

LESSON FOUR

MIRACLES OF SUPPLY (Continued)

A. JESUS PROVIDES TRIBUTE MONEY FOR PETER:

1. SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE: Matthew 17:24-27.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES:

Peter had been approached by one collecting tribute or tax money for the expenses of the Temple. This tribute money was a half shekel. Very likely Peter was being accused of not meeting his religious obligations. It is possible that he also was accused of belonging to some political party, which refused to pay tribute.

The accusation was also laid against Jesus. "*Doth not your master pay tribute?*" Peter did not want this accusation brought against them, so he answered, "Yes," without consulting with Jesus.

The Sanhedrin had placed this tax upon the Jews, and it actually placed each Jew in the position of a stranger or Gentile. Jesus was opposed to the tax and He allowed His opposition to be known.

3. NEED:

The need was simply for Peter to pay the tribute money so that they would not be a stumbling block.

4. HOW WAS THE MIRACLE PERFORMED?

Jesus used a fish to provide the tribute money. Peter might have been tempted here to go back to his old occupation and catch sufficient fish to sell and pay the tribute. Very likely this was the reason that Jesus had Peter catch one fish, and that the need would be provided through a miracle.

5. RESULTS AND THE LESSON TAUGHT:

Through this miracle Jesus taught Peter two lessons. First, although Jesus did not agree with the raising of the tribute money, yet He paid it rather than be a stumbling block. Secondly, Peter did not have to turn back to his old occupation to have this need met, through obedience and faith Jesus would provide.

The miracle reveals some of the attributes of Deity: a) Omniscience - knowing all things and b) FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

B. FEEDING THE FOUR THOUSAND:

1. SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE: Matthew 15:32-39.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES:

This miracle is very similar in meaning and significance to that of feeding the five thousand. However, this was altogether a different miracle. The differences between this and the miracle of feeding the five thousand may be noted. The feeding of the five thousand took place in the north near Bethsaida and the crowd was made up of mainly Jews. This second miracle took place in the south in the territory of Decapolis and the crowd was mainly Gentiles.

3. NEED:

A large crowd had sought out Jesus in the wilderness bringing many of their sick and suffering. Jesus pours out His love in healing on them and they were astonished as they beheld the miracles. They refused to leave until many of them had been there three days. Jesus had compassion upon them and refused to send them away until they ate and were nourished.

4. HOW WAS THE MIRACLE PERFORMED?

They brought seven loaves and a few fishes to Jesus. He gave thanks and broke them, and gave to his disciples. The disciples now went through to crowd and the food kept multiplying. After everyone had eaten there were seven baskets of fragments left.

5. RESULTS AND THE LESSON TAUGHT:

This miracle taught the same truths as the miracle of the five thousand, showing that Jesus is the Bread of Life. However, there are these additional truths: a) This miracle showed that Jesus would do the same for Gentiles as He would for Jews. Undoubtedly the disciples somewhat questioned this at the beginning for they certainly had not forgotten the first miracle; b) This miracle proves that Jesus can and will do the same thing over and over. If the need is there Jesus will meet that need no matter how often it may occur.

C. SECOND DROUGHT OF FISHES:

1. SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES: John 21:3-19.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES:

This miracle takes place on the shore of the Sea of Galilee in the early morning. The disciples had been fishing all night but yet had caught nothing. This scene takes place following the death and resurrection of our Lord. It was a moment of great discouragement and depression. It seemed to them that their three years of following Jesus had all been in vain. Their sacrifice and dedication had been useless.

Peter decided that he was going to return to fishing. He said, "*I go a fishing.*" The other disciples immediately gave their assent, "*We also go with thee.*" Thus they signified that their public ministry had come to an end. It was all a failure and blunder, and they were turning back to their secular occupation of fishing.

Now they had fished all night, and this also was a failure.

3. NEED:

The need was twofold: spiritual and physical. They were weary and tired and hungry. They also needed encouragement and to see that this was not the end but rather the beginning.

4. HOW WAS THE MIRACLE PERFORMED?

Before Jesus performed the miracle, He started a fire on the shore and prepared a breakfast for His disciples.

He now asks them, "*Have ye any meat?*" When they replied in the negative, He instructed them to cast the net on the right side of the ship. Immediately they caught a multitude of fish (one hundred and fifty three large fish) and the net did not break which was another miracle. The disciples had to obey Him and the net had to be on the right side of the boat.

5. RESULTS AND THE LESSON TAUGHT:

This story will be studied again in Life of Christ III, but briefly let us mention some of the lessons taught here:

- a. Without Jesus everything is in vain and quite hopeless;
- b. Everything is in vain if the net is on the wrong side of the boat;
- c. Obedience was necessary upon the part of the disciples;
- d. Jesus knew that hungry, discouraged men must be fed;
- e. Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples with a miracle similar to a previous one.

LESSON FOUR

SELF HELP TEST

- A. State clearly the lessons taught in the following miracles:
1. Feeding the four thousand -
 2. Coin in the mouth of a fish -
- B. What all was meant by Peter's statement, "I go fishing."
- C. Write a paragraph describing the miracle of the second drought of fishes.
- D. What was the attitude of Jesus towards paying tribute money?