

Lesson 13

Proper 13

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 14:13–21

This miraculous sign was recorded by all of the evangelists in their Gospels. They saw it as a striking display of the Lord's compassion for people in their need and of His power to do something about their need. The miracle surely led the people to think of the Lord's miraculously filling their ancestors' needs with the manna in the wilderness.

"Now when Jesus heard this" refers to the execution of John the Baptist by Herod (vv. 6–12).

188. What does it say about Jesus that this report made Him withdraw to a desolate place? What does it say about Jesus that even at such a time in His life and ministry, He did not decline to minister to the crowd?

189. What motivated the disciples to come to Jesus with the suggestion that He send the crowd away so they could buy themselves some food? How did Jesus challenge them, and how did they respond?

190. How do Jesus' words pose a challenge also for us today? (See 1 John 3:16–18.) How can we best approach the challenge of feeding the hungry of America and of the world?

Matthew did not mention the lad who supplied the loaves and the fish; John did. He also did not mention the distribution of the fish; Mark did. Matthew hurried to the miracle itself.

191. How did Jesus focus attention on the divine nature of what was happening?

The Greek *ephagon*, "they ate," is the word that was used for feeding cattle as much as they can eat to fatten them for market. It emphasizes the abundance of Jesus' provision.

192. What numbers did Matthew include to emphasize the magnitude of the miracle?

The Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 55:1–5

The banquet invitation is part of the messianic assurance that is so strong in Isaiah 40–66. The Servant Songs of chapters 42–53 picture the Servant as the agent through whom the gift is given, and now this invitation to the free banquet offers the benefit He made available through His faithful service. The promises of Isaiah found their immediate meaning in the assurances they brought to the people of Judah in exile, but they find their ultimate, full meaning in the eternal messianic kingdom.

193. What do the phrases “everyone who thirsts” and “he who has no money” say about those to whom the invitation is given?

194. What does “buy wine and milk without money and without price” say about the One extending the invitation?

195. How were the people of Judah spending “money for that which is not bread” and laboring “for that which does not satisfy”?

196. What did the prophet point to as the key for those who wish to “eat what is good” and “delight yourselves in rich food”?

197. What is the everlasting covenant the Lord made with David? (See 2 Samuel 7:8–16.) Who is the One who will be “a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples” and will, as a result, attract the nations to Israel?

198. How does this Old Testament Lesson tie in with today’s Holy Gospel?

The Epistle for the Day: Romans 9:1–13

There are many indications that the Church in Rome was quite Jewish in cast and may have had misgivings about the approach Paul had taken in including Gentiles in the Church. They did not know Paul in person, so in chapters 9–11 he took up the subject of Jew and Gentile in God’s purpose. He was immediately confronted by his own deep feelings about the general rejection of the Gospel by Jews, and he wanted to express these feelings openly and honestly to the Jewish Christians of Rome.