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Discovery

Scripture & Science for Kids



A Feast FOR 5,000

BETHANY BUTT

Have you ever been skating or swimming, and having so much fun that you did not even want to stop to eat? Sometimes things seem so important to us that we put them before our physical needs. We read about a group of people who were so interested in what Jesus had to say and do that they would not stop to eat because they did not want to miss anything. This situation gave Jesus an opportunity to perform a miracle. This miracle, known as “the Feeding of the 5,000,” is one of the few miracles recorded by all four of the gospel writers.

Jesus had become an extremely popular and well-known man because of His miracles and His profound teachings. He had a very large crowd that followed Him. We read about this miracle in John 6. The Bible tells us that there were 5,000 men. (That number



does not even include the women and children!) When the time came to eat, the apostles came to Jesus to decide what should be done about the hungry crowd. It would have been very expensive to feed so many people. They knew that they did not have enough money. One of Jesus’ disciples, Andrew, found a young boy who had five barley loaves and two fish. Jesus took the loaves, thanked God for the food, and then He began to pass the loaves to everyone in the crowd. After He had passed bread to everyone, He distributed the fish.

The Bible tells us that the crowd ate until everyone was full, and then there still were twelve baskets of bread and fish left over! Can you imagine how surprised the young boy and the apostles must have been when they watched Jesus use the small meal to feed over 5,000 people? Sometimes, Jesus used things that may have seemed small and unimportant—such as one boy’s lunch—to accomplish great things. In the same way, even though we may feel small and unimportant sometimes, God can use us to accomplish great things.

A BEACON OF HOPE IN THE STORMS OF LIFE!

MELINDA HARRUB

(Open Your Bible to Matthew 14:22-33)

If you've ever taken a vacation near an ocean, you might have seen a lighthouse hovering over the shore. Lighthouses have always fascinated me because of the mystery and beauty that surround them. It's truly fascinating to behold such an enormous beacon of light showering its radiant beams over a deep, dark sea. Lighthouses were built for the purpose of helping ships navigate and remain on course when weather conditions made it difficult. America's first lighthouse was built in 1716 in Boston, Massachusetts—and today's lighthouses can project light as far as 21 miles out to sea! Lighthouses would have been useful in Bible times, as boats were a common way to travel.

On one occasion, Jesus commanded His disciples to enter into a boat and cross the Sea of Galilee without Him. After reaching the middle of the sea, the wind became so strong that it began tossing the disciples' boat among the waves. The darkness of the sky and raging sea must have caused the disciples to lose hope. Suddenly, their eyes caught sight of something—something they thought was a spirit or ghost. As the figure drew closer, Jesus called to them in order to calm their fears and let them know it was Him. Imagine how the disciples must have felt to see Jesus not sinking into the water! Peter (one of the disciples) asked the Lord for permission to come to Him onto the water. Jesus told Peter to come, and Peter began to walk on the water! However, the Bible tells us that Peter took his eyes off of Jesus and began to sink. Jesus immediately stretched out His hand to save Peter.

Jesus performed this miracle (and many others) as recorded in the Bible to prove that He was the Son of God. Miracles are not needed today because we have the Bible to confirm Jesus' identity and purpose. No one today has the ability to walk on water.

However, what a valuable lesson we can learn from Peter in this miraculous story. Undoubtedly, storms of life will cause us to feel hopeless and afraid on occasion. As Christians, we have a beacon of light that always shines to help us stay on course. All we must do is keep our minds focused on that light. Jesus is our beacon of hope in the storms of life!



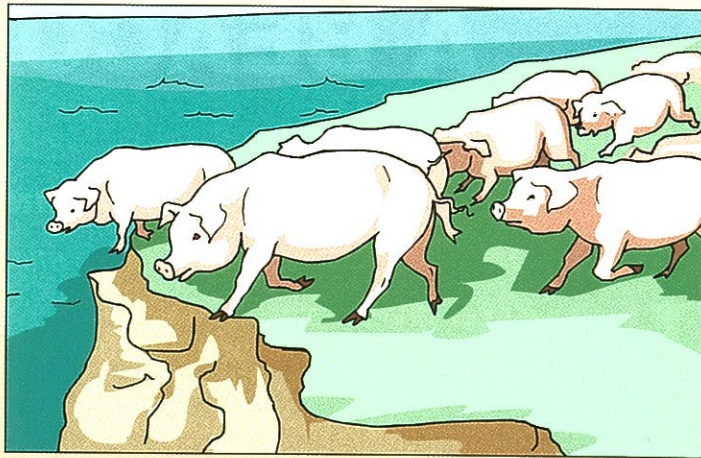
A MAN NAMED LEGION!

RHONDA THOMPSON

During the three short years Jesus preached, He performed many miracles (sometimes called “signs”). These signs were done not only to help people, but also to prove that He was really the Son of God. They were demonstrations of His great power, but they also showed His great compassion for people who were in desperate need.

Luke 8:26-39 tells us about one particular day when Jesus taught crowds of people and performed miracles until He was completely exhausted. That evening, He and the apostles sailed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to get some rest. But when they arrived at the eastern shore of the Sea, they were immediately met by “a man with an unclean spirit” (or “demon”). In fact, the man had so many unclean spirits that he was called “Legion” (a legion was a division of the Roman army of 6,000 men). He was violent and very strong—so strong that even chains could not hold him. He was a danger to others and to himself. He could not even live near anyone else; he had to live away from people in what we would call a graveyard.

In spite of the evil spirits, Legion saw Jesus a long way off and ran to worship Him. The poor man knew Jesus was God’s Son, and the demons



knew too! (see James 2:19). The unclean spirits even called Jesus the “Son of the Most High God.” The demons also knew that Jesus would heal the poor man by sending them out of him. The spirits begged Jesus to send them into a nearby herd of pigs—about 2,000 of them—instead of sending them to the “abyss.” [“Abyss” means “bottomless pit.”] The demons went into the herd of pigs, which immediately went wild, just like poor Legion had been. The pigs rushed down a steep hill into the sea and drowned.

The man who had been saved from the constant torment of evil spirits became calm and “in his right mind.” He was eager to learn more about Jesus and to tell others what Jesus had done for him. But the people of the nearby town were afraid. Instead of being happy that this poor man was in good health again, they asked Jesus to go away. They let their fear keep them from listening to the Son of God.



Some ancient tribes of people incorrectly believed that putting on masks would cause a person to be possessed by the demon that the mask represented.

DEMONS!

RHONDA THOMPSON

Demons or unclean spirits are hardly mentioned in the Old Testament. But they are mentioned many times in the four gospels as beings with evil powers. Often, demons controlled people and caused them to do things they would not ordinarily do. What is most important about these evil spirits is that they were always shown to be weaker than the all-powerful Son of God.

We do not know for certain where evil spirits came from. But we do know that some wicked angels rebelled against God and were thrown out of Heaven (read 2 Peter 2:4).

Today, there is no need to worry about being “possessed by an evil spirit.” The Bible says that there would come a time when God would cause the “unclean spirit to depart from the land” (Zechariah 13:2). We know, like those who saw Jesus cast out demons in the first century, that He is in control. And, as Christians, you can be sure that “the One who is in you [Jesus] is greater than the one who is in the world [Satan]” (1 John 4:4).

(Open your Bible
to John 2:1-11)

Water

TO
WINE

JANA LYONS

Have you been to a wedding lately? If you have, you probably saw a formal ceremony and then ate some cake and drank a glass or two of punch. The whole thing might have lasted about **an hour**. In New Testament times, marriage customs were much different. After the bride and groom received a blessing from the bride's parents, they would proceed to the groom's house where they were considered married. At the same time, there was a great feast at the groom's house that generally lasted about **a week**. Usually, friends, family, musicians, and singers would come. Obviously, it would take a lot of food and drink for a party that big. And it was very important to the groom's family that everyone had enough to eat and drink during the feast.

Once when Jesus and His disciples were invited to a wedding feast, they ran out of wine. [In the New Testament, the word "wine" often meant "grape juice."] Mary, Jesus' mother, wanted to help. No one had ever seen Jesus perform a miracle, but she believed He could do something to assist the groom's family. She told the servants to do whatever Jesus said.

In Jewish homes, there were stone



pots used to hold water for washing. Jesus directed the servants to fill six of these pots with water. Miraculously, the water changed to wine. The Bible never says that Jesus touched the water, nor shook the pots. He simply desired it to happen, and it did. Jesus changed the water to wine.

The servants then took a sample of the wine to the man in charge of the feast. The master of the feast did not know where the wine had come from, and was very surprised that what he was drinking was such good quality wine. The best wine was generally served first at wedding feasts, and then the cheaper wine later. But this time was different.

This was Jesus' first miracle (John 2:11). Not everyone knew exactly what happened, but those who did were even more convinced of the power that Jesus possessed. This was always the purpose of miracles: to prove that the words Jesus spoke were true and that Jesus was who He claimed to be—the Son of the all-powerful God.



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Editor: Kyle Butt, M.A.
 Associate Editor: Eric Lyons, M.Min.
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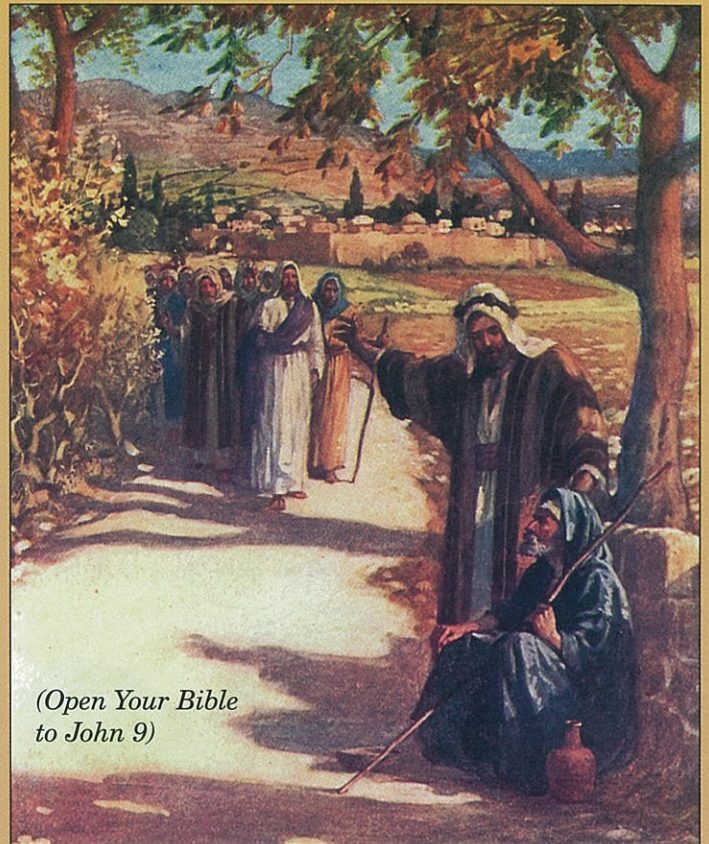
HIDE AND SEEK!

DEBORAH MILLER

Have you ever had to hide your eyes when playing Hide and Seek? Did it seem like a very long time before you could uncover your eyes and look for your playmates? What if you never again could uncover your eyes, and suddenly you were transformed into a land of complete darkness? You would then start to understand the land of the blind, but not the land of those who are **born** blind. This land is so very hard to understand, because in this land you never see anything **before** your eyes are covered.

If you never had seen the color blue, how would you describe blue to anyone else? When you leave your friends and your parents to go to summer camp or to visit your grandparents, your visit might be long enough to cause you to want to see a picture of those you left back at home to remind you how they look. If you live in the land of **congenital blindness** (blind from birth), you would never have seen the faces of your parents and friends, and you couldn't see the picture to remind you how they look.

Congenital blindness is very rare. Some towns do not have even one child who is blind, and even if they do, it might not be congenital. Jesus met a man who was blind from birth, and to show the greatness of God, He cured him. This miracle remains as great today as it was two thousand years ago, because modern medicine cannot cure congenital blindness. A great deal of blindness can be avoided or corrected, but not congenital blind-



(Open Your Bible to John 9)

ness. Jesus said that this man was not blind because of his sin or that of his parents. Jesus placed mud on the man's eyes and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The man obeyed and was cured. How amazing to obey a stranger that you never saw! Rather than rejoicing with this man and his parents, the leaders of the Jews unfairly criticized Jesus for performing this miracle on the Sabbath. Take a moment to rejoice over your sight the next time you play Hide and Seek!

ANSWERS

ACTIVITY PAGES MAY BE COPIED FOR MULTIPLE STUDENT USE

ACROSS: 3-Legion; 5-wedding; 6-Peter; 8-five; 10-congenital.
TRUE OR FALSE: 1-F; 2-T; 3-T; 4-F; 5-T; 6-F; 7-T; 8-F. **CROSSWORD:** **DOWN:** 1-demons; 2-sign; 4-Zechariah; 7-twelve; 9-digs; **MATCHING KNOWLEDGE WITH NUMBERS:** 1-F (5,000); 2-C (2); 3-B (6,000); 4-A (0); 5-B (About 2,000); 6-D (7).
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