

Mark 6:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

Analysis

And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. The miracle's mechanics reveal pattern of blessing, breaking, and distributing that foreshadows the Eucharist. 'When he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes' (λαβὼν τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας, labōn tous pente artous kai tous dyo ichthyas)—Jesus received the inadequate resources. 'He looked up to heaven' (ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, anablepsas eis ton ouranon) directed attention to the Father as source. 'And blessed' (εὐλόγησεν, eulogēsen) gave thanks (Hebrew baruch, blessing God for provision). 'Brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them' (κατέκλασεν τοὺς ἄρτους καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ἵνα παρατιθῶσιν αὐτοῖς, kateklasen tous artous kai edidou tois mathētais autou hina paratithōsin autois)—the imperfect tense 'kept giving' (edidou) suggests continuous multiplication as He distributed. 'The two fishes divided he among them all' (καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας ἐμέρισεν πᾶσιν, kai tous dyo ichthyas emerisen pasin) shows both bread and fish multiplied. This sequence—taking, blessing, breaking, giving—mirrors Last Supper language (Mark 14:22) and became Eucharistic liturgy pattern.

Historical Context

Jewish meal blessings followed set formula: 'Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.' Jesus likely prayed similar berachah (blessing), acknowledging God as provider. The 'looking up to heaven' gesture demonstrated dependence on Father—though Son possessed divine power, His incarnate ministry consistently modeled submission to Father's will. The breaking of bread was practical (distributing pieces) but also symbolic (Christ's body broken for us). The disciples' role as distributors prefigured apostolic ministry: receiving from Christ what they distribute to others. They couldn't create bread but served as intermediaries delivering His provision. The multiplication's mechanics remain mysterious—Scripture doesn't explain whether bread multiplied in Jesus' hands, in disciples' hands during distribution, or in people's hands as they ate. The focus is divine provision, not miraculous mechanics. Ancient readers would recognize the miracle's extraordinary nature: even prophets like Elijah and Elisha performed much smaller multiplication miracles (1 Kings 17:16; 2 Kings 4:42-44). Jesus' feeding of thousands demonstrated unprecedented power.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the sequence 'took... blessed... broke... gave' foreshadowing the Last Supper teach that both physical and spiritual provision come through Christ's brokenness for us?
2. What does the disciples' role as distributors of bread they didn't create teach about ministry—receiving from Christ what we deliver to others?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	λαβὼν	τοὺς	πέντε	ἄρτους	καὶ	τοὺς	δύο
And	when he had taken	G3588	the five	loaves	And	G3588	the two
G2532	G2983		G4002	G740	G2532		G1417
ἰχθύας	ἀναβλέψας	εἰς	τὸν	οὐρανὸν	εὐλόγησεν	καὶ	
fishes	he looked up	to	G3588	heaven	and blessed	And	
G2486	G308	G1519		G3772	G2127	G2532	
κατέκλασεν	τοὺς	ἄρτους	καὶ	ἐδίδου	τοῖς	μαθηταῖς	
brake	G3588	loaves	And	gave	G3588	disciples	
G2622		G740	G2532	G1325		G3101	
αὐτοῖς	ἵνα	παραθῶσιν	αὐτοῖς	καὶ	τοὺς	δύο	ἰχθύας
them	to	set before	them	And	G3588	the two	fishes
G846	G2443	G3908	G846	G2532		G1417	G2486
ἐμέρισεν	πᾶσιν						
divided he	among them all						
G3307	G3956						

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 14:19 (Blessing): And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

Mark 7:34 (Parallel theme): And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

Luke 24:30 (Blessing): And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

1 Samuel 9:13 (Blessing): As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him.

Mark 14:22 (Blessing): And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

Colossians 3:17 (Parallel theme): And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Romans 14:6 (Parallel theme): He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (Parallel theme): Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Matthew 15:36 (Parallel theme): And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

Matthew 26:26 (Blessing): And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.