
Two Miraculous Feedings

Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-38

Matthew, in these two passages records two separate miracles of **Christ**, both involving the feeding of a great multitude of people. In **Matthew 14** there is the account of **Christ** feeding “*five thousand men, beside women and children*” (**verse 21**), a multitude of well over **5,000** people. In **Matthew 15** there is the account of **Christ** feeding “*four thousand men, beside women and children*” (**verse 38**), a multitude of well over **4,000** people.

The miracle of the “*FEEDING OF OVER FIVE THOUSAND*” in addition to being recorded by **Matthew**, is also recorded by **Mark (6:30-44)**, by **Luke (9:10-17)**, and **John (6:1-14)**. Other than the **resurrection of Christ**, this is the only miracle recorded by all four Gospel writers. The miracle of the “*FEEDING OF OVER FOUR THOUSAND*” in addition to **Matthew’s** account, is also recorded by **Mark (8:1-9)**. Only **Matthew** and **Mark** record both miracles.

I. THE SETTING OF BOTH MIRACLES

① **The Place Of Both Miracles:**

The **feeding of over 5000** took place in “*a desert belonging to the city of Bethsaida*” (**Luke 9:10**). This was on the northeastern shore of the **Sea of Galilee**, and was predominately **Jewish**.

The place where the **feeding of over 4000** took place is determined from **Mark’s** account. Though **Mark** does not tell where the miraculous feeding took place, he does say in reference to the miracle “*In those days*” (**8:1**), referring back to **7:31** when **Jesus** was passing through “*the midst of the coasts of Decapolis*” This was on the southeastern coasts of the **Sea of Galilee**, and was predominately a **Gentile** region.

② **The Background Of Both Miracles:**

In the **feeding of over 5000**, **John the Baptist** had been beheaded, and the **apostles**, after they had buried him “*went and told Jesus*” (**Matthew 14:12**). **Mark** records “*the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus and told Him all things*” (**Mark 6:30**). The **apostles** with broken hearts, with hearts full of sorrow, anxiety, and perhaps anger **went and told Jesus!** **THEY GATHERED THEMSELVES UNTO JESUS, AND TOLD HIM ALL!** After telling **Jesus**, He said unto them “*Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile*” (**Mark 6:31**). **Luke** records “*And He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place*” (**Luke 9:10**). In going and telling **Jesus**, there was

fellowship, rest, comfort, and refreshment! The people of that region saw **Jesus** and the **apostles** departing, and came unto them (**Matthew 14:13; Mark 6:33**). Over **5000** people had gathered! **Jesus** looked upon this great multitude of men, women, and children, with much compassion, and healed many of them, and taught them (**Matthew 14:14; Mark 6:34**).

In the **feeding of over 4000**, **Jesus** had just healed the daughter of the **Syrophenician** woman, and had left **Tyre and Sidon** (**Mark 7:31**), going into a mountain (**Matthew 15:29**), and a great multitude gathered unto Him, with their sick, and He healed them (**Matthew 15:30-31**). This went on for three days, and Jesus looked upon them with compassion (**Matthew 15:32; Mark 8:2**).

③ ***In Both Miracles There Arose A Need:***

In the **feeding of over 5000**, **Matthew, Mark, and Luke** all record that **it was getting past meal time**, (**Matthew 14:15; Mark 6:35; Luke 9:12**). **THE PEOPLE WERE HUNGRY!**

In the **feeding of over 4000** **Jesus** said of the multitude *“they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat”* (**Matthew 15:32; Mark 8:2**), and many of them had come a great distance (**Mark 8:3**).

④ ***In Both Miracles The Place That They Were In Was Not Conducive To The Need That Had Arisen:***

In the **feeding of over 5000** **Matthew, Mark, and Luke** all say in reference to the people’s need to eat, that they were in *“a desert place”* (**Matthew 14:15; Mark 6:35; Luke 9:12**).

In the **feeding of over 4000** both **Matthew** and **Mark** refer to the fact that they were in a *“wilderness”* (**Matthew 15:33; Mark 8:4**).

⑤ ***In Both Miracles There Was A Lack Of Material Means:***

In both miracles **Christ** caused the **apostles** to recognize the insufficiency of what they had. In the **feeding of over 5000** **Jesus** gave a command *“give ye them to eat”* (**Matthew 14:16; Mark 6:37; Luke 9:13**), and He asked **Philip** *“Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”* (**John 6:5**). The command and the question caused them to realize the insufficiency of what they had. **Matthew** records *“We have here but five loaves and two fishes”* (**Matthew 14:17**). **Mark** records *“Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth (200 days wages, 55% of a yearly income) of bread, and give them to eat?”* [**Mark 6:37**]. **Luke** records *“We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for this people”* (**Luke 9:13**). **John** records that **Philip** calculated *“Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little”* (**John 6:7**), and that **Andrew** said *“There is a lad*

here, which hath **five barley loaves, and two small fishes, but what are they among so many?**" (**John 6:9**). THEY REALIZED THAT WHAT THEY HAD WAS NOT SUFFICIENT!

In the **feeding of over 4000** the **apostles** were overwhelmed with the need at hand (**Matthew 15:33; Mark 8:4**), and in response to such, **Jesus** asked them a question "**How many loaves have ye?**" (**Matthew 15:34; Mark 8:5**). THEY REALIZED THAT WHAT THEY HAD WAS NOT SUFFICIENT! IN BOTH MIRACLES THEY CALCULATED, BUT LEFT CHRIST OUT OF THEIR CALCULATIONS!

⑥ **The Apostles Proposed A Solution To The Problem At Hand:**

In the **feeding of over 5000**, **Matthew, Mark, and Luke** all record, that when they realized the problem that they had, they suggested that **Christ** send the multitude away, so that they could buy themselves food (**Matthew 14:15; Mark 6:36; Luke 9:12**). IN THEIR MINDS THIS WAS THE ONLY SOLUTION!

⑦ **Christ Commanded The Apostles To Do The Impossible:**

In the **feeding of the over 5000**, **Jesus** said in response to the **apostle's** proposed solution to the problem, "**they need not depart**" (**Matthew 14:16**), and then He said "**give ye them to eat**" (**Matthew 14:16; Mark 6:37; Luke 9:13**). THIS WAS A COMMAND TO DO SOMETHING THAT WAS ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE IN THEIR EYES! In response to the command, they focused upon how little they had (**Matthew 14:17; Mark 6:37; Luke 9:13**).

II. CHRIST'S MIRACULOUS PROVISION

① **The Paltry Means In The Hands Of Christ:**

In both miracles, **Christ** commanded the multitude to sit on the ground, in the **feeding of the over 5000** "**they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties**" (**Mark 6:39**). EVERYTHING WAS DONE IN AN ORDERLY FASHION! In both miracles **Christ** took the material means that they had, prayed, and gave the bread and fish to the **apostles** to distribute to the multitudes in an orderly fashion (**Matthew 14:19; Mark 6:41; Luke 9:16; John 6:11; Matthew 15:36; Mark 8:6**). In the **feeding of the over 5000**, **Matthew, Mark, and Luke** all record "**And they did all eat and were filled**" (**Matthew 14:20; Mark 6:42; Luke 9:16**), and **John** wrote that they ate "**as much as they would**" and that "**they were filled**" (**John 6:11-12**). In the **feeding of the over 4000**, both **Matthew** and **Mark** record that they ate "**and were filled**" (**Matthew 15:37; Mark 8:8**). EACH PERSON IN THOSE MULTITUDES COULD TAKE AS MUCH AS THEY WANTED! In both miracles PALTRY MEANS IN THE HANDS OF CHRIST WERE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO FEED AND ABUNDANTLY SATISFY A MULTITUDE!

② ***In Both Miracles There Was A Leftover:***

In both miracles attention is drawn to that which was leftover after the multitude had eaten (**Matthew 14:20; Mark 6:43; Luke 9:17; John 6:12-13; Matthew 15:37; Mark 8:8**). By definition a “**fragment**” is “**a part broken away, a broken or detached piece**” so the “**fragments**” are not merely the crumbs or the debris left over from the meal, but **the unused portion!** It did not matter how many thousands there were, or how little their resources, **THERE WAS ENOUGH FOR ALL, AND MORE!** **Jesus** placed some significance on the amount of leftovers from both miracles (**Mark 8:18-21**).

○ *In Both Miracles The Remainder After The Feast Was Greater Than When The Banquet Began.*

○ *There Was Most Left When There Was Least To Begin With.*

What They Begin With	What They End With
<u>Five</u> Loaves	<u>Twelve</u> basketfuls
<u>Seven</u> Loaves	<u>Seven</u> basketfuls

○ *There Was Less Visible Means When There Was Most To Be Done. Most Was Done When There Was Least To Do It With.*

○ *When There Was Most Eaten, There Was Most Left. The **5000** Left More Than The **4000**.*

These two miracles illustrate the **sufficiency** and **ability** of **Christ** to more than provide for the needs of man. **THERE IS NO NEED BEYOND HIS SUFFICIENCY AND ABILITY!** These two miracles illustrate that whatever our resources, **THEY ARE MORE IN THE HAND OF CHRIST THAN IN OUR HANDS!** These two miracles illustrate that **material means are not the determining factor in what can be done**, but **Christ!** These two miracles serve as a reminder, that **in all our calculations DO NOT LEAVE OUT CHRIST!**
