

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Jerusalem, showing a large, well-preserved stone wall in the foreground. Behind the wall, a dense urban area is visible, including a prominent church with a tall spire. The foreground shows some ruins and a path. The overall scene is one of historical significance and desolation.

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW:
**THE GOSPEL
OF THE KINGDOM**

Abundance in Desolation

Matthew 14:13-21

Review/Context

- Return to Jesus' display of His authority
- Only miracle besides resurrection recorded in all 4 Gospels
- For me it has been one of the most difficult passages to know what to “do” with
- What is the purpose of the original miracle and what does Matthew intend to do in recording it in this way?

Going to the Desolate Place (13)

Now when Jesus heard this,
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.

Moved with Compassion (14)

When he went ashore he saw a great crowd,
and he had compassion on them
and healed their sick.

The Disciples' Recommendation (15)

Now 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.”

Jesus' Response (16)

But Jesus said,

“They need not go away;
you give them something to eat.”

The Disciples' Dilemma (17)

They said to him,

“We have only five loaves here and two fish.”

Jesus' Provision (18-19)

And he said, "Bring them here to me."

Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass [in groups of 50s], 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.

Jesus' Provision (20-21)

And they *all* ate and were satisfied.

And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.

And those who ate were about *five thousand* men, besides women and children.



Not to scale

Interpretations

- **Completely symbolic/mythical (heavenly)**
 - Application - spiritual provision
 - Problems
- **Completely historical/practical (earthly)**
 - (based on “sharing” story or “token” meal)
 - Application - physical provision
 - Problems
- **Both historical and symbolic**
 - Application - the intersection of heaven and earth

Application/Participation

- Thematic parallels - manna (Ex16) and Elisha (2K_n4:42)
- Why 12 baskets?
 - Unlike heavenly manna in the wilderness which was day to day, this shows ongoing care and provision
 - If this is what he could do with 5/2, what can He do with 12 baskets?
- An exquisite manifestation of Jesus
 - His creative power
 - His wide compassion
 - His eschatological promise