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The Miracles of Jesus Christ: Feeding the 4,000

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THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST

MIRACLE TWENTY-THREE: Feeding the 4,000 (Mt. 15:32-39; Mk. 8:1-9)

SURVEY

Jesus feeds a hungry crowd who had not eaten in three days, by supernaturally multiplying seven loaves and a few fish. Following the bountiful meal, seven basketfuls of food were collected by the disciples.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the second of two occasions where Jesus fed the hungry multitudes. See also miracle 19.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- Some have attempted to show the feeding of the 5,000 and that of the 4,000 were actually the same event, suggesting that the Gospel writers got their details mixed up. But Jesus Himself told us that they were two separate and distinct events.

"When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They said unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven" (Mk. 8:19-20).

- Note the comparisons and contrasts between these two events:
 1. Compared with the feeding of the 5,000: There are several similarities between these two miracles:
 - a. Christ showed compassion toward both groups.
 - b. He asked His disciples what should be done.
 - c. He had the people sit down in orderly groups.
 - d. He supernaturally fed them by multiplying a few fish and loaves.
 2. Contrasted with the feeding of the 5,000: There are a number of differences between these two miracles:
 - a. The size of the crowd: One had 5,000 men; the other 4,000.
 - b. The duration involved: The 5,000 men had been with Him for one day; the 4000 for three days.

- c. The original food: Christ used five loaves and two fishes to feed the 5,000, while using seven loaves and an unspecified number of fish in caring for the 4,000.
- d. The remains: Twelve baskets were left over at the feeding of 5,000, and seven after the 4,000.
- e. The Gospel record: All four Gospel writers record the feeding of the 5,000, while only Matthew and Mark speak of the 4,000.