

Study of the Gospel of Mark

Chapter 8 (Part 1)

Background

As Jesus' public ministry draws to a close Jesus spends more time with His disciples as He prepares them for His coming death and resurrection and teaching them. Because of the crowds that have gathered around Him in Galilee and the opposition by many Jews, Jesus leaves Galilee to spend time with His disciples in the Gentile regions of Tyre and Sidon (Mark 7:24) and Decapolis (Mark 7:31). It is while Jesus is in Decapolis that the following event (Mark 8:1-10) took place.

1. Mark records in these verses a miraculous feeding of a multitude. Mark records a similar event in chapter 6:30-44. Some critics of the Bible have stated that this is an apparent contradiction. A close reading of these two accounts shows that these are not contradictory reports, but reports of two distinct but similar miracles. Compare the two sections and compare the differences between them.

	Mark 6:30-44	Mark 8:1-10
Location?	_____	_____
How long teaching?	_____	_____
How many people?	_____	_____
How much food?	_____	_____
How much left over?	_____	_____
Anything else???	_____	_____

2. The audience in this chapter would have been largely Gentile in contrast to the Jewish audience in chapter 6. Notice Jesus' love and compassion for non-Jews is the same as that for His own people (8:2; 6:34). What can we learn from this?

3. Mark tells us that Jesus leaves the region of Decapolis by boat and crosses to the "district of Dalmanutha" (Mark 8:10). Matthew in his record of the same event says that Jesus crossed over to the "region of Magadan" (Matthew 15:39). How can these differences be reconciled

4. This region was on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, back in the region of Galilee once again. We have heard nothing from the Scribes or Pharisees while Jesus has been in the Gentile areas, but now, upon His return to Galilee, they come out against Jesus again. What two words does Mark use to describe the Pharisee's reaction to Jesus?

5. The Pharisees ask Jesus to give them a sign, to prove who He was. Why didn't Jesus give them such a sign? How had they explained away Jesus' previous miracles? (See Mark 3:22)

6. Read the parallel section in Matthew 16 :1-4. There Matthew records that a sign would be given. What would the sign of Jonah be? (Check out Matthew 12:38-42 if you need help.) Do Matthew's words contradict Mark's words? Why or why not?

7. Jesus didn't stay here long. They again get in a boat and head north to Bethsaida. Along the way Jesus uses the event with the Pharisees to teach His disciples. What did Jesus mean when He said "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod!"? (See Matthew 16:12)

8. What was the "leaven" of the Pharisees? What was "leaven" of Herod? The word "leaven" comes from the Greek word *zume* which occurs 13 times in the New Testament. If you have a concordance, look up the word "leaven" and write down the references where it is used in the New Testament. What can we learn about this word from the way it is used in Scripture?

9. Read Jesus' words in Mark 8:19-20. His words verify that the truth that we considered at the beginning of the chapter - that there were two miraculous feedings of a multitude (Matthew records this in his Gospel as well). How sad that so many doubt the truth of God's Word in the Bible! What can we learn from this?
