

'THE REALLY GOOD LIFE'

Life of Christ Studies in Luke

'Food for Thought'

(The Manna & The MAN From Heaven)

The account about Jesus and the disciples feeding over 5,000 people is found in all four of the gospel records (*Matthew 14:15-21, Mark 6:35-44, Luke 9:12-17 & John 6:1-4*). When God the Holy Spirit moves all four of the gospel writers to record the same event it must be a very important picture He wants portrayed for the reader. When recalling the special emphasis each writer had as he wrote, it reveals a 4-dimensional, 'high definition' portrayal of awesome events like the miracle meal Jesus served to a huge crowd of people that day. Matthew's record (written primarily to a Jewish-minded reader) portrays Jesus as Messiah-King with His 12 disciple court caring for His kingdom followers; Mark (written to the pragmatic Roman reader) focuses more upon the Servant aspect of Jesus and the disciples as they wait upon the needs of the people of God; in the gospel of Luke (which tells the story from a more intellectual Greek mindset) shows Jesus as a brilliant philosopher teaching his disciples dialectically and solving a problem in a wise, eloquent manner. John's account, probably written 40 years after Matthew and Mark (about 30 years after Luke), is supplemental with new personal details of the event (like names of those talking, thoughts and conclusions of those who served and were fed, etc.). Luke sees Jesus as the Son of God with divine creative powers that should have been acknowledged by those who were fed that day. John, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, 60 years after the fact, records the spiritual meaning of the 'wonder bread' in his account of Jesus' teaching about the miracle, the next day (*John 6:22-66*).

Following the miracle meal, Jesus and the disciples returned to the western side of the Sea of Galilee via another thrilling boat-ride during a storm (*in which Jesus came to them walking on the water Matthew 14:22-35, Mark 6:45-52 & John 6:15-21*). Some of those who had eaten the *wonder bread* a day earlier, hurried around the northwest shoreline to meet Jesus and the disciples back in Capernaum (*John 6:22-24*). Since the discussion between Jesus and the crowd finishes in the synagogue (*John 6:59*) this may have been on the Sabbath. If so, the miracle meal would have been served the day before the Sabbath, with everyone needing to get back to town early the next morning. On the way to synagogue the confrontational conversation between Jesus and the people erupts. The people insist that He give them more *wonder bread* so they can believe. They challenged Him to be like Moses was and give them bread just like the manna Israel ate in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt (*Exodus 16*). Jesus refused to give them more *wonder bread* (especially explainable if it was indeed the Sabbath, since even the manna in the wilderness ceased on the Sabbath - *Exodus 16:26*). A Sabbath context also helps explain the 12 baskets of leftovers the day before because of the double manna collection instructions for collection the day prior to Sabbath (*Exodus 16:22-30*).

As the people became more disrespectful and adversarial to Jesus, He followed His new policy of switching to parabolic teaching when those with hardening hearts became hostile at Him and the truth (*John 6:32-51*). The switch from literal interpretation of Jesus' words to allegorical happens in **vs. 33 & 35** where Jesus calls Himself '*bread from heaven*' and '*the bread of life*'. From that point on He is teaching allegorically with *eating and drinking referring to believing* (**vs. 29, 35, 40, 47**) and food referring to having an intimate personal relationship with Him (**vs. 50-51, 53-58**). It is clear that Jesus was speaking figuratively from His clarification of what He said to His disciples in private later (**6:60-66**). To the 12 He explains that His words were *spiritual* (or allegorical/ **v 63**). He also teaches again that *eating* and *drinking* were parabolic terms for *believing* (**v. 64**). The 12 disciples finally understood when they say to Jesus: '*we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*' in **verse 69**. Obviously Jesus is teaching that to believe in Him as Messiah and Lord with all of your heart, mind, and soul is taking Him into your personal life spiritually just like you do with food when it is received physically. Receiving Jesus is not a physical activity you do with your mouth, teeth, and stomach – it is spiritually believing in Jesus and receiving Him by faith into your mind, heart, and soul.

The Transubstantiation Myth

(Roman Catholic Misunderstanding of John 6)

The Roman Catholic religion bases their teaching of salvation by receiving the sacrament of *holy communion*, primarily on a **flawed interpretation of John 6**. They teach that Jesus was speaking literally about physically *eating His flesh* and *drinking His blood* in this passage. As usual, this medieval religious sect of Christendom erroneously takes literally what ought to be understood symbolically and conversely takes symbolically what ought to be understood literally! This text could not possibly be a superstitious instruction to magically change ordinary food substances like bread and wine into the literal body and blood of the Lord and then to be dined upon, assimilated into one's digestive system, and literally become Him inside of you resulting in temporary salvation. Since it must be constantly repeated, it can only be temporary salvation, not the everlasting life Jesus promised (*John 3:16*). Although communion is intended to be a review of Christ's cross-work, it's possible that Jesus' teaching in this passage was a preview of it a year before it happened. However, it would have been appalling to anyone listening that day to think He was condoning any form of *symbolic cannibalism* to be saved (OT passages

such as *Leviticus 17* & NT verses like *Acts 15:20, 29* forbid any such concept of consuming any form of flesh and blood). In addition to the exposition of the primary passage Catholics use justifying *transubstantiation* (changing substances of *wheat/ bread* and *grapes/ wine* into divine flesh and blood) above, it should be remembered that what Jesus taught in this allegory was spoken to unbelievers who remained unbelievers after eating the wonder bread, once and for all rejecting Jesus and His teaching about what He really meant (*John 6:64-66*). They (like RC) took what He said literally, got confused, indignant and walked away worse than they came!). Besides, why would God teach unbelievers to take communion? Communion was and is only for those who are highly committed believers (*1 Corinthians 11:23-32*)! In fact this passage teaches that unworthy persons who take communion will suffer severe judgment, not grace for receiving the bread and the cup (*1 Corinthians 11:29-30*). Like those who first heard and misunderstood Jesus' teaching about the *wonder bread* in *John 6*, millions since have also misinterpreted passage to their eternal demise about how to be saved. Sadly, like the original listeners of the passage, those who trust in the transubstantiation myth of the mass to save them depart, after taking the mass, hopelessly uninformed, unchanged, and unconverted. May the Lord bless us with opportunities to help Roman Catholic people understand the truth of God's grace by trusting the finished work of Jesus on the cross for them. May God use true believers to tactfully correct fatally flawed thinking about what it means to *receive Jesus* – that it means trusting Him, not eating symbols of Him.

THE WONDER BREAD
(The Bread of Life – Feeding the 5,000)
 Luke Chapter 9:10-17

Chapter Overview:

<u>The Disciple's Purposes:</u> <i>The 'charge' 9:1-17</i>	<u>The Disciple's Privileges:</u> <i>The 'change' 9:18-36</i>	<u>The Disciple's Problems:</u> <i>The 'challenge' 9:37-62</i>
Vs. 2, 6, 11 Preaching the King's message	Vs. 18-22 Believer: Committed to Christ (<i>spirit</i>)	Vs. 37-45 Lack of faith & spiritual power
Vs. 1, 2-5 Practicing the King's lifestyle	Vs. 23-26 Follower: Cross-bearing as a lifestyle (<i>soul</i>)	Vs. 46-56 Lack of humility grace & love
Vs. 12-17 Providing for the King's people	Vs. 27-36 Disciple: Called to transformation (<i>physical</i>)	Vs. 57-62 Lack of sacrificial 'faithfulness'

The Disciples' Purposes
(Becoming A Care Provider Like Jesus)

Luke 9:10-17 (see also: *Matthew 14:15-21, Mark 6:35-44, John 6:1-14*)

Feeling About People Like Jesus

"And the apostles when they had returned, told Him (Jesus) all they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him and He received them, spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing."
 9:10-11

Fed Up With People Unlike Jesus

"When the day had begun to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." But He said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people." For there was about five thousand men."
 9:12-14a

Feeding the People for Jesus

"Then He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of fifty." And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. So they ate all and were filled, and twelve baskets of the left-over fragments were taken up by them."
 9:14b-17