

Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Session 11, Twelve, John the Baptist, Feeds 5000 (Mark 6:7-44) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Jennings, Mark, Session 11, Twelve, John the Baptist, Feeds 5000 (Mark 6:7-44), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mark Jennings' lecture on Mark 6:7-44 analyzes several key events in the Gospel. The session begins with **Jesus sending out the Twelve Apostles** with specific instructions for their ministry, highlighting their role as extensions of his work. Interwoven is the narrative of **John the Baptist's beheading**, presented as a significant event emphasizing suffering within discipleship and contrasting Herod's banquet with a future one by Jesus. The lecture then returns to the **apostles' return and the miraculous feeding of the 5,000**, which Jennings interprets with potential Old Testament symbolism and as a compassionate act by a shepherd-like Jesus for a leaderless crowd, possibly primarily witnessed in its miraculous nature by the disciples.

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Jennings, Mark, Session 11 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → Mark).



**Jennings_Mark_Ses
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3. Briefing Document: Jennings, Mark, Session 11, Twelve, John the Baptist, Feeds 5000 (Mark 6:7-44)

Briefing Document: Mark 6:7-44 - The Sending of the Twelve, John the Baptist's Beheading, and the Feeding of the Five Thousand

Overview: This lecture analyzes Mark 6:7-44, focusing on the commissioning of the Twelve Apostles, the abrupt insertion of the narrative concerning John the Baptist's beheading, and the subsequent return of the disciples leading to the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Dr. Jennings highlights the literary structure of the "Markan sandwich," the themes of discipleship and suffering, the contrast between Herod's banquet and Jesus' provision, and the symbolic significance of the feeding miracle.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Commissioning of the Twelve (Mark 6:7-13):

- **Extension of Jesus' Ministry:** Jesus sends the Twelve out "two by two" (Mark 6:7), equipping them with "authority over evil spirits" (Mark 6:7). Their actions mirror Jesus' own ministry: "They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them" (Mark 6:12-13). Dr. Jennings emphasizes that the Twelve are an "extension of what Jesus' ministry has been so far."
- **Specific Instructions:** Jesus instructs them to "take nothing for the journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic" (Mark 6:8-9). This simplicity and lack of provision symbolize their dependence on God, echoing figures like Elijah and John the Baptist, and convey that "the value that they bring is in their message and in their ministry, not in their possessions."
- **Importance of Hospitality and Judgment:** They are to stay in a welcoming house until they leave the town, valuing the initial reception of their message and the virtue of hospitality. Conversely, if a place does not welcome them, they are to "shake the dust off your feet when you leave as a testimony against them" (Mark 6:11), a symbolic act of separation and judgment.

- **Two Witnesses:** The sending of the disciples in pairs likely reflects the "Old Testament injunction idea of the need for two witnesses to confirm something," providing verification of their message and miracles.

2. The Beheading of John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29):

- **The "Markan Sandwich":** This account is presented as an abrupt interruption within the narrative of the Twelve's mission and their return. Dr. Jennings notes this "Markan sandwich" structure, where one story is started, interrupted by another, and then resumed.
- **Significance Beyond a Side Story:** This is the "only episode in Mark's Gospel that does not directly concern Jesus," highlighting its importance. Dr. Jennings suggests that Mark includes this account because of its connection to the theme of discipleship and suffering, foreshadowing Jesus' own fate. He wonders if the flashback to John's martyrdom is related to the "component of discipleship that cannot be lost in the Gospel of Mark, which is the idea of suffering and suffering for the faith, the idea of taking up your cross as a model of discipleship."
- **Herod's Dilemma:** King Herod Antipas is perplexed by Jesus, with some suggesting he is John the Baptist raised from the dead or Elijah. Herod himself fears John, recognizing him as "a righteous and holy man" (Mark 6:20) and liking to listen to him, despite being "greatly puzzled" (Mark 6:20) by his message against Herod's unlawful marriage to Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.
- **Herodias' Grudge and Manipulation:** Herodias harbors a strong hatred for John due to his condemnation of her marriage and seeks his death. She manipulates her daughter into requesting John's head as a reward for her dance at Herod's birthday banquet.
- **Contrast with Jesus' Ministry:** Dr. Jennings draws a stark contrast between Herod's banquet, characterized by "disorder, debauchery, full of sin, murder, lying, manipulation," and the upcoming orderly and generous banquet provided by Jesus in the feeding of the five thousand. This juxtaposition emphasizes the difference between earthly, flawed power and the divine provision of Jesus.
- **Foreshadowing of Jesus' Death:** The gruesome details of John's beheading and the presentation of his head on a platter potentially foreshadow "Jesus' death in here, and the concern of public opinion, the concern of human designs, the ignominious way in which a death is done and presented."

3. The Return of the Twelve and the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Mark 6:30-44):

- **The Apostles' Report:** Upon their return, "the apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught" (Mark 6:30). Dr. Jennings notes that this is the only time Mark uses the term "apostle," highlighting their role as "sent ones, ambassadors."
- **Crowd's Interruption and Jesus' Compassion:** The overwhelming crowds prevent the disciples from even eating, mirroring a recurring theme in Mark. Jesus shows "compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34), a significant metaphor from the Old Testament referring to the lack of true leadership and guidance for the Jewish people.
- **Teaching as the Initial Response:** Jesus' compassion leads him to begin "teaching them many things" (Mark 6:34), emphasizing that the spiritual need precedes the physical one.
- **Disciples' Pragmatic Concern vs. Jesus' Solution:** The disciples suggest sending the people away to buy food, showing their awareness of the practical need. However, Jesus' response, "You give them something to eat" (Mark 6:37), challenges their limited perspective and sets the stage for the miracle. Their estimation that it would cost "eight months of a man's wages" (Mark 6:37, based on Dr. Jennings' translation) reveals their perceived impossibility of the task.
- **The Miracle of Provision:** Jesus pragmatically asks, "How many loaves do you have?" (Mark 6:38), and they find five loaves and two fish. After ordering the people to sit in "groups on the green grass" (Mark 6:39) in an orderly manner, reminiscent of the organization of Israel and potentially echoing Psalm 23 ("He makes me lie down in green pastures"), Jesus multiplies the food to feed everyone.
- **Symbolic Significance:** Dr. Jennings suggests potential symbolic imagery in the five loaves and two fish, though he leans towards it simply being what they had. He emphasizes the symbolism of the "messianic banquet" in the orderly seating and the green pasture imagery, pointing to the Lord's provision.
- **The Surplus and the Twelve Baskets:** The collection of "twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of fish and the loaves" (Mark 6:43) after everyone was satisfied could symbolize the inclusion of all of Israel (represented by the twelve tribes and potentially the twelve disciples).

- **Limited Awareness of the Miracle:** Dr. Jennings makes a crucial observation that unlike other miracles in Mark, there is "no account of amazement or wonder by the crowds" after the feeding. He posits that "only the disciples realize Jesus in the wilderness. Five loaves and two fish became enough to feed everyone," suggesting that this miracle primarily serves to further the disciples' understanding of Jesus and sets up the subsequent miracle of walking on water.

Conclusion: Mark 6:7-44 presents a complex interplay of themes related to discipleship, suffering, leadership, and divine provision. The sending of the Twelve demonstrates the extension of Jesus' authority and the demands of ministry. The jarring insertion of John the Baptist's beheading serves as a stark reminder of the cost of faithfulness and foreshadows Jesus' own suffering. Finally, the Feeding of the Five Thousand highlights Jesus' compassion and power, offering a contrasting image of abundance and order to the chaos and sin of Herod's court, and primarily functioning to deepen the disciples' understanding of Jesus' identity and mission.

4. Study Guide: Jennings, Mark, Session 11, Twelve, John the Baptist, Feeds 5000 (Mark 6:7-44)

Mark 6:7-44 Study Guide

Key Concepts and Themes

- **Discipleship and Mission:** The sending out of the Twelve demonstrates the extension of Jesus' ministry and introduces the theme of suffering as part of discipleship, foreshadowed by John the Baptist's martyrdom.
- **The "Markan Sandwich":** This narrative technique is evident in the interruption of the Twelve's mission report with the story of John the Baptist's death. Understanding this structure helps to see the intended connections between the stories.
- **Authority:** Jesus bestows authority over evil spirits and illness upon the Twelve, mirroring his own authority. This highlights the transfer of power and the continuation of his work.
- **Dependence on God:** The instructions given to the Twelve regarding what to take on their journey emphasize their reliance on God's provision and the value of their message over material possessions.
- **Reception and Rejection:** The instructions to shake the dust off their feet in unwelcoming places highlights the reality of rejection in ministry and draws a parallel to Jesus' own experience.
- **John the Baptist's Martyrdom:** This flashback serves to contrast Herod's earthly and flawed kingship with the coming Kingdom of God represented by Jesus, and underscores the cost of speaking truth to power. It also foreshadows Jesus' own suffering and death.
- **Public Opinion vs. Righteousness:** Herod's decision to execute John the Baptist reveals the danger of prioritizing public approval and oaths over one's conscience and the recognition of righteousness.
- **The Feeding of the 5,000:** This miracle demonstrates Jesus' compassion and provision, echoing Old Testament themes of God as shepherd and the miraculous feeding in the wilderness (manna). The orderly nature of the feeding contrasts with Herod's chaotic banquet and hints at a messianic banquet.

- **Understanding of Jesus' Identity:** The various opinions about Jesus' identity (John the Baptist raised, Elijah, a prophet) reveal the public's struggle to comprehend his true nature and mission.

Quiz

1. Describe the initial instructions Jesus gave to the Twelve when he sent them out. What did he authorize them to do?
2. Explain the narrative purpose of the "Markan sandwich" in this section of Mark. How does the story of John the Baptist interrupt and relate to the account of the Twelve?
3. What were the key reasons behind John the Baptist's arrest and eventual execution by Herod?
4. How did Herod react to John the Baptist, and what ultimately led him to order John's beheading despite his initial reservations?
5. What were some of the popular opinions circulating about Jesus' identity that Herod heard? Why were people speculating about these specific figures?
6. Describe the setting and the initial reason why Jesus and the disciples went to a "remote place." How was this plan disrupted?
7. What motivated Jesus to feed the large crowd in the wilderness? What specific metaphor does Mark use to describe the crowd's condition?
8. Summarize the disciples' initial response to Jesus' instruction to "give them something to eat." What does this reveal about their understanding at that moment?
9. Describe the miraculous feeding itself. What details emphasize its abundance and orderliness?
10. According to the lecture, who were the primary witnesses to the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, and what is notable about the crowd's reaction as described by Mark?

Answer Key

1. Jesus instructed the Twelve to take very little with them: only a staff, no bread, no bag, no money, sandals but not an extra tunic. He authorized them to preach

repentance, drive out demons, and anoint the sick with oil and heal them, mirroring his own ministry.

2. The "Markan sandwich" interrupts the report of the Twelve's successful mission with the tragic story of John the Baptist's beheading. This juxtaposition likely serves to highlight the theme of suffering and martyrdom as integral to following Jesus, contrasting the disciples' initial success with the cost of discipleship.
3. John the Baptist was arrested because he publicly denounced Herod's marriage to Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, stating it was unlawful. He was executed because Herod, bound by a rash oath made during a banquet and fearing disapproval from his guests, granted Herodias' vengeful request for John's head.
4. Herod feared John, recognizing him as a righteous and holy man, and enjoyed listening to him even though he was puzzled. However, during his birthday banquet, influenced by his oath and the presence of his high-ranking guests, he succumbed to Herodias' manipulative request to have John executed.
5. Some were saying Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead, explaining his miraculous powers. Others thought he was Elijah, or another prophet from long ago. These speculations reflected an attempt to categorize Jesus within familiar Old Testament prophetic figures known for their power and authority.
6. Jesus wanted to take the disciples to a remote and quiet place to rest because they were overwhelmed with ministry and hadn't even had a chance to eat due to the large crowds. This plan was disrupted when many people saw them leaving and ran ahead on foot from all the towns to meet them.
7. Jesus had compassion on the large crowd because they were "like sheep without a shepherd," indicating their lack of true spiritual guidance and leadership. His compassion motivated him to begin teaching them many things before the issue of their hunger arose.
8. The disciples responded by pointing out that they were in a remote place and it was late, suggesting Jesus should send the people away to buy food for themselves in the surrounding villages. Their response indicates a practical concern for the crowd's physical needs but a lack of understanding of Jesus' ability to provide miraculously.
9. Jesus directed the people to sit down in an orderly fashion in groups on the green grass. He then took the five loaves and two fish, looked up to heaven, gave

thanks, broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to distribute. Everyone ate and was satisfied, and twelve baskets full of leftover pieces were collected.

10. The lecture suggests that the primary witnesses to the miracle were the disciples. While the crowd was fed, Mark does not explicitly state their amazement, implying that the significance of Jesus' miraculous provision in the wilderness was particularly understood by the Twelve, setting up the subsequent account of Jesus walking on water.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the character of Herod Antipas as presented in Mark 6:14-29. What motivations and pressures influenced his actions, and what does this episode reveal about the nature of earthly power in contrast to Jesus' authority?
2. Discuss the significance of the instructions Jesus gives to the Twelve in Mark 6:7-13. How do these instructions reflect the nature of discipleship and the priorities of their mission?
3. Compare and contrast the two "banquets" described in Mark 6:7-44: Herod's birthday banquet and the feeding of the 5,000. What does Mark seem to be highlighting through this juxtaposition?
4. Explore the various ways in which the figure of John the Baptist functions in Mark's narrative, particularly in relation to Jesus' identity and the theme of suffering.
5. Examine the symbolism and significance of the feeding of the 5,000 in its immediate context within Mark 6:30-44 and in light of Old Testament parallels. What message is Mark conveying through this miracle?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Discipleship:** The state of being a follower or learner of Jesus Christ, involving adherence to his teachings and way of life.
- **Apostle:** (Used once in this passage referring to the Twelve) One who is sent out with authority to proclaim a message or carry out a specific mission.
- **Markan Sandwich (Intercalation):** A literary technique in Mark's Gospel where one story is inserted into the middle of another, often to draw thematic connections or create irony.
- **Authority:** The power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience. In the context of Jesus and the disciples, it refers to divine power over spiritual and physical realms.
- **Repent:** To feel sincere regret or remorse about one's sins and to turn away from them. This was a central theme of the preaching of both John the Baptist and Jesus.
- **Messianic Banquet:** A symbolic meal in Jewish eschatology representing the abundance and joy of the Messianic Age, when God's salvation is fully realized.
- **Martyrdom:** The suffering of death on account of adherence to a cause, especially religious beliefs, as seen in the death of John the Baptist.
- **Compassion:** A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is suffering or has been treated unfairly, accompanied by a desire to alleviate the suffering.
- **Shepherd (Metaphor):** In biblical tradition, a shepherd often symbolizes a ruler, leader, or God who guides, protects, and provides for their people.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the "end times" or the final destiny of humanity and the world, often associated with the coming of the Messiah and God's ultimate reign.

5. FAQs on Jennings, Mark, Session 11, Twelve, John the Baptist, Feeds 5000 (Mark 6:7-44), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Mark 6:7-44

1. What is the significance of Jesus sending out the Twelve disciples two by two? Jesus sending the Twelve out in pairs likely served multiple purposes. Practically, it offered increased safety and mutual support during their travels. Symbolically, it likely reflects the Old Testament requirement of two witnesses to confirm the truth of a matter (Deuteronomy 19:15), lending credibility to their preaching and the miracles they performed.

2. What were the main instructions Jesus gave to the Twelve when he sent them out? Jesus instructed the Twelve to take very little with them: only a staff, no bread, no bag, no money, to wear sandals but not an extra tunic. They were to stay in any house that welcomed them until they left that town. Their mission was to preach repentance, drive out demons, and anoint the sick with oil for healing, mirroring Jesus' own ministry. This lack of provision emphasized their dependence on God and the value of their message over material possessions.

3. Why does Mark interrupt the account of the disciples' mission with the story of John the Baptist's beheading? Mark's inclusion of John the Baptist's martyrdom within the narrative of the Twelve being sent out creates a "Markan sandwich." This juxtaposition highlights the theme of discipleship as involving potential suffering and sacrifice, foreshadowing Jesus' own suffering and death. It also contrasts the disordered and sinful banquet of Herod with the anticipated orderly and generous provision of Jesus in the feeding of the 5,000. Furthermore, John's fate serves as a stark reminder of the dangers faced by those who boldly proclaim God's truth.

4. How did King Herod react to hearing about Jesus' miracles? Herod Antipas, believing Jesus might be John the Baptist raised from the dead, was troubled and reminded of his own role in John's execution. The various opinions circulating among the people about Jesus' identity (John the Baptist, Elijah, or a prophet) reveal the growing recognition of his extraordinary nature and the attempts to categorize him within existing religious frameworks.

5. What motivated Herod to have John the Baptist arrested and ultimately executed?

John the Baptist openly condemned Herod's marriage to Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, as unlawful. While Herod initially feared and respected John, Herodias held a grudge and sought his death. Herod eventually succumbed to pressure and his oath made during a banquet, fearing public disapproval more than his conscience, leading to John's beheading.

6. What was the initial reaction of the disciples when faced with the hunger of the large crowd? The disciples, recognizing the late hour and the remote location, pragmatically suggested that Jesus should send the people away to buy food for themselves in the surrounding villages. Their concern highlights their awareness of the people's physical needs, even as Jesus had been focused on teaching them. They did not initially conceive of a miraculous solution.

7. What is the significance of Jesus' compassion on the crowd, described as "sheep without a shepherd"? Jesus' compassion stemmed from his recognition of the crowd's spiritual need, their lack of true guidance and leadership. The metaphor of "sheep without a shepherd" is a common one in the Old Testament, referring to a people vulnerable and lost without proper care. Jesus' response was to teach them, indicating that their primary need was spiritual nourishment and direction, which he provided before addressing their physical hunger.

8. What are some of the possible symbolic meanings and connections within the feeding of the 5,000 narrative? The orderly seating of the crowd on green grass may evoke Psalm 23 and the image of God as a caring shepherd providing for his flock. The potential connection to the manna in the wilderness and the imagery of a messianic banquet suggest that the feeding is more than just a miraculous provision of food; it symbolizes God's abundant care and the foreshadowing of a future time of plenty in the Messianic age. The twelve baskets of leftover food could represent the twelve tribes of Israel, highlighting the inclusivity and completeness of God's provision. Notably, the text does not explicitly state the crowd's amazement, potentially suggesting that the miracle's full significance was initially grasped primarily by the disciples.