



## [Matthew 15:32-39](#)

(32) Now Jesus called His disciples to *Himself* and said, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.' (33) Then His disciples said to Him, 'Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?' (34) Jesus said to them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven, and a few little fish.' (35) So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. (36) And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples; and the disciples *gave* to the multitude. (37) So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. (38) Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. (39) And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.

## [Mark 8:1-10](#)

(1) In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, (2) 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. (3) And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.' (4) Then His disciples answered Him, 'How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?' (5) He asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven.' (6) So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set before *them*; and they set *them* before the multitude. (7) They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also

before *them*. (8) So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. (9) Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, (10) immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha.

## **Matthew 14:13-21**

(13) When Jesus heard *it*, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. (14) And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. (15) When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." (16) But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." (17) And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." (18) He said, "Bring them here to Me." (19) Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. (20) So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. (21) Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

## **Mark 6:30-44**

(30) Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. (31) And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. (32) So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. (33) But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. (34) And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many

things. (35) When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. (36) Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat." (37) But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?" (38) But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish." (39) Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. (40) So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. (41) And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. (42) So they all ate and were filled. (43) And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. (44) Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

## [Luke 9:10-17](#)

(10) And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. (11) But when the multitudes knew *it*, they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. (12) When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." (13) But He said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people." (14) For there were about five thousand men. Then He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of fifty." (15) And they did so, and made them all sit down. (16) Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke *them*, and gave *them* to the disciples to set before the multitude. (17) So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them.

## [John 6:1-15](#)

(1) After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the Sea* of Tiberias. (2) Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. (3) And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. (4) Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. (5) Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (6) But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. (7) Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." (8) One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, (9) "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" (10) Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. (11) And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. (12) So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." (13) Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. (14) Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." (15) Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

*New King James Version*

At first, [Jesus'](#) miracle of feeding the 4,000 ([Matthew 15:32-39](#); [Mark 8:1-10](#)) may seem to be the same as the one He performed for 5,000 ([Matthew 14:13-21](#); [Mark 6:30-44](#); [Luke 9:10-17](#); [John 6:1-15](#)). They do have a few similarities: Jesus multiplies loaves and fish; a multitude is fed; the disciples are skeptical; and they collect leftovers.

However, some distinct differences nullify any notion that they are the same: The crowds are of different sizes; the disciples speak first in the first miracle,

but Jesus does in the second; they occur in discrete locations; they follow different events; the numbers of loaves and fish differ; the numbers of baskets differ; the baskets themselves are different; and finally, Jesus spends one day with the 5,000, but three with the 4,000.

Jesus Himself removes any doubt by referring to them as two different miracles. He mentions the different numbers of people present at the two events, the different numbers of baskets of fragments gathered afterward, and the different sizes of the baskets ([Matthew 16:9-10](#); [Mark 8:19-21](#)).

— Martin G. Collins

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