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32: *God Provides & Satan Lies* (Matthew 15:29-16:12)

If the teachings of the Bible could be condensed into one simple phrase, it might go something like this: **God Provides & Satan Lies**. Today we see Jesus compassionately provide for needy people while the religious leaders show up to put Jesus to the test, just like Satan did. Now the question is, who are *YOU* going to trust - God who Provides OR Satan who Lies?

beourguest

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teachingnotes

Jesus Had a Gentile Ministry?

Matthew 15:29-30 (NIV) Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them.

Matthew doesn't tell us WHERE Jesus went to **along the Sea of Galilee**. Mark does. Here's what Mark writes.

Mark 7:31 (NIV) Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the **Decapolis**.

Capernaum was the home base of Jesus ministry in Galilee. **Gadarenes** is where Jesus cast the demons out of 2 men into a herd of 2000 pigs (Mt 8:28-34). **The Decapolis** is comprised of **10 Gentile cities**, where Jesus and His disciples have now traveled to. Mark gives us a glimpse into the personal touch of the Lord Jesus to those in need.



Mark 7:32-37 (NIV) There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him. After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means "Be opened!"). At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly. Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. People were overwhelmed with amazement. **"He has done everything well,"** they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Mark then transitions to tell the same account that we pick back up in Matthew's account.

Matthew 15:30-31 (NIV) Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

We have heard these kinds of stories so often that we can take them for granted. Think about what this would look like if this is *YOUR* friend, *YOUR* family member...or *YOU*!!!

This largely Gentile audience didn't praise the pagan statues and monuments honoring the various gods of the Greek pantheon that now been excavated¹; instead, **they praised the God of Israel**.

Matthew 15:32-33 (NIV) Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way." His disciples answered, "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?"

These people had been with Jesus for **three days**. What miracles had they seen?! What teachings had they heard?! This is not the story from Mt 14:13-21 of the feeding of the 5000+. These are 2 different stories that Jesus later mentions (Mt 16:9-10).

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., Matthew, vol. 2, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 477.

Different Story, Same Outcome

Matthew 15:34-38 (NIV) "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Seven," they replied, "and a few small fish." He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. **They all ate and were satisfied.** Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was four thousand men, besides women and children.

The earlier miracle of feeding 5000+ resulted in **12 baskets being left over** - likely representing the 12 tribes of Israel and the Lord providing for His 12 apostles.

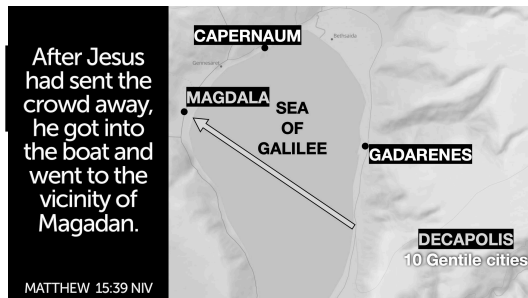
❓ Why **7 basketfuls** left over? We don't know for sure.

- Some think it could represent the 7 Gentle nations that Israel conquered and ran off when they entered the Promised Land (Deut 7:1; Acts 13:19).²
- Since **seven** is often the number symbolizing perfection/completion, it could symbolize the fullness of God meeting the needs of all people - Jews & Gentiles.

✓ Jesus has now demonstrated He is the Jewish Messiah who has come to feed the hungry souls of both Jews & Gentiles!

GOD PROVIDES

🌟 **John Beck:** "The geography of forgiveness extended to every shoreline."³



Many scholars believe **Magadan** is a variant spelling for **Magdala**, home of Mary Magdalene.⁴

Matthew 16:1 (NIV) The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

Here we see **the Pharisees and Sadducees** working together. We have not seen the Sadducees mentioned by Matthew since Mt 3:7, where **the Pharisees and Sadducees** had come to question John the Baptist about his unorthodox practices (Mt 3:7-11). John called them "a brood of vipers".

While Pharisees and Sadducees served together on the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Supreme Court), they were generally more enemies than friends - *they worked together when they had to, but they really didn't like it.* But now these unlikely partners forged an alliance and **came to Jesus and tested him** - "tested" - the same term used when Satan tempted/**tested** Jesus in the wilderness saying, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." (Mt 4:1-3)

They **tested** Jesus and asked Him for yet another **sign from heaven**. *Had Jesus not given enough signs?* - Healing all kinds of diseases, casting out demons, feeding thousands from a tiny meal? Nothing would be enough for the Pharisees. These men had already made up their mind, already plotting to kill Jesus (Matthew 12:14).

GOD PROVIDES & SATAN LIES

While **GOD PROVIDES, SATAN LIES** so that most of the religious leaders seemed blinded to truth about who Jesus is.

2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV) The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Despite all the signs Jesus has given, they refuse to see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Jesus, the Messiah. So, like Satan did, they **tested** Jesus and demanded another **sign** from Him.

The Sign of Jonah

Matthew 16:2-4 (NIV) He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away.

These folks knew how to interpret the weather but turned a blind eye to all that Jesus had done and said. Jesus refuses to act like a magician to put on a show for these highly educated religious leaders. Instead, Jesus refers to them as **a wicked and adulterous generation** - WOW!!! There is only one **sign** that Jesus will show - **the sign of Jonah**. Jonah was swallowed by **a huge fish**, stuck in there for **3 days**, yet was ultimately rescued from this smelly, watery grave. So too, Jesus points to His future resurrection from the dead as the ultimate "**sign**" that He has come from heaven.

² John A. Beck, "The Geography of Forgiveness," in Lexham Geographic Commentary on the Gospels, ed. Barry J. Beitzel and Kristopher A. Lyle, Lexham Geographic Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 261-262.

³ Beck, 264.

⁴ Michael J. Wilkins, Matthew, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 542.

Matthew 16:5-10 (NIV) When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread." Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?"

How quickly we forget God's provision in our lives, just as the disciples seemed to be concerned about lack of food, despite Jesus having fed thousands on two different occasions.

❓ **Have you ever taken an inventory of what God has provided for YOU?**

- How many *meals* have you eaten? How many *illnesses* has God healed you of? How many *clothes* has God clothed you with? How many *friends* has God put in your life? How many *sins* has God forgiven you for? How many *tough times* has God walked with you through? How many times has God spoken to you from the Scriptures & through His people?



Write down the ways God has provided for you. When the moment comes when you lack faith, pause to remember the ONE who is faithful!

Satan's Blind Guides

Matthew 16:11-12 (NIV) How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Satan tactically places his pawns to make sure the blind lead the blind (Mt 15:14), and Jesus is making sure to warn His disciples about these false leaders. Jesus will soon begin to talk about something His disciples had never considered to be an option - His DEATH. Jesus has come to earth to do more than heal & teach, **He has come to make a payment** - a payment that no one else could make - the way that GOD PROVIDES eternal life for us!

GOD PROVIDES & SATAN LIES

- ❓ If you could go back and do it over, how many times would you have paused and remember how GOD PROVIDES instead of giving into SATAN'S LIES?
- ❓ Feeling guilty? Feeling ashamed? Turn to the GOD who PROVIDES.

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156), **Mark & Dot Mancil** (850-253-5405), **Boss & Amelia Mulkey** (850-464-6717), or **Tom & Martha Waddail** (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. **Read Mark 7:31-37.** How does Mark's Gospel help give us more insight into *WHO* Jesus is likely ministering to? Take a moment to discuss the personal touch of Jesus along with what the people thought of Him.
2. **Read Matthew 15:30-31.** If this crowd *is* mostly Gentile, what is the significance of them "praising the God of Israel"?
3. **Read Matthew 15:32-38.** What is similar/different in this account compared to the previous feeding near Tyre & Sidon (see Mt 14:13-21)? Have you ever considered how Jesus feeding both the Jews & Gentiles is a fulfillment of the ancient prophecy from Gen 18:18 & 26:4? Explain your answer.
4. **Read Matthew 16:1-12 & 2 Cor 4:4.** Why does Jesus warn His disciples of the Pharisees and Sadducees and their teachings? Since these religious leaders are so opposed to Jesus - testing Him like Satan did (cf. Mt 4:1-3, Mt 16:1) and wanting Him dead (Mt 12:14) - how is it obvious that Satan is involved?
5. Take a few moments to discuss a) How God has PROVIDED for you b) how Satan has LIED to you.
6. What challenged or encouraged you *most* from today's teaching? What does God want YOU to do with what we studied today?
7. Share prayer needs and pray for one another.