, AND HAVE NOTHING TO EAT: And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. (Mark 8:1-3 AV)

Here Jesus Christ was acting out of compassion. Notice that the people had basically been fasting for three days.

Notice the next verse.

And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness? (Mark 8:4 AV)

The previous event didn't seem to occur to them. How much effect had that miracle really had on their faith?

Let's continue.

And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. (Mark 8:5 AV)

This time there are 7 loaves. Notice the next verses.

And HE COMMANDED THE PEOPLE TO SIT DOWN ON THE GROUND: and he took the SEVEN LOAVES, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them*; and

they did set *them* before the people. And they had A FEW SMALL FISHES: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*. (Mark 8:6-7 AV)

The same procedure as previously is now followed. Christ commanded the people to sit down; implied is in groups of fifties and hundreds as previously. Jesus Christ wanted the number of men involved in this event also to be recorded. The fishes involved are incidental and not of any significance.

Let's continue.

So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left SEVEN BASKETS. (Mark 8:8 AV)

This time seven baskets of fragments are taken up. Notice the next verse.

And they that had eaten were ABOUT FOUR THOUSAND: and he sent them away. (Mark 8:9 AV)

This time there are 4000 men, as Matthew will point out. Now the last verse in this context.

And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. (Mark 8:10 AV)

Keeping in mind John's earlier comment that the people had wanted to make Christ a king after He had fed them through a miracle, we should understand the reason why once again Christ left immediately. It was to avoid any kind of foolish conduct by the people.

So now let's look at Matthew's account of this event.

MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT OF THE FEEDING OF THE 4000

This is recorded in Matthew 15:32-39. Notice verse 32.

Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I HAVE COMPASSION on the multitude, because they continue with me now THREE DAYS, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away FASTING, lest they faint in the way. (Matthew 15:32 AV)

This is the same as in Mark's account. The people had been fasting for three days and Jesus Christ had compassion on them.

Let's continue.

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. (Matthew 15:33-34 AV)

This is also the same as in Mark's account. Let's continue.

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. (Matthew 15:35-36 AV)

Again we have the same details as in Mark's account. Let's continue.

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**. (Matthew 15:37-38 AV)

The details are again the same as recorded by Mark, except that Matthew once again makes clear that the number counted referred to MEN, besides women and children.

Let's note the last verse in this section.

And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala. (Matthew 15:39 AV)

That concludes the discussion of this particular event, of the feeding of the 4000 men. Now later Jesus Christ linked these two feedings together, something that both, Mark and Matthew recorded in their gospels. So let's examine these two references as well, before we look at the real significance of these two feedings of large multitudes.

MARK'S RECORD OF HOW CHRIST REFERRED TO THESE FEEDINGS

This is found in Mark 8:14-21. Thus in Mark's Gospel there are only three verses between the end of the feeding of the 4000 and the incident when Jesus Christ referred to both these occasions.

Let's notice the circumstances.

Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *IT IS BECAUSE WE HAVE NO BREAD*. And when Jesus knew *it*, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? **HAVE YE YOUR HEART YET HARDENED?** (Mark 8:14-17 AV)

The disciples misunderstood an instruction Christ had given them. Verse 17 does in fact reveal a powerful reason why people cannot understand the truth of God. A lack of understanding the truth is almost always connected with **PEOPLE HARDENING THEIR OWN HEARTS!**

That's what Jesus Christ was referring to. A hardened heart or attitude **ALWAYS** presents a barrier to a better understanding.

Let's continue.

Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and **DO YE NOT REMEMBER?** (Mark 8:18 AV)

First of all, this points out that Jesus Christ WANTED them to remember the details and the lesson from those two feedings. But Christ is also showing that a hardened heart is A VERY POWERFUL BARRIER TO REMEMBERING THINGS!

This has happened to all of us at one time or another. When we harden our attitude towards certain people (perhaps relatives or friends or people in the workplace, etc.) one automatic result is that WE ALSO FORGET any good points in their favour, the good things they may have done for us in the past. Negative emotions towards other people drive from our memory their past positive contributions to our lives.

A hardened heart does not remember the positive benefits it has received in the past. That's a lesson all of us need to learn.

Let's continue.

When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. (Mark 8:19 AV)

5 Loaves ... 5000 men ... 12 baskets.

And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. (Mark 8:20 AV)

7 Loaves ... 4000 men ... 7 baskets.

Notice the final verse in Mark's account of this episode.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand? (Mark 8:21)

Matthew records a more complete statement from Jesus Christ in this regard. Let's now look at Matthew's account.

MATTHEW'S RECORD OF HOW CHRIST REFERRED TO THESE FEEDINGS

This is found in Matthew 16:5-12. In Matthew's Gospel there are only four verses between the end of the feeding of the 4000 and this incident when Jesus Christ referred to both these occasions. Thus both, Matthew and Mark, present this reference right after the second of these two feedings.

Here is how Matthew starts this particular incident.

And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *IT IS BECAUSE WE HAVE TAKEN NO BREAD.* Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O YE OF LITTLE FAITH, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? (Matthew 16:5-8 AV)

Where Mark's account refers to them "hardening their hearts", Matthew's account here refers to them "lacking faith". These two things go together, since a hardened heart is the clearest evidence of a lack of

faith, or, put another way, since one of the first ways in which a lack of faith will manifest itself is in a hardening of the heart.

Let's continue.

Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? (Matthew 16:9-10 AV)

Here the answers by the disciples are not recorded, but they are obviously the same.

5 Loaves ... 5000 men ... 12 baskets.

7 Loaves ... 4000 men ... 7 baskets.

Matthew now provides an additional explanation from Jesus Christ.

How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? (Matthew 16:11 AV)

Christ now spells out the lesson. They should have remembered the previous miracles to realize that Jesus Christ was not at all worried about food when He had given them the admonition in verse 6. And so Matthew then records the correct understanding the disciples then came to.

Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (Matthew 16:12 AV)

The admonition in verse 6 had really been an instruction to beware of THE TEACHINGS of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

And that covers all the information we have in the gospels about the feeding of the 5000 and the feeding of the 4000. Now let's look at the significance of these events.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE TWO FEEDINGS

We have seen the following things:

- 1) The account of the feeding of the 5000, as recorded by Matthew and Mark and Luke, represents the understanding of ALL of the apostles up into the 60's A.D. Basically none of them saw any significance in this event above it being a lesson in faith and an example of Christ's compassion for people.
- 2) But after all the other apostles had died, and another approximately 30 years had passed, and after it had become very clear that Jesus Christ's second coming was still a long way into the future, then the Apostle John came to understand this event in a way none of them had considered it before. And that "new understanding" the Apostle John came to was based on considering the larger picture, going beyond the matter that Jesus Christ had provided one meal for a large multitude.
- 3) John's new understanding was based on tying together into one picture several things that had previously never been focused on by any of the apostles. These included:

- A) Linking this feeding to the Passover.
- B) Recognizing that Jesus Christ Himself had initiated the whole process.
- C) Recognizing Christ's interest in wanting the total number of men involved recorded.
- D) Recognizing Christ's concern in having all the fragments gathered up.
- E) Recalling that after the crucifixion the early Church fairly quickly grew to "5000 men".
- F) Linking this feeding of the 5000 with Christ's subsequent comments about "bread from heaven".

The apostle Paul had already in the early 50's A.D. explained to the Corinthians that God is building His Family in THREE STAGES.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS; AFTERWARD THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING. THEN COMETH THE END, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. (1 Corinthians 15:22-24 AV)

The three stages are:

STAGE 1 = Jesus Christ being resurrected into God's Family as the first of the firstfruits.

STAGE 2 = Approximately 2000 years later those in the first resurrection at Christ's second coming are then inducted into the Family of God.

STAGE 3 = Approximately 1100 years after that comes "the end" or "the end ones"; i.e. those that comprise the end ones in the God-Family building process. This includes all those from the millennium and the period allocated to those in the second resurrection.

AFTER STAGE 3 the process is concluded with the lake of fire burning up all the wicked, this whole planet, and this whole universe. This is what the Apostle John explains in the Book of Revelation, when this present universe will then be replaced by a totally new heaven and a new earth, the future living environment for the Family of God.

I believe that the Apostle John had come to understand that "the feeding of the 5000" represents ALL THOSE WHO WILL BE IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION!

And that means that the subsequent "feeding of the 4000" represents ALL THOSE WHO JOIN THE FAMILY OF GOD LATER, AS "THE END ONES"!

When we really understand this correctly, these two "feedings" represent the last two of the three stages by which God builds His Family.

Let's take another look at both of these "feedings".

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEEDING OF THE 5000

- 1) The 5 loaves were enough to feed 5000 men. At one loaf per man (or family) that represents bearing

fruit ONE THOUSAND FOLD! Now some diligent human beings might bear fruit thirty-fold or sixty-fold or even one hundredfold (see Matthew 13:23), but Jesus Christ bore fruit one thousand-fold, ten times more than anyone else.

2) Those 5000 men that were fed represent the 5000 men who came into the Church through the preaching of Jesus Christ Himself (Acts 4:4). Understand that those people who came into the Church on the Day of Pentecost and soon thereafter, represent the fruit that was borne by Jesus Christ's own ministry.

In the 1970's and 80's I visited many people who had been studying the booklets and articles Mr. Armstrong had written. Some of those people I eventually baptized. Now those people that I then baptized weren't really "my" fruit; they were really Mr. Armstrong's fruit, because it was HIS preaching that had started them on the road of seeking baptism. I simply completed the process that Mr. Armstrong's preaching and teaching had started in the minds of those people. Likewise, that first group of people that came into the Church within the first year after the Day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts chapter 2, represented people who had been exposed to Christ's ministry, and they were the fruit of HIS ministry, even if the preaching of Peter and others completed the process that Christ's personal preaching had started in their minds.

3) The bread Christ had produced was not only enough for the 5000 men who were present at that time, but it was also enough to fill 12 baskets, one for each Apostle to gather in. Now in the resurrection the 12 apostles will be over the 12 tribes of Israel, and the whole group of the first resurrection will consist of 144000, grouped into 12000 for each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

So the fragments gathered up in 12 baskets represent the food for all the others in the first resurrection (i.e. all except the 5000 already fed).

4) One point I wonder about, and obviously have no way of proving one way or the other, is whether God selected the number of men in this feeding to be 5000 to indicate that there were (i.e. might have been?) 5000 people who will be in the first resurrection, who will be from the time period of Adam's creation to the start of Christ's ministry? If that were so, then there would have to be 139000 people in the first resurrection who are from the New Testament period. [This point is far more speculative than the others, and may not be correct at all? I present it simply for your consideration.]

5) This feeding has to do with the Passover, as John pointed out. And at the Passover we eat "bread" that represents the broken body of Christ. Christ said that "the bread that I will give is (i.e. represents) my flesh" (John 6:51). So ALL THE BREAD Christ gave at this one occasion feeds 144000 (12 baskets for 12000 each), 5000 of whom were fed DIRECTLY by Jesus Christ (possibly also in Old Testament times?), and the rest being fed by "the fragments" He produced.

6) The 5000 Christ fed wanted to make Him King (John 6:15), and that is precisely what He will be to all those fed by this one miracle (directly and via fragments) ... He will be King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:4).

Now let's look at the other feeding.

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY INTO GOD'S FAMILY

Notice what the Apostle Peter preached to the Jewish rulers:

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among

men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12 AV)

I don't doubt that Peter's statement is correct. Therefore this means that EVERYBODY WHO EVER ENDS UP IN THE FAMILY OF GOD (obviously apart from God the Father and Jesus Christ) will have gotten there through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. There simply is no other way! The sacrifice Jesus Christ has brought for all mankind is "the bread" that He has given us to eat, which all MUST eat in order to have access to eternal life (see John 6:54), and that "bread" is His "flesh" (again John 6:51).

So everybody who ever gets to be a part of the Family of God will have gotten there because he was fed with "bread" by Jesus Christ.

And because God builds His Family in TWO STEPS (i.e. after Jesus Christ has done His part), THEREFORE Jesus Christ performed THE SAME MIRACLE TWICE, with only the numbers being changed slightly.

Let's now look at the other feeding.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEEDING OF THE 4000

This feeding represents especially those in the second resurrection, though it also includes all those from the millennium who end up in God's Family. This feeding represents "the great multitude which no man could number" of Revelation 7:9.

1) They all fasted for "3 days" because it would be "a fast" for about 3000 years from the time Christ said this during His ministry until the time of the second resurrection at the end of the millennium, when they will receive access to "bread from Jesus Christ". In other words, they would still have to wait 3000 years from when Christ spoke these words until they would receive any "spiritual bread", i.e. access to Christ's sacrifice and to forgiveness.

2) The 7 loaves in this instance cover "bread" for all 7000 years of human beings being born. The "bread from heaven" represents the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for all humanity.

3) The 4000 men in this instance, rather than referring to a number of people, are more likely a reference to all human beings from the 4000 years before Christ's first coming; i.e. from Adam to Christ.

4) The 7 baskets gathered up cover the needs of all humanity from all 7000 years, especially those from the time of Christ's ministry onwards and up to the end of the millennium and those in the second resurrection; i.e. all those not already covered by "the 4000 men".

And that about covers this feeding of the 4000.

IN CONCLUSION

Both these feedings were extremely important to Jesus Christ. Christ was well aware of the exact numbers involved, and He gave commands so that these numbers could be readily obtained.

Christ was equally concerned about all the fragments being gathered up, so that "nothing be lost" (John 6:12). And Jesus Christ very clearly linked these two miracles together in Matthew 16:5-12 and in Mark 8:14-21. And Christ presented the exact numbers involved in both cases in a way where the disciples had to provide the correct answers (Mark 8:19-20). This is the only recorded time Jesus Christ ever reminded the disciples of specific "STATISTICS".

The precise numbers involved — 5, 5000, 12 and 7, 4000, 7 — make clear that there is nothing random or coincidental about these two events. They were planned by God, and these numbers simply must have a special significance to God. God wanted to tell us something through these numbers.

With these two miraculous feedings Jesus Christ has covered ALL HUMANITY FROM EVERY AGE! They have been divided into two distinct groups, both of which were fed in the same way by Jesus Christ. The only difference is that the second group had to FAST FOR 3 DAYS, i.e. they had to wait longer for this miraculous feeding.

Now the first group (i.e. the 5000) had in all likelihood also fasted for close on a day before Christ fed them. So the second group (i.e. the 4000) only fasted about two days LONGER than the first group. In the same way salvation became available in general terms about 2000 years earlier for those in the first group (i.e. from the time of Christ's ministry onwards) than for those in the second group (i.e. starting with the beginning of the millennium).

The things I have discussed in this article do not affect any of the things we believe or practice. They don't change anything. But they do open a totally new perspective on what would otherwise be nothing more than "very interesting miracles". And these two miracles, when correctly understood, provide one more illustration of the two steps in which God adds human beings to His Family, which two steps we already understand from various other scriptural passages.

For over 30 years the original apostles did not grasp the real significance of those two dramatic events they were privileged to witness. It is only the observations which the Apostle John made towards the end of his long life that reveal that significance. By then John KNEW that this feeding of the 5000 was intimately connected with the real meaning of the Passover, and that is why he presents this account very much in a Passover setting in his gospel account.

And to all of you who will read this I say: you are now also eating of the fragments that were taken up in 12 baskets at the feeding of the 5000.

Frank W. Nelte