

The Feeding of the Four Thousand
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Text: Mark 8:1-10 (see also Matt. 15:22-38)

Gospel of Mark: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th Edition Paragraph Topic: The Feeding of the Four Thousand

Central Idea of Message: Just as Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 had represented his miraculous ministry and provision for the Jews, the feeding of the 4,000 represents his miraculous ministry and provision for the Gentiles.

Introduction: Just as Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 had represented his miraculous ministry and provision for the Jews, the feeding of the 4,000 represents his miraculous ministry and provision for the Gentiles. In other words, since the Jewish mind divided all people into two categories - Gentiles and Jews - the miraculous ministry of Jesus and his subsequent provisions are open to all people willing to come to him in faith. This had to be exciting news for Mark's mostly Gentile readers to see reaffirmed repeatedly in Mark's narrative of the life and times of Jesus the Messiah. Here is Mark's account of the feeding of the 4,000.

I. The Setting (vv. 1-5)

- A. Another hungry crowd (v. 1)
 - 1. "Again": Mark wants his readers to know that this is a different miracle from the feeding of the 5,000 previously recorded in Mark 6:32-44
 - 2. There was a great multitude with nothing to eat
 - 3. Jesus called his disciples
- B. The compassion of Jesus (v. 2)
 - 1. He said that he felt compassion for the multitude
 - 2. The people had remained with him for three days
 - a) Wow! You think I preach a long time!
 - b) Constant attendance
 - c) Three days they had been with him listening to him teach and preach
 - d) Some may have had some food on day one, but they hadn't packed enough to feed themselves or others for three days
 - e) I suppose that anyone listening to a preacher pretty much non-stop for three days, at least

during daylight hours, deserved a little perk of some sort!

- C. The concern of Jesus (v. 3)
 - 1. He was concerned that if he sent them away hungry that some might faint along the way home
 - 2. He knew that some had come from great distances to see and hear him
 - 3. These people had not only journeyed long distances to see and hear Jesus, but also had taken off from their daily work to stay with him for three days
 - a) That must have been awesome!
 - b) A three-day spiritual seminar with Jesus as the professor!
 - c) Makes we wonder how many he had started with on day one
 - d) Had anybody walked away after day one?
 - e) Had anybody walked away after day two?
 - f) Why did he wait until day three to feed them?
 - g) There are some valuable principles to be learned from this, which we will review in our conclusion
- D. The question of the disciples to Jesus (v. 4)
 - 1. Where could they find enough bread to satisfy everybody?
 - 2. No mention here of cost or buying bread
 - 3. It is as if they did not consider another miraculous feeding
 - 4. Or did they think Jesus needed at least some bread to start multiplying it into more bread?
- E. The question of Jesus to the disciples (v. 5)
 - 1. "How many loaves do you have?"
 - 2. They answered, "Seven"
 - a) Jesus did not ask them how many loaves they had found but how many they had
 - b) Apparently the seven loaves of bread were what the Twelve themselves had
 - c) But this was enough, for Jesus did not instruct the disciples to go and search for more loaves or for someone with fish or peanut butter, or Oreo cookies

II. The Feeding (vv. 6-10)

- A. Jesus directed the crowd to sit down on the ground (v. 6)
 - 1. Had they been standing while listening to him preach, only reclining when sleeping at night?

2. Jesus took hold of the seven loaves of bread supplied by the disciples
 - a) He gave thanks [maybe this is why we pray and thank God for our food right before we eat]
 - b) He broke the loaves into pieces and started distributing the fragments to the Twelve, who, in turn, served them to the people
 - c) **He took, he broke, he blessed are all past tense [Aorist] words, whereas the tense [Imperfect] for the word gave indicates that he kept on giving**
 - d) **Detailed textual clues like these reflect the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in what was written, for mere human penmanship would ordinarily be far less meticulous with verb and participle tenses**
- B. The disciples also had a few small fish (v. 7)
 1. Jesus blessed these as well
 2. After blessing them, he ordered them to be served to the people also
- C. The people ate and were satisfied (v. 8)
 1. If I have not eaten for three days, I would need a lot of food to satisfy me!
 2. Everybody ate and everybody was satisfied
 3. The disciples picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces
 - a) Different word for basket than what was used in the feeding of the 5,000 men
 - b) The word used here [**σπυρίς**] is for a very large basket
 - c) This difference and several others help distinguish this feeding as separate from the feeding of the 5,000 in Mark 6:32-44 (cf. Godwin 69; Lane 272; Turlington 330; Wessel 686; Wiersbe, *Outlines*, 121)
 - d) See also Jesus' words in Mark 8:19-20
- D. The number was estimated to have been about 4,000 men (v. 9)
 1. About 4,000 men, not counting women and children, were fed and then sent on their way home
 2. Now, there was no concern that anybody would faint from hunger while journeying home
 3. Staying had certainly been worth the wait!
- E. After feeding the 4,000 and sending them away, Jesus and his disciples entered a boat (v. 10)

1. And went to the district of Dalmanutha
2. Also known as Magadan or Magdala (cf. Wessel 687)
3. The region of the Decapolis [ten cities] (cf. Wuest 1:159)

Conclusion: Principles.

(1) Just as Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 had represented his miraculous ministry and provision for the Jews, the feeding of the 4,000 represents his miraculous ministry and provision for the Gentiles.

(2) Staying with Jesus has its rewards, although they may be delayed in coming.

(3) Jesus cares about the every day, ordinary needs of people, like eating.

(4) Being nurtured spiritually takes great patience and personal discipline, in other words we need to be relentless in our pursuit of hearing God's word.

(5) Some things in life are more important than eating.

(6) Jesus will fill us up if we stick around long enough to let him.

(7) No matter how much grace Jesus gives out, there is always more than enough to go around and plenty leftover for everybody else.