

TEXT 1 Kings 17:1-16; Matthew 14:15-21

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Deuteronomy 8:3; Job 23:12; Jeremiah 15:16

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to relate that God has promised to provide in time of need, both physically and spiritually. For this the Christian should always give thanks.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD. — Psalm 92:1

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. — Ephesians 5:20

ANSWER TITLE: **Enough for Everyone!**

SEARCH TITLE: **Food and Water (Thanksgiving)**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The ANSWER key verse is taken from one of the best loved Psalms. David may have composed this Psalm while he was still a shepherd boy watching his father's sheep on the very same field where a thousand years later the angel choir announced the birth of Jesus.

Ahab was king of Israel, and son and successor of Omri. He began to reign about 874 B.C. He married an idolatress, Jezebel, who was the daughter of the king of Sidon. Through her ungodly influence, Ahab forsook Jehovah and became a Baal worshiper.

Six chapters are given to Ahab's reign, while only a part of one chapter is given to most of the kings. The reason is that it is largely the story of Elijah. Elijah was God's answer to Ahab and Jezebel who had substituted Baal for God. God sent Elijah to eradicate Baalism, a vile and

cruel religion. Elijah's rare, sudden, and brief appearances, undaunted courage and fiery zeal, and the brilliance of his triumphs, the pathos of his despondency, the glory of his departure, the calm beauty of his re-appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration, all make him one of the grandest characters Israel ever produced.

The feeding of the five thousand is the only one of Jesus' miracles told in all four Gospels. It occurred on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, just one year before Jesus' death. There He worked one of His most marvelous miracles for the Passover-bound multitudes. Notice His love of order as He made the people sit down in companies of fifties and one hundreds; also that He was not wasteful—He commanded that the leftovers be gathered up. The people were so impressed that they wanted Him to be king immediately.

YOUR OPENER

Food and Water (Thanksgiving)

TEXT: 1 Kings 17:1-16; Matthew 14:15-21

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Deuteronomy 8:3; Job 23:12; Jeremiah 15:16

KEY VERSE: Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. — Ephesians 5:20

Thanksgiving Day is a day appointed for the giving of thanks to the One who gives “life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). Christians recognize that God is the provider of spiritual as well as physical nourishment. This realization results in every day being a day of thankfulness to God.

RESPONSES

1. Allow time for your students to respond to the question. They should recognize that Elijah first obeyed God’s instructions to go hide himself by the brook Cherith, and there he was sustained. The conclusion should be reached that we, too, must be obedient if we expect God to sustain us.

2. At God’s command Elijah went to Zarephath, where God had commanded a widow woman to sustain him. Not only was Elijah taken care of, but so were the widow and her son. Had Elijah ignored following God’s directions, he most likely would have lost his life, and the widow and her son possibly would have perished as well. Point out that we also have a direct effect on others.

3. Jesus blessed and broke it. Your students should see the necessity of giving thanks for the provisions of the Lord. Bring out that because the disciples brought the food to the Lord, every person was fed. If the disciples had taken the food from the lad and distributed it without bringing it to the Lord, it may have fed three or four people but no more. Draw the parallel to any talent or ability we may have—if it is given or consecrated to the Lord, He will bless it. On the other hand, if we attempt to use this talent in our own strength, without seeking the blessing of the Lord, our efforts will be of little spiritual value.

1. During the first part of the famine, ravens brought Elijah food and he drank from the brook Cherith. What did he have to do before receiving this provision and what can we learn from his actions?

2. When circumstances change in our Christian life, we should realize that God won’t lead us down a dead-end street. Analyze and write what Elijah did after the brook dried up. Then write what could have happened had he not followed God’s leading.

3. In considering the first two questions, we can conclude that it is vital to obey the directions of the Lord. In so doing, we can then have genuine praise and thanksgiving for what He has done and know that He will supply our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). A good illustration of needs being supplied is in the Matthew portion of our text. When Jesus saw that the multitude was hungry, He commanded His disciples, “Give ye them to eat.” But the disciples were in a dilemma. They did not have enough food to feed 5,000 men plus women and children. There was a lad who had five loaves and two fishes, and this was taken to the Lord. What did Jesus do before giving the food to the disciples to distribute among the people? What lesson can we derive from this?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Referring to our physical needs, Jesus said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow . . ." (Matthew 6:34). What can we do to keep from being overly concerned about our physical needs? Support your answer with Scripture.

5. Man cannot survive long without eating, yet many are trying to live spiritually without a proper spiritual diet. List some items that you consider an important part of a healthy spiritual diet.

6. Read 1 Timothy 4:4,5. Why is it important to pray over our food before eating?

7. Referring to our key verse, and looking beyond the obvious blessings of food, clothing and shelter, what are some of the things that might be included in the "all things" for which we are to give thanks?

4. Lead the discussion to center around priorities and trust in God. References may include Psalm 37:3, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:19 among others. You may wish to broaden this discussion to consider instances in which Christians have suffered from hunger, privation or lack of other physical needs. Your students should see that provision is promised "according to his riches in glory." Ask your students what they feel is included in the word "riches," helping them recognize that God may allow physical discomforts, knowing that in the end it will be to the person's spiritual enrichment if he accepts these circumstances as part of God's refining process.

5. Answers may include: attending church, private devotions, memorizing Scripture, prayer. A suggested approach might be to set up a circle response, going around your class allowing each student an opportunity to offer a thought.

6. We have God's promise that He will sanctify our food if we accept it with a prayer of thankfulness. Knowing that it is God who provides, it is natural that those who love Him would want to return thanks.

7. Your students will come up with a variety of responses. Allow time for them to contribute their suggestions. Focus their attention on the fact that they should not take any of God's bountiful blessings for granted, and that He is pleased when they thank Him for specifics.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What are some of your needs? In what ways are these provided? In what ways do you feel deficient?

In what ways can we show our thankfulness to God?

When God says He will provide your needs, what do you think He means? What is the difference between needs and wants?

What would you say is a physical need? What would you say is a spiritual need?

Give an example from your own experience (or that of someone you know) of when God actually met some physical needs.

Name some other Biblical examples of God's supplying food and water for those in need.

What should be our attitude when God does fulfill our needs? Why is this so important?

Have you ever done something or given something to someone, only to have it met with indifference or ingratitude? What were your feelings?

In our Bible text, and also in the ANSWER story, we read about Jesus' feeding the hungry crowd who had gathered to hear Him. Why do you suppose He cared about the physical needs of these people? Does He feel the same about us today? Why or why not?

THINGS TO DO

Bring trick party candles that relight when blown out. Light, and then ask a volunteer to blow them out. They'll have to try to blow them out again and again. Compare this to a spirit of thankfulness. Thanking God is not something we do just once, but we must do it often. The reason is that he does not give just once, but again and again.

Show your students a jar of water and a Japanese dried flower that has seemingly sprung to life. (These can be bought at an Oriental shop.) The water is pure, and brings life, refreshment, fruitfulness and beauty. It cleanses, produces power and changes barren deserts into places of beauty. Some people are as barren deserts, and just as natural water can change a desert place into a garden, so can the Lord change mortal deserts into places of beauty. Jesus is the Living Water.

All that water can do in the natural, the Lord can do in the spiritual—cleanse, refresh, make lives fruitful and beautiful. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37).

Bring a lily bulb and a lily, or a picture of these. Jesus said, "Consider the lilies of the field." Look at the bulb—does it look as though anything beautiful could come out of it? But if you plant it, one day it will produce leaves and then a blossom—a miracle wrought by our heavenly Father. Discuss with the class how much God cares for the lily which has beauty for only a few days. Then, impress upon your students how much more He loves and cares for and will provide for each of them.

Bring pictures which show some ways that God provides for us, and have your students explain the pictures. Then discuss how God not only provides for our physical needs but also our spiritual needs.

Answers for ANSWER

He Will Provide

Read the text, Matthew 14:15-21. Fill in the missing vowels (A,E,I,O,U) and complete this story of how God provided for those with a need. It is not an exact quote.

In the eVenInG JEsUs' dIscIplEs
Asked JEsUs tO sEnd the mUltItude
AWAy sO they cOuld gEt sOmEthing
tO EAt. JEsUs tOId the dIscIplEs
they cOuld fEEd them. All there
wAs tO EAt wErE fIvE lOAvEs And
two fIshEs. ANEr JEsUs brOkE them
In pIcEs And gAVe them tO the
dIscIplEs tO fEEd the mUltItude.
EVeryOnE wAs fIllEd And there
wErE twElvE bAskEtS lEft.