



What the Bible Has to Say About Food

If asked to name any biblical passages about food, what would you imagine people would recall? famine in Egypt at the time of Joseph? water into wine? stones to bread? feeding of the four or five thousand? Here are some suggestions:

GENESIS

Within the providence of God, famine is one of the things that keeps his people on the move. Genesis is set in the history of a semi-nomadic people. The families and lives of Abraham (see 12:10), Isaac (see 26:1), Jacob (see 25:29–34), and Joseph (see 41:22–32) are all influenced by hunger and famine.

EXODUS

The land God promises to Moses when he meets him at the burning bush is described in terms of its abundant food—a land flowing with milk and honey (see 3:8).

The accounts in Exodus of the Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness are not just to provide the history of a people but to demonstrate, in key passages such as Exodus 16:1—17:7, the need to rely on God for provision.

PSALMS

God's character is portrayed as one who does not wish to see the hungry suffer (see 107, 146).

EZEKIEL

A Godly person is one who feeds the hungry (see 18:7,16).

GOSPELS

The Gospels demonstrate that Jesus, too, is Lord over food. As God provided food in the wilderness for our forefathers, so Jesus can provide for every human need:

- » feeding of the five thousand (see Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:30–44, Luke 9:10–17, John 6:1–14)
- » feeding of the four thousand (see Matthew 15:29–39, Mark 8:1–10)
- » water into wine (see John 2:1–10)
- » miraculous catches of fish (see Luke 5:1–11, John 21:1–14)

But Jesus also uses imagery of food to teach about spiritual nourishment. He emphasizes, especially in John's Gospel, that people should seek him, for he is real bread, the Bread of Life (see John 6:48–51), and living water (see John 4:13–14).

In his temptation in the wilderness, Jesus resists the idea of turning stones to bread (see Matthew 4:1–4, Luke 4:1–4), pointing to the word of God as the source of life and sustenance. He also teaches about fasting (see Matthew 6:16–18, Matthew 9:14–15, Mark 2:18–20, Luke 5:33–35).

In possibly the most famous parable of all, Jesus shows the Prodigal Son's being driven back to his father by hunger (see Luke 15:11–32).

There is a contrast in the Gospels: Don't worry about your own food (see Matthew 6:25). Do worry about the hungry. The righteous are those who feed them (see Matthew 25:31–46).

REVELATION

Famine is one of the pictures of final judgment (see 6:8, 18:8).

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WORLD VISION RESOURCES educates Christians about global poverty, inspires them to social justice, and equips them with innovative resources to make a difference in the world. By developing biblically-based materials for educators and ministry leaders on the causes and consequences of global poverty, World Vision Resources supports the organizational mandate to move the church in the United States to more fully embrace its biblical responsibility to serve the poor.



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