

decapitated John, the speaker of prophecy, not accepting the head of all prophecy, Christ. Though they have the word of the prophets, they possess the word without its head, which is Christ.

**30-33. And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by boat privately. And the people saw them departing, and many recognized Him, and ran afoot thither out of all the cities, and arrived first, and came together unto Him.** After the apostles had preached, they gathered together unto Jesus, so that we too may learn, when we have been sent forth to serve in some manner, not to run heedlessly like a horse that has bolted, disregarding the One Who sent us, but to know Him as the Master and to return to Him, to tell Him all that we have both done and taught. For we must do, as well as teach. Christ gives rest to His disciples, so that those with authority in the Church again might learn to allow rest for those who toil in preaching the word and in teaching, and not continuously to keep them at their labors. They withdraw into a desert place to avoid vainglory, yet not even there are they able to escape the attention of those seeking the Lord. For the multitude made such haste lest He escape from them, that they even arrived first at the place where Jesus intended to give rest to the disciples. So also must you, O reader, anticipate Jesus, not waiting for Him to call you, but run on ahead so that you yourself arrive there before He does.

**34-40. And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came unto Him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto Him, shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? Go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And He**

**commanded them to make all sit down in groups upon the green grass. And they sat down in sections, by hundreds, and by fifties.** The Pharisees, in truth ravening wolves, were not shepherding the people, but devouring them. This is why the people left them and gathered together unto Christ the true Shepherd, Who gave them food: first, the food which is more beneficial and precious than all else, His words of teaching, and then He gave them food for the body as well. See what strides the disciples are making in acquiring compassion for others. For they took pity on the multitude, and then approached Christ to ask on their behalf. But the Lord tests them to see if the disciples have realized His power to feed the multitude, and says, "Give ye them to eat." But they reproach Him as if He did not understand how great was their poverty, and the size of the crowd. For they said, somewhat bitterly, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?" In the end He bids all the people to recline on the grass in groups, for this is the meaning of [the Greek word] *symposiai*, which signifies the separate groups of invited guests around each table. "And they sat down in sections," that is, in various divisions, for [the Greek word] *prasiai* means the various plots of a garden, in each of which a different vegetable is grown.

**41-44. And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, He looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided He among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.** He looks up to heaven, both to teach us to ask for our food from God, and not from the devil, which is done by those who seek their food by unrighteous means; and also to show the multitude that so far from being opposed to God [as the Pharisees claimed], He calls upon God. He gives to the disciples, so that by holding the loaves in their own hands, they will not forget the miracle. There are twelve baskets left over for the same reason, so that after each disciple had lifted a basketful on his shoulder, he would remember the miracle. An abundance of His power is displayed: not only are so many fed, but food is even left over. For if Moses gave manna, it was according to each one's need. And what was