

Episode #820 Matthew 15 Part 4-Feeding the Four Thousand

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. Last time, the Lord taught that His commission with authority was only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Yet when a Gentile woman believed His words that she was a puppy dog, took the puppy’s place, and asked for the puppy’s portion, He gave it to her and said she had great faith. Today, we are considering His second feeding of the multitude.

III. Feeding the Four Thousand. Matthew 15:29-39.

- A. Verse 29. These mountains were not like the Rockies, but more rolling hills like the Ozarks or the mountains in California. Sitting was the common position for teaching.
- B. Verse 30. Notice the crowds He attracted! Maimed are those disfigured in some way. His healings were just this simple, with no fanfare. This was the power of the Lord and the demonstration of the Kingdom.
- C. Verse 31. The Greek is short and straightforward: dumb speaking, maimed whole, lame walking, and blind seeing. God’s glory was the ultimate purpose of the healings!
- D. Verse 32. Bullinger points out that it is not “three days and three nights,” but just “three days,” so this is inclusive reckoning, including the day they arrived and this day. He did not desire (will) to see them become exhausted from lack of food.
- E. Verse 33. The “wilderness” was the uninhabited place, where they were, and where food is not readily available. The disciples do not spend so much time calculating as they did the first time, having already seen that miracle. Perhaps they were hoping that He would tell them to miraculously feed them this time, as He did last time. Or perhaps they are not expecting another miracle, still caught up in practicalities.
- F. Verse 34. The bread was not loaves but biscuits again. This was a larger amount this time. The fish are dried, small like anchovies or sardines. The previous fish were maybe tilapia sized, but this is the word for little fish.
- G. Verse 35. “Ground” is the Greek word *ge*, often translated “earth” or “land.” Here it is simply used for the “ground,” as it is properly translated. This shows the difficulty of trying to fit a one word/one word translation scheme to the Bible.
- H. Verse 36. The reason we pray before meals is following the Lord’s example. Yet we often include much more in our prayers before meals than just thanks. Breaking was necessary with their bread. Notice this does not in any way refer to a “communion service,” but a common meal. Again, all is done in an orderly manner, as any great service of food must be done.
- I. Verse 37. Again with people who seldom could eat as much as they wanted, and not having had much in three days, they might have eaten two or three times their normal meal. This is a repetition of this miracle, already performed earlier. This was not just a random repetition, but purposeful, as we will see in chapter 16. This also validated His ministry and demonstrated the blessings of the kingdom that He proclaimed. This time they gathered the leftovers in a reed basket, perhaps a lunch basket or hamper. Bullinger says this is like our modern clothes-baskets. The Lord specifically calls this basket out versus the one in the earlier miracle when He speaks of it later.
- J. Verse 38. “Men” are *andres*, males. Men were probably in the majority, but there would have been many more than just the four thousand.

K. Verse 39. They stepped into a ship or embarked. The word is a *ploion*, a decked ship. “Magdala” means A Tower, a place on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, 3 miles north of Tiberias. Mary Magdalene was from here.

IV. Conclusion: The Lord worked many miracles, including a second feeding of the multitude, this time of four thousand. His miracles were not singular events, but showed His power every time He performed them. Do we believe in the God Who can open His hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing, as He will do in His kingdom? Let us believe.