

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

The Healing and Feeding of the 4000

Last time...an encounter with a Syro-phenician woman of Canaan who

- was not bound by the traditions of the Jews
- heard Jesus' words with understanding and faith
- her faith and persistent prayer was rewarded

A lesson in faith and perseverance in prayer

This time...another multitude, much healing, and the feeding of the 4000

We will be in Matt 15 and Mark 7 and Mark 8

Matt 15

v29 Jesus departed...near unto the Sea of Galilee:

Jesus left the region of Tyre and Sidon where He had an appointment with the woman of Canaan

Matthew's account tells us that He went "near the Sea of Galilee"... but where?

The locale is not detailed

There, Jesus went up a mountain...again

This sounds familiar: near Bethsaida most recently

v30 great multitude...lame, blind, dumb, maimed...He healed them:

Again

This sounds familiar

Is 35:3-6

work of the Messiah

Is 53:4

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows

Did Jesus return to Galilee to the lost sheep of Israel to give the children their bread (v24-26)?

v31 the multitude wondered...glorified the God of Israel:

Again

This sound familiar...yet different

The multitude

- wondered...with admiration
 - at the love, compassion, and power of God
 - not exactly how things have gone for Jesus as of late
- vs wandered (John 6:60-66 at the end of the Bread of God teaching)

And I find the wording curious: “they glorified the God of Israel”

This is the only time in Gospel of Matthew (written to the Jews)
we read “God of Israel”

Does this sound like something Jews would say?

Does this sound like something they should hear?

v32 I have compassion...three days...I will not send them away:

Again

This sounds familiar...yet different

Jesus has compassion on the multitude that has stayed with, listened to Him
for 3 days

Jesus will not send them away in their weakened condition,
displaying the heart of the Good Shepherd to the 12 who

- have not yet demonstrated/learned compassion (last time, Matt 14:15)
- must have His heart for the work they will soon be doing

v33 have so much bread in the wilderness:

Again

This sounds familiar...yet different

A hungry multitude with Jesus not near a city with a market and homes

Echoes of the feeding of the 5000 near Bethsaida

Yet Jesus does not ask His disciples what they should do (John 6),
to which they said, “Send them away.” (Matt 14:15)

This time...”I am not going to send them away.”

- v34 How many loaves:
 Again
 This sounds familiar...yet different
 Seems that short term memory is a very real problem for the 12

 7 loaves vs 5
 More food than last time!
- v35 commanded the multitude to sit:
 Again
 This sounds familiar
- v36 He took...gave thanks...broke...gave:
 Again
 This sounds familiar

 Jesus multiplying loaves and fishes by dividing with His hands
 In the mountains...so everyone could hear Jesus pray and see Him
 multiply by dividing
 He served the disciples, the disciples served the multitude
- v37 eat...filled...broke...seven baskets:
 Again
 This sounds familiar...yet different

 Everyone ate to their heart's content...and there were baskets of leftovers
 7 vs 12
- v38 four thousand men, beside women and children:
 Again
 This sound familiar...yet different

 4000 vs 5000

 So...is the feeding of the 4000 a "repeat performance" of the feeding of the 5000
 or is the feeding of the 4000 different in a meaningful way?

 Let's look at the parallel account in Mark

Mark 7

v31 Tyre and Sidon...Sea of Galilee, through the midst...Decapolis:
Mark gives us locale details not in Matthew

Let's look at the map of the Roman tetrarchs to get our bearings as we read our
Bibles carefully

[Tetrarchs]

[Tyre Sidon]

Jesus left Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon, arriving near the Sea of Galilee
(Matt 15:29), through/from the midst of the Decapolis,
also Gentile territory

Therefore, His journey was not back to Capernaum as He had come to the region
of Tyre and Sidon (v24)

Instead, Jesus went

- north from Tyre to Sidon
- east to Damascus or southeast along the southern slope of Mt Hermon
- south thru the tetrarch of Philip to the Decapolis ("Ten Cities")
- west to the Sea of Galilee
- near the east or southeast shore of Sea of Galilee

By taking "the long way around", Jesus

- stayed out of
 - the Galilee, the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, who murdered John the Baptist
 - Jewish territory, away from hostile elements
- had more time to
 - pour His heart into the 12
 - via Damascus, upwards of 120 miles...6 days
 - via southern slope, upwards of 75 miles...4 days
 - prepare the 12 for the rising unbelief of and rejection by the Jews

Jesus is now ministering on the east side of the Jordan River...Gentile territory
The last months of His evangelistic ministry is spent here

The controversies with the Jews regarding His radical teachings are such
that Jesus will not again teach in a Jewish synagogue, with one
exception (Luke 13:10)

Jesus is in the Roman province called the Decapolis

This is not His first visit here

Mark 5:1-20

Jesus had an appointment with a man possessed by Legion, to

- heal him...casting demons into pigs, the herd went off the cliff
- put him in his right mind
- send him (v18-20)
 - to share his testimony with the people of the Decapolis
 - as His forerunner in the region of the Decapolis

The Lord knew He was coming back here, having much ministry (Father's work) to do here

"Chased away" for deviled ham on His first visit, Jesus is now welcomed enthusiastically due to the witness of the man who had been freed of Legion by Jesus

v32 one that was deaf...impediment in his speech:

In Matt 15:30, Jesus healed many...the lame, blind, dumb, maimed

In Mark's account, the focus is on one of those healed – a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment ("tongue tied")...dumb

v33-35 He took him aside:

Jesus separates this man from the multitude...gets him alone...
and ministered in a way He had not before

Jesus

- put His finger in the deaf man's ears
- spit and touched the deaf man's tongue
- looked up to heaven, inhabited by His Father
- sighed/groaned in sympathy/compassion
- spoke in Aramaic, "Be opened"

And immediately this man's

- ears were opened...as was a whole new world to him!
- tongue was loosed ("chain" was broken) and his speech given/restored, a great burden lifted!

Note: Jesus never healed the same way twice, there was no pattern to how He healed the afflicted

Why not?

Man would make it a formula and a method, sucking the Life and Power out of it

A work begun in the Spirit would "finish" in the flesh

v36-37 tell no man...beyond measure astonished:

Then Jesus told them...who?

It seems friends/family of the deaf man went aside with him

They were eyewitnesses of this miracle

Jesus tells them to not tell anyone about what He has done

This is the 5th time Jesus has healed someone and told them to keep it to themselves

1. leper (Mark 1:40-44)
2. a multitude (Matt 12:15-16)
3. Jairus and his wife (Mark 5:41-43)
4. 2 blind men (Matt 9:27-31)
5. Deaf and dumb man (Mark 7:32-37)

Additionally, Jesus will (soon) tell the 12 to tell no one Who He is

6. at Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:13-20)
7. at the Transfiguration (Matt 17:1-9)

Why does Jesus not want them to tell anyone what He had done?

Were there Jewish “kingmakers” in the mix?

No, He had compassion for them, He loved them, He wanted to save them

Miracles do not save, Jesus saves

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, not by miracles (Rom 10:17)

Jesus wanted them to take to heart His preaching and teaching,

to focus on His life-giving words instead of His miracles

His words are forever, the miracles are temporary

But...the more He exhorted them to be still about the miracle

(miracles, for all were healed), the more they “had to tell somebody!”

A deaf and dumb man now hearing and speaking is able to keep his marvel and joy to himself or be inconspicuous in his town?!

This is their...the people of the Decapolis...first eyewitness of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jewish Prophet of the God of Israel

They have heard the testimony of the man freed of Legion and had their fearful hearts softened toward Jesus

Now, He has touched them and they are “dumb struck” with wonder

A radically different response than

- these same folks in Mark 5
- the Jews after being healed and fed by Jesus and hearing His preaching and teaching (Bread of God, traditions of men vs Word of God)

Hence...Matt 11:20-24

Therefore...

Mark 8

v1-3 the multitude...came from afar:

Therefore, the multitude

- on the east side of the Jordan River in the region of the Decapolis
- that has been with Jesus for 3 days at “Family Camp” listening to Him preach and teach and being healed by Him
- that has run out of food
- upon whom Jesus has compassion and will feed (men, women, and children are present)
- many of whom have come from a long ways away

is...Gentile

This sounds familiar...yet different: because this is a Gentile multitude

Harkening back to Matt 15:31 and the curious wording of
“they glorified the God of Israel”

As part of the Gospel written to the Jews, this is something they need to hear,
Gentiles giving glory to their God because of the work of their Messiah,
Jesus Christ

v4 From whence can a man satisfy:

How many times must they see and hear things before learning?
How many times must we?

How many times must they hear the testimony of God before His ways and
His thoughts become their first ways and thoughts?

The testimony of God:

Num 11:22-23

2 Kings 4:42-44

Matt 14/Mark 6/John 6

How many times must we?

Perhaps the problem:

Again...

this sounds familiar...yet different...
because this is a multitude of Gentiles, not Jews!

v5-9 How many loaves...Seven...seven baskets:

Again...this sounds so familiar, yet different: Gentiles, not Jews

They have so much to learn and remember; when will they?!

After

- the resurrection of Jesus
- Jesus breathes on them and they receive the Holy Spirit “in”
- the baptism of Jesus...baptism of the Holy Spirit “upon”
- the Holy Spirit teaches them all things, guides them to the truth and brings all things into their remembrance

Mysteries of God are being revealed:

- The mystery of Christ:
100% God and 100% Man, Word made flesh
- The mystery of salvation accomplished by the Jewish Messiah:
For the Jew and the Gentile

The recent history of the ministry of Jesus Christ:

Feeding 5000 near Bethsaida...Jews

Escape from the “kingmakers”

Bread of God teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum – disciples offended

Confrontation with Pharisees and scribes regarding traditions of men vs Word of God –
leaders offended

End of Jesus’ Galilean ministry

To Tyre and Sidon

Feeding 4000 in the Decapolis...Gentiles

Application

Jesus went “way out of His way”...to save you and me

We wondered at the Love of God and were astonished at the Power of God

He touched us...each of us individually (aside) according to our need

He fed us...the Bread of God

He freed us from all our chains

And He has sent us to publish/broadcast His love and power to others “way out of His way”

May we do so

- by the power of the Holy Spirit upon us
- as a deaf and dumb man who now hears and speaks!