

March 27-April 2, 2023

Matthew 14; Mark 6; John 5–6

“BE NOT AFRAID”

Summary:

Matthew 14. 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.

Mark 6. 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.

John 5. 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.

John 6. 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

How ancient are “Names of the Lord?”

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 tradition that relate with bread and water.

“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.](#))

How is bread symbolism perpetuated in Jewish life?

“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.” “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 nonJew (*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." "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.**)

When is bread set apart as a gift to the Lord?

"*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." "Loaves of *hallah* appear in forms associated with special occasions and different areas. The most distinct special occasion is Passover, when *hallah* appears as *matzah*, 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.**)

What "bread" came from heaven?

"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." "*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." "*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.**) 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 I appreciate the "Bread of Affliction?"

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**) Remember, that the Hebrew word for water is "*Ma-yim*" and that the word for heaven is "*Shema-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.

What can I do to help with miracles?

"*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 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 did Jesus show mercy in the midst of His grief?

Another lesson took place at the uninhabited eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Even today, the few archaeological ruins indicate the deserted nature of that area. 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, learning that his dear cousin, John the Baptist had been cruelly killed, Jesus 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. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. For they were about five thousand men (not counting women or children). And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. 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. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets. (Luke 9:13-17) 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 five thousand – not counting women or children. 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 them as Jesus sent them by boat to the other side of the lake. “And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. 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)

How does “sinking” teach “being raised?”

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 cannot command the spirit.” “But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind

boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." **(Matthew 14:27:33)** Recalling a principle of faith; faith is thinking of things you want to happen. Fear is thinking about things you don't want to happen. (Human kind has that God given gift.) however, faith in the Lord is thinking about what He wants to happen! 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, son of Jonah, Peter (Rocky), was now teaching him that rocks sink . . . to be raised by "The Rock of Salvation," **(Psalm 62:2)** the "Stone which the builders rejected." **(Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17)**, the Bread of Life! **(John 6:35)** Just as bread needs to be raised, we need to be raised by the Bread of Life, the Leaven, the Rock of Salvation.