

March 25-31 2019

Matthew 14–15; Mark 6–7; John 5–6

“Be Not Afraid”

Summary: *John the Baptist is beheaded—Jesus feeds the five thousand and walks on the sea—Those who touch the hem of His garment are made whole.*

The scribes and Pharisees contend against Jesus—He heals the daughter of a gentile woman—He feeds the four thousand.

Jesus sends forth the Twelve—John the Baptist is beheaded by Herod—Our Lord feeds the five thousand, walks on the water, and heals multitudes.

Jesus reproves the Pharisees for their false traditions and ceremonies—He casts a devil out of the daughter of a Greek woman—He opens the ears and loosens the tongue of a person with an impediment.

Jesus heals an invalid on the Sabbath—He explains why men must honor the Son—Jesus promises to take the gospel to the dead—Man is resurrected, judged, and assigned his glory by the Son—Jesus obeys the divine law of witnesses.

Jesus feeds the five thousand—He walks on the sea—He is the living manna sent from God—Salvation is gained by eating living bread—Jesus explains how men eat His flesh and drink His blood—Peter testifies that Jesus is the Messiah.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights **What meanings do you see in the metaphors of water and rock?** Remember, that the Hebrew word for water is “Ma-yim” and that the word for heaven is “She-ma-yim” (from the waters). The Fountain of Living Waters came from heaven. Moses struck the rock and out came water. It became the Rock of Salvation. The term rock is an ancient metaphor for the Lord. Simon, son of Jonah (Bar Jonah in Aramaic) was affectionately nicknamed Petrus (“rock” in Greek) by Jesus. In that sense, Simon became “Rocky-1” in the scriptures! Jesus, knowing that He was the “Rock of Salvation,” was establishing a profound lesson for one who would be the Lord’s mouthpiece and chief witness.

Who is the “Rock?”

“*Adon Olam* (Lord of the world) is a rhymed poem of unknown authorship, which was probably written in Babylon around the tenth century. The present version, as it appears in the Ashkenazi service, consists of ten verses. The first six speak of God the eternal, all-powerful and ever- ruling Creator of the universe. The next four verses are more personal in nature. Here, God is much closer to the individual worshiper, his hopes and his fears. “He is my God, my Redeemer, my Rock in time of trouble.”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

During Jesus’ three-year ministry, Peter and other Disciples were being taught numerous lessons of the eternal and spiritual nature of the Lord and the many physical witnesses of Him. This training was necessary so that when He was gone from their physical presence, they could fulfill their Apostolic mission, witnessing of Him. During this ministry training time,

when they unsuccessfully sought to emulate His miracles they asked for an explanation. “. . . his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.” (Mark 9:28-29)

How does the uninhabited eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee contrast with “Fishes and Loaves?”

At the lower and southern end of the Golan on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee is a more desolate or deserted place where few people lived. During Jesus’ ministry He went there to be alone. When the people heard that He was on the other side, they followed Him out of their cities. He blessed them and preached to them until the disciples urged Jesus to let them go home to buy food to eat. He said, “. . . Give ye them to eat.” (Mark 6:37)

How many were actually fed?

Jesus told the disciples to feed the people, and they said it couldn’t be done because they did not have enough food. Surely five loaves and two fishes could never feed the multitude! Still, Jesus did not change His charge. He took what they had, prepared it and returned it to the disciples. Then they fed the loaves and fishes to the people. “And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.” (Matthew 9:21)

What could be the meaning of the amount of food left over?

There was even enough left over for each disciple to have a basket of food for himself. Would it have been more dramatic if there had been fourteen basketfuls left over? Or would it have been less dramatic if only ten basketfuls remained? The remaining twelve baskets full of food would surely suffice the Twelve as Jesus sent them by boat to the other side of the lake.

What previous instruction did the twelve get to cast out spirits?

“And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.” (Matthew 14:22-26) Faced with what they supposed was a spirit, the only instruction they might have had at that point was that fasting and prayer was necessary to drive spirits away. After they had eaten a miraculous meal the previous evening and had twelve baskets or provisions with them, they were full, not fasting! They may have therefore thought, we’re unable to command the spirit.

What is your definition of fear, faith . . . and faith in the Lord?

Fear is thinking about things you don’t want to happen. Faith is thinking about things you do want to happen. Faith in the Lord is thinking about things He wants to happen. “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid . . . Peter answered . . . bid me come unto thee on the water . . . Come . . . he walked on the water . . . he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid . . . he cried, saying, Lord, save me . . . Jesus stretched forth his hand . . . wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Matthew 14:27:33)

For whom was the lesson about walking on water?

Many people believe that with enough faith, they can walk on water. However, the personal nature of the Lord’s miracles leads us to view the event more closely. Peter cried, “Lord save me.” Jesus responded, “Wherefore didst thou doubt?” This may have been a personal

lesson for the Prophet-to-be. The dialogue might be imagined to have continued, “. . . Wherefore didst thou doubt, I came to save.” It is possible that the Savior, having named Simon, Peter (Rocky), was now teaching him that rocks sink . . . to be raised by the “Rock of Salvation, the Stone which the builders rejected.” ([Matthew 21:42](#); [Mark 12:10](#); [Luke 20:17](#))

What are the connections of water, rock and bread?

Just as bread needs to be raised, we need to be raised by the Bread of Life, the Leaven, the Rock of Salvation. The words Bread, Bread of Life, Leaven, Rock, and Water are some of the more frequently used names of the Lord. That teaches is that He is everywhere and that the common necessities of life reflect how necessary He is to our lives. Note the following involved Jewish ritual and traditions that relate with bread and water.

How important is bread in Judaism?

“The rabbis regarded bread as the staple diet and no meal was considered complete without it. They instituted a special benediction to be recited before eating bread made from one of the five species of cereals (wheat, rice-wheat, spelt, barley and two-row barley) grown in Erez Israel. This blessing (popularly called *Ha-Mozi*) is: "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who bringeth forth (*ha-mozi*) bread out of the earth." After pronouncing this benediction, other food or beverages may be eaten without saying another blessing --- except for wine and fruits, for which their particular blessings must be recited in all cases. Before the benediction over bread is said, one is obliged to wash the hands by pouring a quarter "log" (approximately 0.137 liters) of clean water over them, and drying them properly. After eating bread at least of the size of an olive the full Grace after Meals has to be said.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

What do two loaves of “Hallah” represent on the Sabbath?

“A religious duty of Jewish women when baking is to separate a small portion of the dough about the size of an olive, as *hallah*, and to burn it. In Temple times the *hallah* portion was given to the priests. From Talmudic times, it was the special duty of the housewife to bake the bread for the Sabbath. This bread, usually prepared from white flour, is also called "*hallah*." Two such loaves are placed on the festive Sabbath table as a symbol for the double portion of manna which the Israelites in the wilderness received every Friday, and because of the Showbread in the Temple, which was displayed each Sabbath. The bread for Sabbath is usually braided, and of oblong shape, but for Rosh Ha-Shanah it is round.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

How was bread used in the Temple anciently – and nowadays?

“Hallah is a form of bread. The term also applies to the bread portion which was brought as an offering to the priests in the days of the Temple. The biblical commandment reads: "Then it shall be that when you eat of the bread of the land, you shall set apart a portion for a gift unto the Lord" (Numbers 15:19). The priests' portion was to be separated from dough made with the flour of any of these five species of grain: wheat, barley, oats, rye or spelt, when the dough was of a specified amount, equivalent in volume to 431/5th eggs. This amount of dough is made with approximately three and a half pounds of flour. All the laws on the subject are in a tractate in the Talmud called *Hallah*. Since the law of *hallah* can no longer be observed, the rabbis decreed that a small piece of dough should always be set aside and burnt so that the *mitzvah* of *hallah* and the destruction of the Temple would never be forgotten.” “Rabbinic tradition made *hallah* a special *mitzvah* for women. Today the word is generally used to mean the white

Sabbath and festival loaf. And the *mitzvah* of separating *hallah* is followed by observant Jews in their bakeries and in homes where the art of baking fresh *hallah* is still practiced.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What do the shapes of hallah loaves signify?

“Loaves of *hallah* appear in forms associated with special occasions and different areas. The most distinct special occasion is Passover, when *hallah* appears as *mazzah*, unleavened bread. Dough was often made into symbolic shapes. One example is the bird shape which represents the phrase "As birds hover, so will the Lord protect Jerusalem" (Isaiah 31:5). The sweet *hallah*, often round in shape, is traditional for Rosh Ha-Shanah, to symbolize the prayer for a sweet and a full year. For the Sabbath, the oval loaf has been baked by Ashkenazi Jews for over a thousand years. Another popular form for the Sabbath is the braid, two loaves of three strands each, or one of six strands --- the number six representing the weekdays, handmaidens of the Sabbath. A *hallah* of 12 small sections symbolizes the 12 tribes of Israel. Each variation enriches the beauty of the tradition.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Who can bake loaves of bread for the Jews?

“As a protective measure against assimilation which might lead to intermarriage the rabbis prohibited Jews from eating food cooked by a gentile, or bread baked by a non-Jew (*pat akkum*). However, this interdiction does not apply to bread sold by a professional non-Jewish baker (*pat paltar*), if the ingredients are not otherwise forbidden by the dietary laws.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What reasons are bread and salt used to begin a meal?

“Bread must be treated with special regard. Raw meat should not be placed on it nor spilt wine be allowed to spoil it; it should also not be thrown across the table. Providing bread for the poor was regarded as a great religious duty; the withholding of it from the hungry, a sin. Whenever the Talmud sage, Rabbi Huna, broke bread for a meal, he first opened his door and said, "Let everyone in need come and eat," as is done at the beginning of the Passover *seder*. Bread with salt was regarded as the poor man's food but sufficient for the humble student of the Torah, and it has remained a custom to sprinkle a little salt on bread partaken at the beginning of meals. In Jerusalem it is the custom to greet official guests of the City Council with bread and salt as they enter the city's limits.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The gesture of breaking bread, sprinkling it with some salt is a humble prayer expressing indebtedness to the Lord, as if to say, “If I only had bread with a little flavor, I am grateful.”

How important is the directive of using bread?

The before-the-meal prayer has an order, “It is a particularly important religious duty to wash the hands before eating bread and this washing must be performed by pouring water over the hands from a utensil with a wide mouth, the lip of which must be undamaged.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) Every time the term bread is used, it should be an automatic reminder to look for the Lord in the meaning of the phrase. The lack of bread may be an indication of the lack of accepting the Lord. He just wasn't there. “And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.” (Genesis 47:13)

How can the negative term “Bread of Affliction” have a positive meaning?

The bread of affliction refers to Him, who was afflicted more than anyone was, is or will be afflicted. “Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction: for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.” (Deuteronomy 16:3) Since the Lord descended below all things and then rose above all things, He came from the rocks below and ascended to the heaven above. The following verse is one of several ways of remembering Him. “And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.” (Nehemiah 9:15)

How is manna like bread?

“Manna is called "bread from heaven" in the Book of Exodus, and "bread of the angels" in Psalms. The English name "manna" comes from the words, *man hoo?* ("What is this?" in classical Hebrew) which is what the Israelites exclaimed when they saw manna for the first time.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What was manna?

“Manna was the miraculous food which sustained the Israelites during the 40 years in which they wandered through the wilderness of Sinai. Exodus 16:4 describes manna as white in color and resembling a fine frost which covered the ground. It fell from heaven within the area of the Israelite camp every morning excepting the Sabbath, and it needed no cooking. One *omer* (measure) for each person was collected each day, and the amount gathered by every family was enough for all its members. Manna was to be eaten within 24 hours, for if left, it bred worms and rotted. The double portion which fell on Friday did not rot, however, but remained good for the Sabbath. This is commemorated today by the two loaves of bread on the Sabbath table.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)