

(43) 4000 Fed (Mt. 15:32-39; Mk. 8:1-9)

1. All four Gospels record the feeding of the 5000 (F^{5k}), but only Matthew and Mark record the feeding of the 4000 (F^{4k}).
2. Liberal theologians view this event as a conflation of two separate incidents¹ but Jesus specifically used both events as an instruction opportunity (Matt. 16:9-10; Mark 8:19-20).
3. The F^{5k} crowd was predominantly Jewish, but the F^{4k} crowd is largely Gentile.
4. The F^{4k} is noteworthy for its duration (3 days) over the F^{5k} (1 day) (Mt. 15:32; Mk. 8:2).
5. The F^{5k} CALF became obsessed with the miracle repetition and desired to make Jesus their King. The satisfaction of their earthly appetite was their whole priority (Jn. 6:26).
6. The F^{4k} CALF disregarded their earthly appetite for three entire days of feeding on the Word. They are hungry (νῆστις *nēstis* ^{#3523}_{2x}) and in danger of fainting (ἐκλύω *ekluō* ^{#1590}_{5x}).
7. The disciples who participated in the F^{5k} express skepticism at the F^{4k}.
 - a. Are they truly that dense? Are they prejudiced by the Gentile crowd?
 - b. Are they actually having fun and joking with the Lord?
 - c. Are they playing a part for the sake of the crowd?
 - d. What have the disciples been eating? What has Jesus been eating?
8. As before the disciples are the table waiters (Matt. 15:35-36 cf. 14:19; Mk. 8:6-7 cf. 6:40-41). Again the meal is satisfying and leftovers are gathered up (Mt. 15:37 cf. 14:20; Mk. 8:8 cf. 6:42-43).
9. The F^{4k} miracle was less miraculous than the F^{5k} miracle.
 - a. 5 loaves fed 5000 with 12 baskets remaining.
 - b. 7 loaves fed 4000 with 7 baskets remaining.
 - c. These incidents serve to illustrate the *a fortiori* logical argument of our redemption.

¹ Although it is of course not impossible that there were two similar, miraculous feedings, the data surveyed above seem more consistent with the hypothesis of one original event that came to be transmitted in two different versions, each with its own symbolism. Hagner, Donald A. Vol. 33B, *Word Biblical Commentary : Matthew 14-28*. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002.