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Matthew 14

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Matthew 14.

Topics.

- John the Baptist is beheaded.
- Jesus feeds about five thousand.
- Jesus walks on the Sea of Galilee.
- Peter walks on water.
- Many who touch the fringe of Jesus' garment are healed.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Jesus told the parable of the sower; the tares and wheat; the mustard seed; the woman and the leaven; treasure hidden in a field; a precious pearl and the fisherman's net. He then spoke about scribes being trained for good and old and of a prophet being without honour in his home town.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

MATTHEW 14:1-12

John the Baptist is Beheaded.

- **Matthew 14:1-12:** At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus,² and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him."³ For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,⁴ because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."⁵ And though he (Herod) wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet.⁶ But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod,⁷ so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.⁸ Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter."⁹ And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given.¹⁰ He sent and had John beheaded in the prison,¹¹ and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.¹² And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.

Herod: known as Herod the Great was a Jewish Roman client king of Israel who began the Herodian Dynasty, he proceeded against the Pharisees in (6BC) and took Jerusalem in (36 BC), he ruled for thirty-seven years, thirty-four years of them after capturing Jerusalem. The name Herod means, hero and was the name of four Jewish kings. Herod the Great had a brother Phillip and ten wives and fourteen known children. He is described as a madman who murdered several of his own family members including his wife Mariamne and a great many rabbis. He had his wife Doris and her three-year-old child banished so he could marry Mariamne. Herod is known for his colossal buildings including the second temple (sometimes referred to as Herod's temple), for giving orders to kill all boys of the age of two and under in Bethlehem, beheading John the Baptist and his trial of Jesus. It is most likely Herod suffered throughout his lifetime from depression and paranoia (Luke 23:6-15) (Acts 4:27) (notice, Herod believed in a resurrection) (v2).

How amazing it this: Jesus comes miraculously healing people of their sickness and the king of the people rather than being thrilled suffering people in his kingdom are being healed and delivered from their crippling diseases is only concerned about his own authority and power and feels

threatened by this unique man in his kingdom who is going about doing only good and bringing joy to those who were suffering. Sadly, this is the case with many kings or leaders of small groups and sometimes even churches. It is often all about the leader's own importance and power rather than the welfare of the people they are leading

MATTHEW 14:13-21

Jesus feeds the Five Thousand.

- **Matthew 14:13-21:** Now when Jesus heard this (John had been beheaded), he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." ¹⁸And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The accounts of feeding the five thousand are found in the following chapters.

(Matthew 14:13-34) (Mark 6:30-54) (Luke 9:1-20) (John 6:1-58).

A scenario of the feeding the five thousand: the following scenario is taken from the accounts given in Mathew, Mark, Luke and John as they are all the same event with each one adding further detail. The apostles had been proclaiming the Kingdom of God and healing the sick they return in excitement and tell Jesus all that they had done. Around this time, they hear that John had been beheaded so Jesus withdraws with the disciples in a boat to a desolate place (in a town called Bethsaida) to rest awhile because they had no leisure time even to eat. But the crowds followed Jesus on foot from the towns so he goes ashore and has compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, he heals their sick and when evening came the disciples tell him to send the crowds into the villages to buy food for themselves. But Jesus ordered the crowds to sit in groups on the green grass, and prayed to his Father (the Passover Feast of the Jews was at hand).

Then he miraculously feed about five thousand men, besides women and children. The crowds proclaimed, "This is the Prophet who is to come into the world!" Jesus seeing, they were about to make him King made his disciples get into the boat and sail without him across the Sea of Galilee (also Sea of Gennesaret and of Tiberias) to Capernaum on the other side of the Lake. Jesus stayed behind and dismissed the crowd then went up on a mountain to pray, but when evening came, he saw that the disciples were in trouble so he went to them walking on the Sea of Galilee, he got into the boat and they moored at the shore of Gennesaret (a village on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (6 miles north of Tiberias). The next day the crowd that had remained in Bethsaida on the other side of the Sea of Galilee where they had eaten the bread got into boats and sailed to Capernaum seeking Jesus when they arrived he began to tell them about the true Bread of Life (John 6:1-58).

Purpose of the miracle of feeding the five thousand: after this event the people (mostly Jews because it was Passover time) should have recognized that it was God from heaven multiplying the bread though Christ to them as God did with the manna in the Old Testament. This

event should have confirmed to the Jews that Jesus was sent from God, especially since immediately after the feeding of the five-thousand he tells them that he is the true Bread that the Father has sent and then teaches about the manna sent from heaven and the true Bread sent from Heaven (John 6:1-58). The Jews should have perceived the link between the two breads miraculously being produced by their God, one through Moses' and the other through Christ God's Son.

Feeding the five-thousand and the four-thousand are two different events: there is another very similar, but different event recorded in the Bible (Matt. 15:32-39) where Jesus is feeding a crowd of four-thousand, but in that story Jesus after feeding the four-thousand went to Magadan not Gennesaret. Magadan is a village on the shore of Sea of Galilee 3 miles from Tiberias. The village of Gennesaret and Magadan are about three miles apart. From Tiberias it is three miles north to Magadan and then a further three miles to Gennesaret. Added to this difference Jesus asked the disciples, do they not remember the five loaves for the five thousand and the seven loaves for the four-thousand? (Matt. 16:9-10), thus the feeding of the five-thousand and the four-thousand are clearly two separate events.

Skeptics: because the feeding of the four-thousand was only a few months after the feeding of the five-thousand and yet the disciples ask Jesus the same question in both stories, "Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?" some skeptics reason that if these events had been real events surely the disciples would have remembered how Jesus feed the previous five-thousand and expected him to do the same miracle because it appears the disciples have totally forgotten about the previous miracle. Skeptics reason that it would be impossible for anyone not to remember such a fantastic miracle? There is no-doubt many possibilities that would answer the skeptic's doubts, as the two stories only give the reader a limited amount of knowledge regarding both events.

The following possible explanation is not a dogmatic teaching, but simply one possibility. It needs to be understood that those reading the story only know the multitudes were all totally feed and satisfied because the Bible tells us thus the disciples may not have realized that every single person was being feed? Even though they sat the people in fifties there were over five-thousand which would have covered a vast area of land and some, especially the children would have been scrambling to the food. It was getting dark and twelve baskets would take a long time to distribute amongst that size crowd. Jesus probably continued to teach and heal the people while they were passing the baskets to each other. The disciples most likely stayed with Jesus to hear him speak while the multitudes were eating so it is quite possible that though they would have realized a miracle was taking place they didn't fully understand the enormity of the miracle. Nevertheless, whatever the reasons the spiritual message of the story is very clear which is:

- Jesus is the true bread (manna) of eternal life.
- Whoever comes to Christ will be fully satisfied.
- The blessings in Christ are never exhausted.
- There is more than enough for all who follow, and who belong to Jesus.

MATTHEW 14:22-33

Peter walks on Water.

- **Matthew 14:22-33:** Immediately he (Jesus) made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the

waves, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea (of Galilee). ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." ²⁸And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³²And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Peters faith: while Peter was trusting in Christ, he was able to stand on water. His faith typifies the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, providing we continue to trust in the Lord to be saved, he will save us, but the moment we lose sight of our salvation in him and God's grace and begin to trust in our own efforts or strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions we not only disconnect ourselves from him and his saving power as Peter did when he doubted Jesus was able to save him from the storms of life (v28-31), but also nullify what Jesus achieved for us on the cross and make his brutal, bloody and cruel death count for nothing.

The following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ. Paul in his letters wrote:

- I do not nullify the *GRACE* of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value.

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Equally as horrific as this Paul states:

- When we forsake *GRACE* we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by *GRACE* that God made us alive in Christ (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5).

Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that:

- It is only by *GRACE* that any brother or sister has been saved (Eph. 2:8).

Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God. This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. This means in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, Grace and Faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them.

This is the reason the author in the book of Hebrews spends so many chapters brilliantly and skillfully explaining to the Hebrews that they must stop their sin of trusting in religious works, the Levitical Law and their priesthood to be counted righteous before God and start trusting in the grace of God that is in Christ and in his righteousness to be saved to eternal life. By extension this means that Christians must stop trusting in attending a church building every week, strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to be saved. Though the practice of some of these maybe good in themselves they become grossly sinful when believers trust in them for their salvation since not one of them has any power to save to eternal life.

NOTICE: this event brought the disciples to state that, "Jesus is truly the Son of God" (v33).

People are Healed by Touching the Fringe of His Garment.

- **Matthew 14:34-36:** And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.
³⁵And when the men of that place (the land of Gennesaret) recognised him, they sent around to all that region and brought to him all who were sick ³⁶and implored him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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