

28.58 Feeding 4000 (Matthew 15:29–38; Mark 8:1–9)

✓ “Check” it out: opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher, not the student. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and/or visual aids found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check also “Activities” and “Handwork” below for additional suggested items.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Decapolis*: an area of ten Greek cities southeast of the Sea of Galilee
- *to glorify*: to give praise and exaltation to
- *loaves*: dinner roll type loaves of ✓perhaps 4-inch diameter

Scripture: (ESV)

Matthew 15:29 Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. 30 And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, 31 so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

32 Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.” 33 And the disciples said to him, “Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?” 34 And Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven, and a few small fish.” 35 And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground, 36 he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 37 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over. 38 Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39 And after sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

Mark 8:1 In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, 2 “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away.” 4 And his disciples answered him, “How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?” 5 And he asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven.” 6 And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. 7 And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. 8 And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. 9 And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. 10 And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

Introduction/Review:

Way up in Phoenicia [locate on a map] Jesus had healed a persistent woman’s daughter, even though the daughter was not present. Then Jesus had traveled all the way to Decapolis, a wilderness southeast from the Sea of Galilee. ✓I’m sure that journey was not wasted but profitable time, for Jesus’ disciples and probably more people were with Him. The journey was a great opportunity for His teaching. In Decapolis Jesus healed a deaf/mute man.

Story:

Staying in this area, Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee and then went up on a mountain and sat down there.

Jesus could go nowhere without attracting a crowd of people. That fact was true here in this place distant from His usual journeys. ✓Perhaps some of these people had followed him all the way from Tyre and Sidon, but the locals came too, bringing to His feet people of many diseases—lameness, blindness, being crippled, being mute—so that Jesus might heal them. Jesus healed them all, and the people “glorified the God of Israel.”

This course of events continued three days. The Bible text doesn’t tell us Jesus preached to these people, but ✓no doubt He did. The crowd grew and seemed unwilling to leave the Lord. ✓They might have brought picnic lunches, but those provisions were running out. Still they stayed.

Jesus assessed the dire situation. He called His disciples ✓who could have been mingling with the crowd. Jesus said to them, “I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away.”

The disciples answered, “Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?”

Does this response sound similar to the response in a story we’ve heard before? When did we hear the disciples answer with the same question? [When Jesus fed the crowd of 5000.] What will Jesus do this time? Will He ask how many loaves of bread the disciples have? Yes!

Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” I wonder how many there were. Last time there were five.

The disciples answered, “Seven—” (Ah, this is a different answer) “—and a few small fish.” Last time there were two small fish.

“Everybody, sit down! ✓Sit in rows!” Jesus shouted.

“What did He say?” someone out of earshot might have asked.

“Sit down!” answered someone closer.

The word continued to spread until, eventually, all the people sat down. Jesus took those seven loaves of bread and, after thanking God for them, began breaking them. He distributed the broken bread to the disciples, who distributed to the crowds. The same procedure continued with the few small fish.

Everyone got bread and fish. The Bible states, “They all ate and were satisfied.” Not only that, leftovers abounded. They took up the broken pieces left over—seven baskets full.

Four thousand men, plus women and children, were there by the southeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. All of them were fed by Jesus from seven loaves of bread and a few small fish.

Most of us are not used to big crowds of people; so it’s hard for us to imagine the size of this group. [Show the picture found below of about 17,000 people at a basketball game.] This picture shows about 17,000 people and gives us an idea of the crowd Jesus fed if 4,000 women and 9,000 children are added to the 4,000 men. If we cut off one fourth of this picture [do so], we might see the minimum number whom Jesus fed that day. What a lot of people!

This miracle would have been astounding if only 40 or 400 people had been filled by seven loaves and a few fish, but Jesus’ power as God was once again super amazing as He fed these crowds. This is the God who cares for us!

With their stomachs full, it was time for the people to go to their homes. Jesus sent them away. Then He and His disciples got into a boat and sailed across the Sea of Galilee to a town called Magadan. Mark states He

went to the district of Dalmanutha, ✓probably near Magadan. Neither of these places is clearly identifiable, but we think they were in the vicinity of either Gennesaret (on the northwest side) or Tiberias (on the west side) of the Sea of Galilee.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- Jesus is God: No person could heal as Jesus did. His feeding 4000-plus people with seven loaves and a few fish is impossible unless God does it.
- God will supply our daily needs. Thank Him for this.
- Do you thank God for your food at mealtime? How about when you are in public or when others around you do not stop to “say grace”? Gratitude to God for all His provisions is elemental in a Christian’s life. Failure to stop and thank God at mealtime corrupts part of one’s spirituality.

Activities:

- Play dough: loaves, fish, boat
- Compare and contrast the feeding of the 5000 with the feeding of the 4000. See chart below.
- Sing “Feeding 4000” found below.
- Sing first two stanzas of the song, “Jesus Healed . . .” found in Lesson 28.57 or on the Songs page at teachingthebibletochildren.org.
- Review questions: (Game: Put a felt “loaf” or “fish” on the flannel board for each correct answer.)
 1. Where did Jesus go in Decapolis? [To a mountain; walked by the sea.]
 2. What were the great crowds doing? [Bringing diseased people to be healed of Jesus.]
 3. How long were the people with Jesus? [Three days.]
 4. Why did Jesus have pity/compassion on the crowd? [They needed to eat.]
 5. What did Jesus ask the disciples? [“How many loaves do you have?”]
 6. What was the disciples’ answer? [“Seven loaves and a few small fish.”]
 7. How many people were fed? [4000 men besides women and children.]
 8. How many baskets of broken pieces were left over? [Seven.]
 9. What did Jesus and the disciples do after Jesus sent the crowds away? [Sailed across the Sea of Galilee to Magadan and/or Dalmanutha.]

Handwork:

- See the photo below as a model for students to make fish (make more from paper), a basket (made from a decorated paper plate folded over with a handle), and loaves (make 7 out of paper). Place the cut-out loaves and fish in the basket.

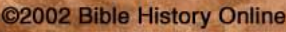
Memory Verse:

- Matthew 15:31—When they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing . . . they glorified the God of Israel.

**Decapolis
to glorify
loaves**

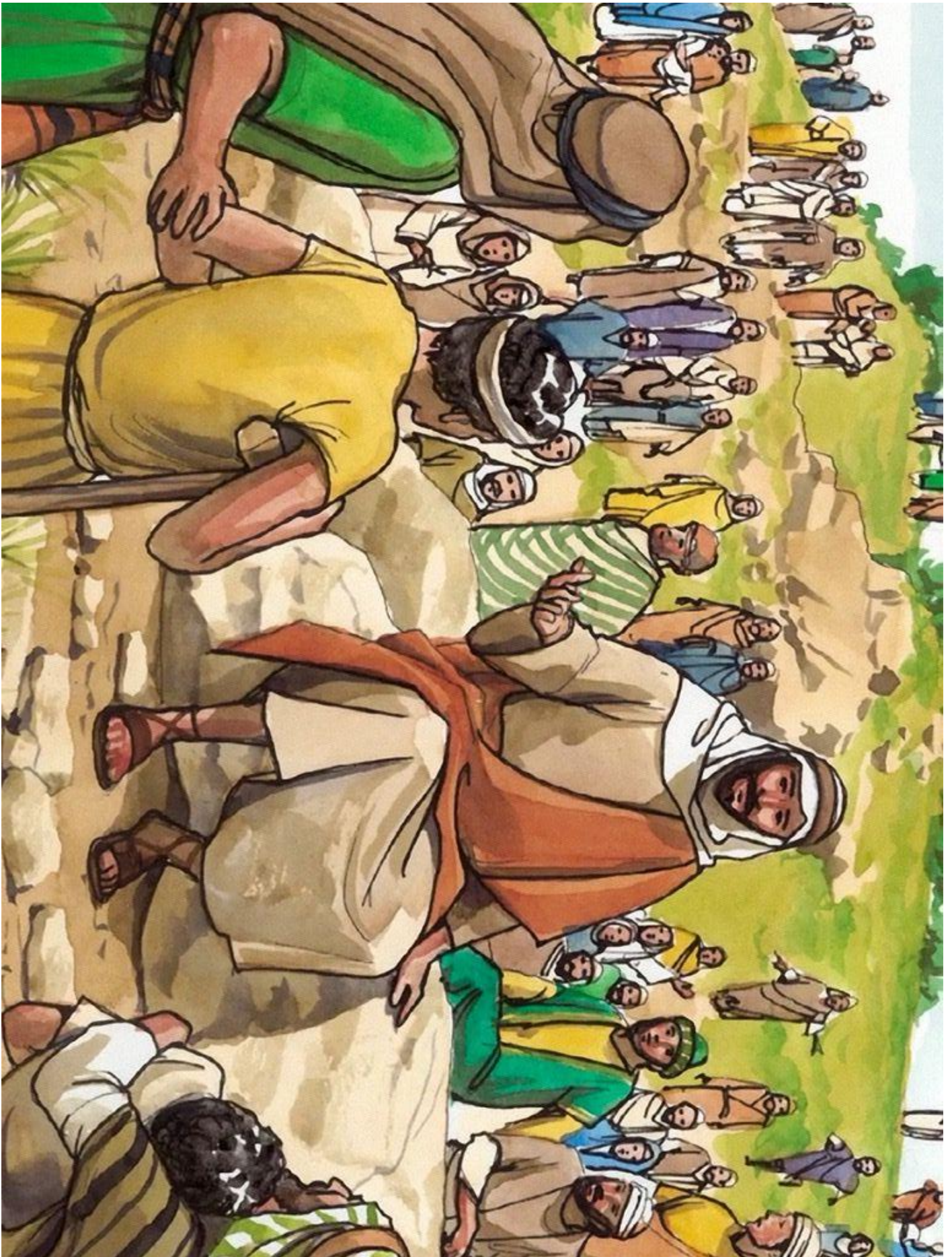
Compare and Contrast

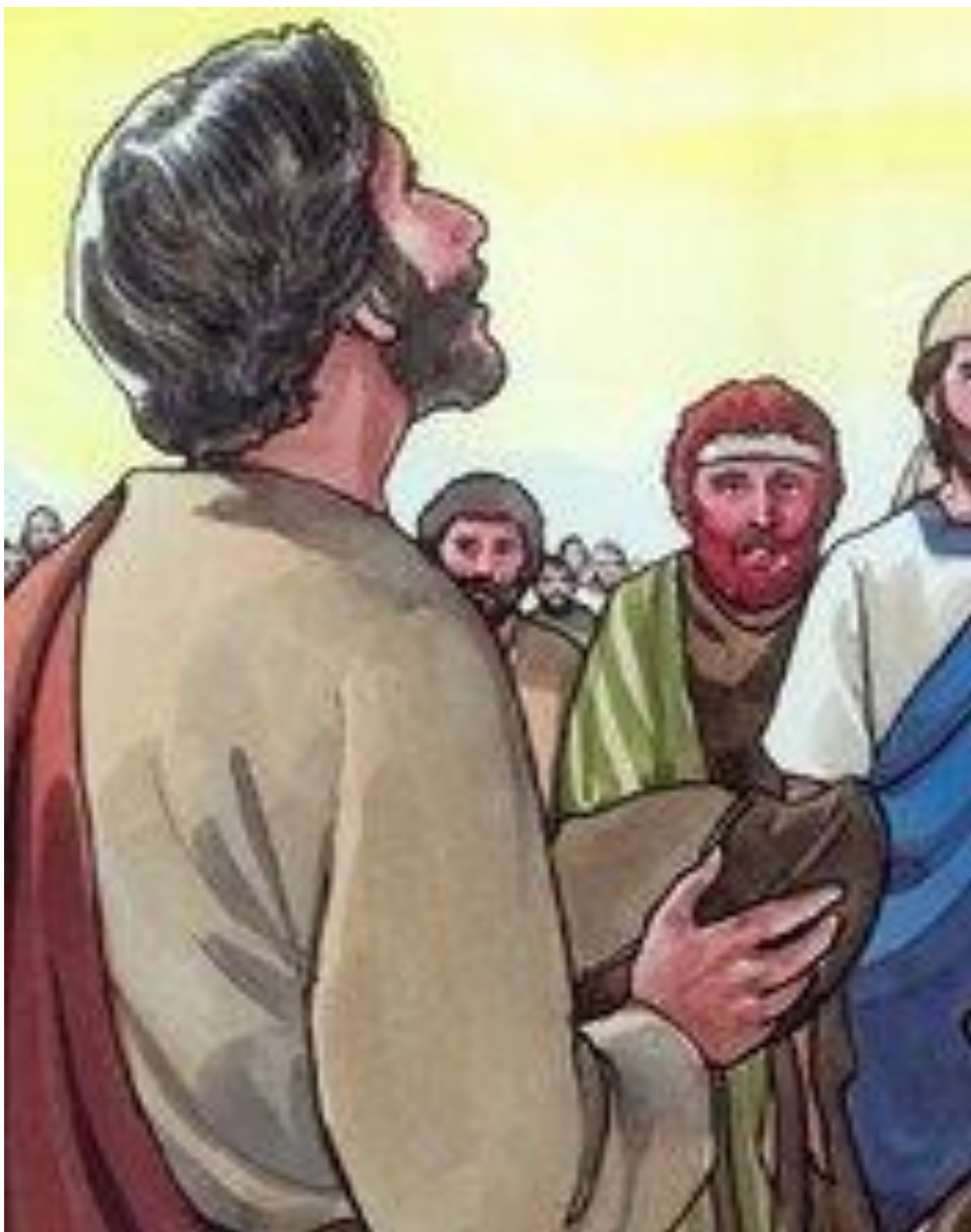
5000 men	4000 men
in Bethsaida	in Decapolis
5 loaves	7 loaves
2 fish	some fish
sat in groups of 50	sat
Jesus blessed	Jesus blessed
Jesus broke	Jesus broke
Disciples gave	Disciples gave
12 baskets left	7 baskets left
All satisfied	All satisfied

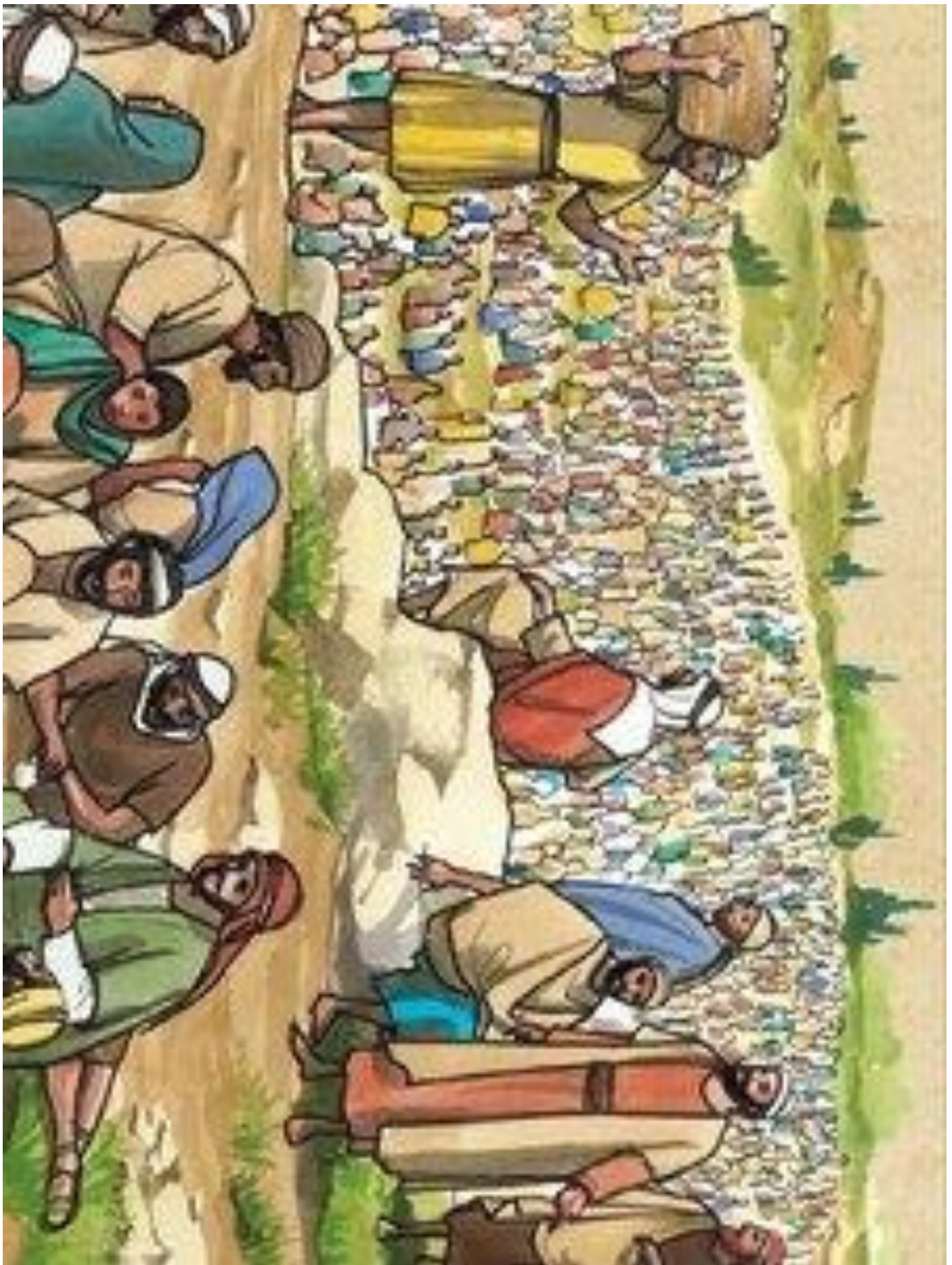


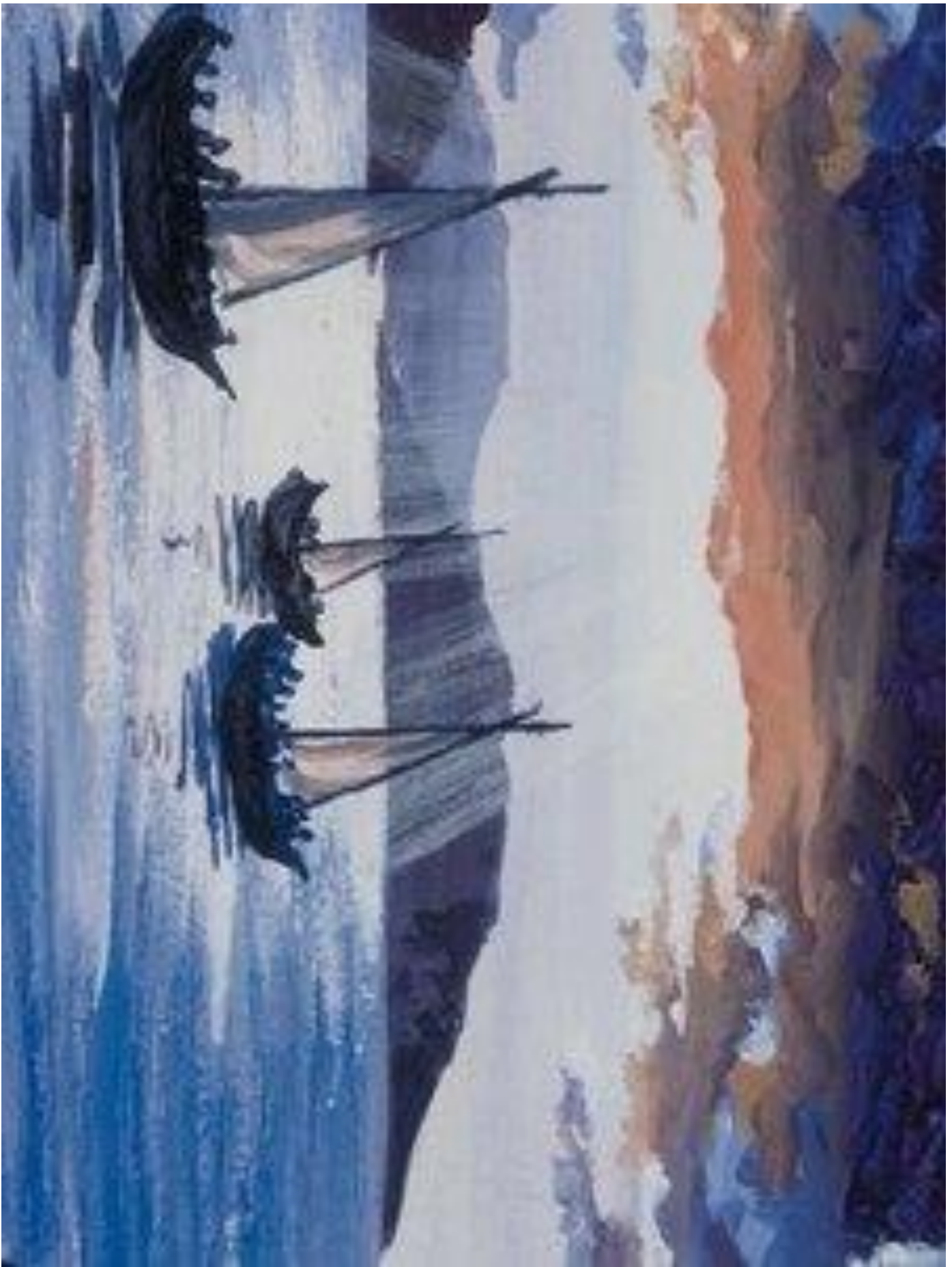


<http://gigapan.com/cms/about/finding-a-face-in-the-crowd-bruce-ely-captures-oregon-s-biggest-fans>
A crowd of about 17,000









28.58

Feeding 4000

Marilyn Alexander

Marilyn Alexander

Two times Je - sus fed a crowd with bread and fish.

3 This time there were four thou-sand men be - sides wo-men and child - ren.

5 This time sev - en loaves and a few fish fed the crowd.

7 This time sev - en bas - kets full of scraps re - mained.



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/289778557245051060/>