

AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: “Feeding the Multitude” in Luke 9

Scripture of Lesson: Luke’s Gospel 9: 10-17; John 6:1-14

1. Mission work of the Messiah for the multitude

- A. Jesus took His disciples to a remote place in the wilderness outside of Bethsaida, in the modern-day Golan Heights area, where the 1967 Six Days War was fought. He wanted to give some rest to the disciples after their training mission. [v 9:10]
- B. But the people found out where they went and came to the wilderness area seeking the benefits of the Lord’s divine power of healing. Lord Jesus did not reject them but received them. [v 9:11]
 - i. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. To the people without confidence in the nation’s leadership, their Messiah showed them a vision of God’s kingdom of whom they could become citizens. When their king, Herod, was only a stooge of the Roman Empire and had no love for the people, the King of kings showed the glorious, royal, kingly presence, in which they felt secure.
 - ii. He healed their infirmities. When their nation’s king and religious leaders could provide no comfort or healing to the deep wounds caused by centuries of deprivation and exploitations by foreign powers, the Son of God healed their illnesses and comforted them.

2. God feeds His people

- A. The situation: The great multitude of 5,000 men plus their families came out too far from the villages to buy food. They were “in a desert place [v. 12],” where there was no resource to get food.
- B. The disciples’ recommendation: The disciples considered the logistic difficulty of feeding this great multitude. They saw no feasible way to feed them in the given circumstance but to send them away to villages far away. We are often faced with similar situations – no way to meet the needs of the time.
- C. The Lord’s plan: Feed the multitude through God’s blessing using what they had. Andrew brought a young lad who had five loaves and two fishes as his own meal. Andrew doubted its usefulness: “But what are they among so many? [John 6:9]” Lord Jesus blessed this boy’s food, multiplied it to feed the entire crowd and there was plenty left over after everyone ate full.
 - i. Just as God fed the million plus people of Israel in the Arabian wilderness for 40 years with manna and quail meat, God the Son showed clearly that He is the same God who sustains and nourishes His people.
 - ii. Although the developed nations can feed their peoples, some 800 millions today do not have enough food and go hungry in spite of advanced farming technology. There is still much need of feeding the hungry people. We note, however, all predominantly Christian nations have been blessed materially and their peoples are being fed sufficiently.
 - iii. Let us have the mind of Christ and show compassion for the poor and the needy.
- D. Lessons to the disciples and the people
 - i. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.* [Matt 4:4]
 - ii. *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which*

came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” [John 6: 47-51]

- iii.* Lord Jesus performed this miracle of feeding the great multitude to remind them that He came as the same God who fed their ancestors for 40 years in the Arabian wilderness. Here, He is feeding them in the same miraculous way where there is no available resources for feeding such a large crowd. However, the people were only interested in the natural food and did not understand the Messiah’s desire to feed them spiritually. Because they could not understand His plan and desire, many left Him and followed no more.

Discussion topics:

- 1. Discuss the difference between human approaches and God’s way of meeting a need.*
- 2. Do we have the hunger for God’s truth and righteousness and seek to have this hunger filled by the Spirit of God and the Scriptures? Or are we like the Jews of the first century and do not understand God’s desire to feed the spiritually hungry souls?*