



Matthew Lesson 18

November 10, 2020

Scriptures from TLV
“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

14:15 -36

We ended our last lesson discussing where Yeshua might have fed the 5000. The traditional site is Tabgha on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, but recently an alternate site has been proposed near Hippos on the southeastern shore.

15 When it became evening, the disciples came to Him, saying, “This place is isolated, and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away so they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves” (Matthew 14:15 TLV). The nearest town to the location which has now become Tabgha was Capernaum, about 1.8 miles north. If they were not on the western shore, but on the eastern shore near Hippos, they would have only had 1.2 miles to town, but because Hippos, the city on a hill is elevated, they would have also had a vertical climb of 1,150 feet to reach it. But, of course, they didn’t go to either location.

16 But Yeshua said to them, “They don’t need to leave—you give them something to eat.” 17 “We have nothing here except five loaves and two fish,” they said to Him. 18 “Bring them here to Me,” He said (Matthew 14:16-18 TLV). This event is reported in all four Gospels, but only in John is it mentioned that a boy had the five loaves and two fish. In the Matthew account, obviously it was he who had the food even though he was not mentioned here or in Mark or Luke. But, John felt it was important and included the information in his account, possibly to show that ADONAI can use anyone and no one is insignificant.

19 Ordering the crowd to recline on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish; and looking up to heaven, He offered the bracha. After breaking the loaves, He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds (Matthew 14:19 TLV). Both the TLV and the CJB speak about Yeshua offering the *bracha*. Christian versions of the Bible just translate directly into English without attaching any Hebraic significance to what Yeshua was doing. The NIV says “He gave thanks and broke the loaves,..” But, the NAS follows the Christian tradition of blessing the food and says “He blessed *the food*, and breaking the loaves,..” The KJ and NKJ more faithfully translate the Greek by saying “He blessed and brake,..” and “He blessed and broke,..” respectively. But, Christians almost unanimously interpret that to mean that Yeshua blessed the food. Nowhere in Scripture are we told to bless the food. We are told specifically to bless ADONAI after we eat our food: *10 “So you will eat and be full, and you will bless Adonai your God for the good land He has given you” (Deuteronomy 8:10 TLV).* But, this was before a meal. Why did Yeshua bless?

We, as members of the Messianic Jewish Movement, understand exactly what Yeshua did. He blessed His Father in heaven and broke the bread. That’s what we understand to be a *bracha*, in English, a blessing. In doing this, was Yeshua following the “tradition of the elders,” following oral *torah*? I believe He was, but that doesn’t mean that we are to follow the *Talmud* today. Yeshua rejected other parts of “the traditions of the elders” as evidenced by His rebuke of the Pharisees who criticized His disciples. In Matthew 15 and Mark 7, they

criticized them for not following their form of handwashing before eating. He very obviously rejected that portion of the “oral *torah*.” We do follow as beautiful traditions many things found in the *Talmud*. For example, we light *Shabbat* candles on Friday evening, but we don’t have to. We follow Jewish tradition by saying the *bracha* and breaking bread before eating our meals, but we don’t do it because *Talmud* tells us to. We consider *Talmud* to be non-*Torah* and not authoritative for us. Before meals, we recite the *bracha* and break bread because Yeshua did it. Saying *Barukh atah ADONAI, Eloheinu melekh haolam, hamotzi lechem min ha’aretz, Amein* is what we prefer, but we would still be correct if we just said it in English: “Blessed are You O L-rd our G-d, king of the universe who brings forth bread from the earth” or just simply “Blessed are You Father” and then break the bread. But, it is not a sin if we don’t do either. Nowhere in Scripture are we told to pray before meals, although most followers of Yeshua do pray and give thanks before the meal. The only Scriptural requirement to pray is after meals as we saw in Deuteronomy 4, but, that prayer is not about the food, it’s about the “good land” which ADONAI has given us. It’s about *eretz Yisra’el*, the Land of Israel, but we should also be thankful for this land, the United States.

20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces left over. 21 Now those eating were about five thousand men, besides women and children (Matthew 14:20-21 TLV).

When we read these two verses, we don’t get the full impact, the enormity, of Yeshua’s miracle unless we stop and think about it; meditate on it. Many scholars believe that the total number fed was more than 15,000. It’s also amazing that 12 baskets of pieces were left over, their collection being an indication that nothing would be wasted, but also an indication that ADONAI is generous and always supplies more than enough. Read 2Kings 4:42-44 about when ADONAI through Elisha fed 100 men with 20 loaves of bread and some ears of corn. They ate their fill and had some left over. Verse 44 says: *44 “So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of Adona” (2Kings 4:44 TLV).* What was left over after Yeshua fed all of these people was many times more than the five loaves and two fish they had at the beginning. Stop and think a minute. To feed 15,000 people would have required hundreds and hundreds of baskets of food, but an easy task for the Son of G-d!

22 Right away, Yeshua made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. 23 After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the hillside by Himself to pray. And when evening came, He was there alone (Matthew 14:22-23 TLV). After the people were fed and the pieces picked up, Yeshua immediately made His disciples get into the boat and head to the other side. The Greek *eutheós* means “at once or directly.” Yeshua apparently chose not to minister further because He wanted to pray. Note that He told them to head to the “other side.” That will have significance when we see where they go ashore when they reach the other side.

24 But the boat was already a long way from land, tossed around by the waves, for the wind was against it. 25 Now in the fourth watch of the night, Yeshua came to them, walking on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It’s a ghost!” And they cried out with fear. 27 But immediately, Yeshua spoke to them, saying, “Take courage! I am. Don’t be afraid” (Matthew 14:24-27 TLV).

The Sea of Galilee is a lake, but it’s called a sea for a good reason. It is 13 miles long and 8 miles wide at its widest point. In a body of water that large, the wind can whip up some pretty big waves. I can testify to this, having seen breakers 3-4 feet tall come ashore

at a beach on the southeastern shore. After Yeshua had been praying for a number of hours, He walked on the water and got near them at around 4 AM. Apparently, they were superstitious and thought that He was a ghost. They were really afraid. He essentially said, “don’t be afraid. It is I.” In the Greek, what Yeshua said is *egó eimi*. The TLV translated *egó eimi* as “I am.” This is a good translation in my opinion. *Egó* means “an emphatic expression of I” and *eimi* means “I exist or I am.” Yeshua was declaring His divinity, His oneness with the Father and a statement that He was with the Father before Abraham. To a group of Pharisees, Yeshua said: 58 ..., “Amen, amen I tell you, before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58b TLV). In this situation, the Pharisees recognized that Yeshua was declaring Himself to be in unity with the one who said to Moses: 14 ..., “I AM WHO I AM. ” Then He said, “You are to say to Bnei-Yisrael, ‘I AM’ has sent me to you” (Exodus 3:14 TLV). It’s a mystery. Yeshua was with the Father in the beginning and has always existed with Him. But, we don’t know how.

28 Answering, Peter said to Him, “Master, if it’s You, command me to come to You on the water.” 29 And He said, “Come!” And Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water to go to Yeshua. 30 But seeing the wind, he became terrified. And beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, “Master, save me!” 31 Immediately Yeshua reached out His hand and grabbed him. And He said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped Him, saying, “You really are Ben-Elohim!” 34 After they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret (Matthew 14:28-34 TLV). Kefa stood out among the twelve. He was sometimes brash and impetuous, but he also had deep insight. He alone wanted to walk on the water and he was the one who cut off the High Priest’s servant’s ear. He was the one who jumped out of the boat and swam to shore to Yeshua when He appeared to them after He had risen from the dead. After Yeshua had rescued Kefa and they had returned to the boat, they, all of the disciples, worshipped Yeshua saying, “You really are Ben-Elohim!” But, when Yeshua asked them who He was at a later time, only Kefa answered. He knew by ADONAI’s Spirit that Yeshua was *Ben Elohim*. 15 He said, “But who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Yeshua said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 16:15-17 TLV)! Kefa said in Hebrew: “You are *Mashiach BenElohim!*”

In verse 22 Yeshua told His disciples to get in the boat and go to the other side. What that means is that He told them to cross the lake. Then, verse 34 says: 34 After they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. But, if they crossed the lake and landed at Gennesaret, which was on the northwestern side, they would have had to come from the eastern side. If this is true, then it would mean that the site near Hippos is the place where the 5000 were fed.

Gennesaret, anglicized from the Greek is *Kinneret* in Hebrew and Lake *Kinneret*, the Sea of Galilee, takes its name from the Plain of *Kinneret* and the ancient city of *Kinneret*. The name of both of these places was supposedly derived from the *kinnar* trees which grew there. The plain is south of Capernaum and the ancient city of *Kinneret* was southwest of there about halfway between Capernaum and Magdala in the territory assigned to the Tribe of Gad.

Another interesting fact about this area is that where Yeshua and His disciples landed that morning is very near and perhaps even the same location as the modern *Kibbutz Ginosar*, a name derived from *Kinneret*. It was founded by Zionist Jewish Youth in 1937. Now, intimately connected with this place is the ancient fishing boat called the “Jesus Boat” which was discovered nearby in 1986. It was during a severe drought, lake levels were very low

and parts of the boat were protruding from the mud. The boat, which has been dated to the 1st century is 27 feet long and 7 and a half feet wide and very possibly the very same type of boat that Yeshua and His disciples were in. To preserve it, it was covered with wax and submerged in a liquid for 12 years before being able to take it out and exhibit it. It is in a building near the boat landing at *Kibbutz Ginosar*. From the Gospel account, we can suppose that this was very near the location that Yeshua and His disciples landed. We have seen the boat several times in our travels to Israel. The lake crossing in a modern Galilean fishing boat is a highlight of every trip to Israel. Our trips across began at *Kibbutz Ein Gev* on the eastern shore, which is near Hippos and possibly near the site of the feeding of the 5000 (see the map in the text of Lesson 17) If that is true, thousands of modern followers of Yeshua have made that same lake crossing, Hippos to *Kinneret*, during their pilgrimages to Israel.

35 And when the men of that place recognized Yeshua, they sent word into all the surrounding region. And they brought to Him all those who were in bad shape 36 and kept begging Him that they might just touch the tzitzit of His garment—and all who touched it were cured (Matthew 14:35-36 TLV). Since Yeshua came to the boat at around 4 AM, it is likely that they were landing around daybreak or soon after. The people were already up and around. Yeshua allowed them time to bring the sick in from the surrounding area and then healed them. The people knew Scripture and wanted to touch Yeshua's *tzitzit*. *20 "But for you who revere My Name, the sun of righteousness will rise, with healing in its wings"..* (Malachi 3:20a TLV). They understood that this was about the Messiah and that wings was about the *kanaph*, the corner of the garment where the *tzitzit* were located.

In my last *Shabbat* message, I spoke about "mystery of the faith," and suggested that we should not attempt to create doctrines by analyzing mysteries that are true mysteries. *Sha'ul* spoke about mysteries. To the congregation at Ephesus, he wrote: *2 "Surely you have heard about the plan of God's grace given to me for you— 3 that the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote before briefly"* (Ephesians 3:2-3 TLV). And, then he explains that this mystery, the mystery of Messiah, has been revealed: *6 "This mystery is that the Gentiles are joint heirs and fellow members of the same body and co-sharers of the promise in Messiah Yeshua through the Good News"* (Ephesians 3:6 TLV). But there are other mysteries that have not been revealed. A few years after he wrote this to the Ephesians, he wrote these words to Timothy: *8 "Servant-leaders (shammashim) likewise must be dignified, not double-speaking, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must keep hold of the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience"* (1Timothy 3:8 TLV). In my opinion, *Sha'ul* was not now speaking about the Mystery of Messiah, the Mystery of the Gospel, but about other mysteries of the faith. As I said a moment ago, we should not seek to take unexplained things in Scripture, explain them and make them into doctrines. I believe that unexplained things of Scripture will remain mysteries until Yeshua returns. My reason for bringing this up tonight is to point out that where Yeshua fed the 5000 is not a mystery of the faith. It's just one of those many unexplained things in Scripture, the answer of which will not change belief in any way. So, we don't know for certain where the feeding took place. But, it is interesting, at least to me, to consider the possibilities. *Shalom aleichem!*