

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom

Part XV: Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen By The Opposition To His Ministry, Matthew 11:2-16:12

K. Christ As Israel's Messiah By His Compassionate Reaction To People Afflicted By His Opponents (Matthew 14:13-21)

I. Introduction

- A. Jesus withdrew from His nation's hostile religious leaders (Matt. 12:14-15), from His hostile townsfolk (Matt. 13:53-58) and from wicked Herod Antipas with whom Jesus knew He would otherwise eventually get into open conflict in violation of His peaceful ministry calling, Matthew 14:1-13 with 12:17-21 (our last lesson).
- B. However, Israel's people faced affliction in the form of a vacuum of godly leadership due to Herod's killing of John the Baptizer, so Jesus had compassion on them, showing His Messianic qualifications (as follows):

II. Christ as Israel's Messiah By His Compassionate Reaction To People Afflicted By His Opponents.

- A. Matthew 14:13a reports that when Jesus heard from John the Baptizer's disciples of his martyrdom by Herod Antipas (Matthew 14:12), Christ "withdrew" (*anachoreo*, Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 62-63), the same word used back in Matthew 12:15 of His "withdrawing" from the religious leaders.
- B. Jesus thus took a boat across the Sea of Galilee to a desolate place away from Herod's attention, but when the people of the surrounding towns heard of His movement, they followed His boat on foot around the lake to where He would land so He might heal them of their physical illnesses and maladies, Matt. 14:13b-14 ESV.
- C. When Jesus left the boat for shore and saw the great multitude that had followed Him, He felt compassion on them, and healed their sick, Matthew 14:14. This compassion undoubtedly arose in part due to Jesus' awareness that with Herod Antipas' appalling martyrdom of John the Baptizer whom the people all held to be a prophet (Matthew 21:26), a vacuum in spiritual leadership existed in the nation than only He could fill.
- D. Christ's great compassion extended His healing work into the late afternoon near sundown (*opsios*, Ibid., p. 606), so the disciples came to Jesus to explain that since it was a deserted area and the day was fading, He ought to send the people away so they might enter the surrounding villages and buy food to eat, Matt. 14:15.
- E. Nevertheless, extending His compassion further, Jesus replied to His disciples that the people did not need to leave, that the disciples should give them food to eat, Matthew 14:16.
- F. The disciples said they had only five loaves and two fishes, but Jesus told them to bring the food to Him, Matt. 14:17-18. Then, He commanded the crowd to sit down on the grass, took the loaves and fishes in hand, looked to heaven, blessed them, broke them and gave them to the disciples to give to the people, Matt. 14:19.
- G. Astoundingly, (1) all the people not only ate of what had been this small bit of food, (2) they "ate to their fill" (*chortazo*, Ibid., p. 892), and (3) the disciples took up the leftovers twelve full (*plaras*, Ibid., p. 675-676) baskets (*kophinos*, Ibid., p. 448), woven baskets that held several gallons of dry measure each, *Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib.*, v. One, p. 488. The clear multiplication of the loaves and fishes on these various levels of evidence reveal the enormity of the miraculous provision! (4) Also, the crowd numbered about five thousand **men BESIDES women and children**, Matthew 14:21. This would mean that from **fifteen to twenty thousand** people were fed, *Bible Know. Com., N. T.*, p. 54.
- H. This miracle has profound Messianic implications in view of Moses' prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:18-19:
 - 1. God had predicted to Moses that He would raise up a Prophet **like unto Moses** from among the **Hebrew people**, that He would put **His words** in that Prophet's mouth, and would hold the people of Israel accountable to heed those Words from God, Deuteronomy 18:18-19.
 - 2. Well, Moses had been used of God supernaturally to feed the people of Israel with manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16:1-36), and Jesus here supernaturally had fed the multitudes of Israel with food in a wilderness area, Matthew 14:15, 19-21.
 - 3. Thus, due just to this miracle, Israel was responsible to heed Jesus' words as the Prophet from God!

Lesson: After John the Baptizer's martyrdom, Jesus expressed great compassion on Israel's multitudes, so He ministered unto them, healing their sick and supernaturally feeding them in a wilderness area as the Prophet of God with God's Words that God had long before predicted through Moses would arise in Israel.

Application: May we (1) trust in Jesus as the Prophet of God predicted by God to Moses. (2) May we heed Jesus' words as God's Messenger and (3) rejoice in His shepherding of us that is concerned with our every need. (4) May we rest in Christ's compassionate sensitivity to intense needs we face that are created by appalling evils or trials.