

## Yochanan ~ Part 12

Imagine you're at a picnic by the lake with a group of friends. Suddenly, you realize the snacks are running low! Just when you're starting to panic, a friend pulls out a forgotten bag of chips from their backpack, and everyone cheers! This is similar to what happens in **Yochanan** 6:1-21 when **Yeshua** feeds 5,000 people with just five loaves and two fish. His ability to provide in abundance reminds us that even in scarcity, He can turn our little into plenty!

### The Fourth Sign: Feeding the 5,000

The third of **Yeshua's** miracles reported by **Yochanan**, the feeding of five thousand people, is told in the **Synoptic Gospels** in essentially the same way (Mattityahu 14:13–21, Mark 6:32–44, and Luke 9:10–17).

*6<sup>1</sup> Sometime later, Yeshua went over to the far side of Lake Kinneret (that is, Lake Tiberias),<sup>2</sup> and a large crowd followed Him, because they had seen the miracles He had performed on the sick.*

Generally, **Yochanan** portrays the crowds as following **Yeshua** only externally, drawn to him primarily because of his miracles, and mired in confusion and ignorance.

*3 Yeshua went up into the hills and sat down there with His talmidim. 4 Now the Judean festival of Pesach was coming up; 5 so when Yeshua looked up and saw that a large crowd was approaching, He said to Philip, "Where will we be able to buy bread, so that these people can eat?" 6 (Now Yeshua said this to test Philip, for Yeshua Himself knew what He was about to do.)*

The huge crowd apparently walked several miles around the north side of the lake and caught up with **Yeshua** and the **Talmidim**. **Philip** would be the natural choice for **Yeshua's** question since he, like **Andrew** (v. 8) and **Kefa**, was a native of nearby Bethsaida (see note at 1:44). **Yeshua's** question echoes **Moshe's** query in the wilderness: "*Where can I get meat to give all these people?*" (Numbers 11:13). Other parallels between **Yochanan** 6 and Numbers 11 are the people's grumbling (Nu 11:1; Jn 6:41, 43); the description of the **manna** (Nu 11:7–9; Jn 6:31); the reference to the eating of meat/**Yeshua's** "flesh" (Nu 11:13; Jn 6:51); and the overabundance of the provision (Nu 11:22; Jn 6:7–9).

*7 Philip answered, "Half a year's wages wouldn't buy enough bread for them - each one would get only a bite!"*

The amount referred to here, 200 denarii, was a substantial sum. A denarius was about a day's wage for a laborer.

*8 One of the talmidim, Andrew, the brother of Shim'on Kefa, said to Him, 9 "There's a young fellow here who has five loaves of barley bread and two fish. But how far will they go among so many?"*

A young fellow may refer to a kid, a teenager, or even someone in his early twenties. The same word is used to refer to young **Joseph** in Genesis 37:30 and **Daniel** and his friends in Daniel 1. **Barley** was common food for people experiencing poverty (the well-to-do preferred wheat bread); the fish were probably dried or preserved, perhaps pickled. In a similar account, **Elisha** fed 100 men with 20 barley loaves (2 Kings 4:42–44).

*10 Yeshua said, "Have the people sit down." (Some have estimated that there were an additional approximately 10,000 to 15,000 women and children.) There was a lot of grass there, so they sat down. The number of men was about five thousand. 11 Then Yeshua took the loaves of bread, and, after making a b'rakhah, gave to all who were sitting there, and likewise with the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 After they had eaten their fill, he told his talmidim, "Gather the leftover pieces, so that*

*nothing gets wasted.”<sup>13</sup> They gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.*

The number of baskets may allude to **Yeshua’s** symbolic restoration of the 12 tribes of Isra’el.

*<sup>14</sup> When the people saw the miracle He had performed, they said, “This has to be ‘the prophet’ who is supposed to come into the world.”<sup>15</sup> Yeshua knew that they were on the point of coming and seizing Him, in order to make Him king; so he went back to the hills again. This time He went by Himself.*

John MacArthur opines that **Yeshua’s** rebuke of the crowd for seeking Him merely because it enjoyed eating the bread and fish exposed the people’s materialistic hearts. Although the people had seen the miraculous feeding of the large crowd, they did not understand the spiritual implications of that miracle or other signs.<sup>1</sup>

They were on the point of coming and seizing Him, in order to make Him king. The crowd wanted freedom from **Roman** rule and peace for **Isra’el**, and they thought **Yeshua** was the man for the hour. But his own view was different: *“My kingship does not derive its authority from this world’s order of things”* (18:36). Had they succeeded, they would have nullified **God’s** way of making **Yeshua** the **Messiah**, which was through His being the **Suffering Servant** dying for the sins of humanity, being resurrected, ascending to **God’s** right hand and returning in future glory to assume the throne. The hope then, as now, among traditional **non-Messianic Jews** was for a conquering hero.

*<sup>16</sup> When evening came, His talmidim went down to the lake, <sup>17</sup> got into a boat and set out across the lake toward K’far-Nachum. By now it was dark, Yeshua had not yet joined them, <sup>18</sup> and the sea was getting rough, because a strong wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup> They had rowed three or four miles when they saw Yeshua approaching the boat, walking on the lake! They were terrified; <sup>20</sup> but He said to them, “Stop being afraid, it is I.”<sup>21</sup> Then they were willing to take Him into the boat, and instantly the boat reached the land they were heading for. <sup>2</sup>*

Imagine being one of the thousands fed that day by **Yeshua**. The satisfaction of a full belly is temporary, but the hunger for more of **God’s** presence is everlasting. The crowd followed Him, not just for the bread but for the miracle worker Himself. In our spiritual journey, let us seek not just the gifts but the **Giver**, feeding our souls with **His Word** rather than just our physical needs. This challenge invites us to assess what truly satisfies us.

In our next post, we will continue to explore the **Gospel of Yochanan**.

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<sup>1</sup> Daily Readings From the Life of Christ, Volume 2.

<sup>2</sup> Yochanan 6:1-21.