

Exegetical Notes, Mark 8:1-13

“One More Sign”

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Mark 8:1-13

Verse 1-3

During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.”

- See Mark 6:30-44. In that passage, Jesus is confronted with a similar situation, a hungry crowd of more than 5000 people. With just five small loaves and two fish he feeds the entire group. While some scholars think this is the retelling of the same event because of the similarities between the two, the details make it clear that this is a second event. However it is very similar to the first.

Verse 4-5

His disciples answered, “But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?” “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked. “Seven,” they replied.

- The situation is much as it was in chapter 6. They are in a remote place. The available supply is woefully insufficient to feed so many. This time, just seven loaves of bread. There is no apparent alternative supply. It is impossible to feed so many people with so little.
- But...we have been here before. You would think that the disciples would be reasoning, “We have been in this situation before. Jesus can do what seems to be impossible to us.” You would think that they would remember the previous similar experience.

Verse 6-7

He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so. They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them.

- Just as he did in chapter 6, Jesus organized the crowd, gave thanks for the available supply and told his disciples to give the food to the people.

Verse 8-10

The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. About four thousand men were present. And having sent them away, he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

- Once again the too little that was available proved to be more than enough in the hands of Jesus. The seven small loaves fed the crowd of over 4000 with seven basketfuls of leftovers.
- The surprise in all this is the disciples' behavior. They do not seem to have any recollection of the previous event.

Verse 11

The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven.

- Review the previous seven chapters of Mark's Gospel. You will discover that Jesus has given them sign after sign, including twice feeding a multitude of people with almost nothing. But, like the disciples, these signs seem to have gone unnoticed. So, now the authorities ask Jesus for one more sign, implying that this time they will catch it!

Verse 12-13

He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it." Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

- The simple fact is that Jesus had given these people sign after sign to show them who he was. But they had not caught the meaning of anything he had done. In their ignorance, they ask him to do another miracle to prove to them that he is of God. He refuses to do so and departs from them. He is apparently disgusted with those who should know but refuse to see.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *One More Sign!* They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship* & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)