

MATTHEW 15

Jesus Rejects Rabbinic Tradition¹

1 Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said:

2 Why do your disciples² break (παραβαίνω, pres.) the tradition (παράδοσις) of the elders (πρεσβυτέρων)? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.³

3 And he answered and said to them:

Why do you yourselves break (παραβαίνω) the commandment (ἐντολή) of God on account of your tradition (παράδοσις)? 4 For God said:

Honor your father and mother, and:

He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.

5 But you say:

Whoever says to father or mother: Whatever I have that would help you has been dedicated (ὠφελέω, aor. pass.), 6 he certainly will not honor (τιμάω) his father.

So you made void (ἀκυρόω, aor.) the word (λόγος) of God on account of your tradition (παράδοσις). 7 Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied (προφητεύω, aor.) correctly about you:

8 This people (λαός) honors (τιμάω, pres.) me with their lips, but their heart (καρδία) is distant (ἀπέχω, pres.) from me. 9 But to no end (μάτην) do they express devotion (σέβω, pres.) to me, teaching (διδάσκω, pres.) as instruction (διδασκαλία) commandments (ἐντάλματα) of people.

10 After Jesus called the crowd (ὄχλος) to him, he said to them:

Hear and understand (συνίημι). 11 It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.

12 Then the disciples (μαθηταὶ) came and said to him:

¹ Mk 7:1-23 is a parallel passage.

² The Jewish leaders attack Jesus indirectly through his disciples.

³ Why aren't the Jewish leaders asking Jesus about his teaching or miracles? Instead, they are focused on rabbinic rule-breaking.

Do you know that when the Pharisees heard this statement, they were offended (σκανδαλίζω, aor. pass.)?

13 But he answered and said:

Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone. They are blind guides of the blind.⁴ And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.

15 Peter said to him:

Explain the parable to us.⁵

16 Jesus said:

Are you (pl.) also still void in understanding (ἄσύνετος)? 17 Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated? 18 But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart (καρδία), and those defile the man. 19 For out of the heart (καρδία) come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and slanders. 20 These are the things that defile the man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.

Canaanite Woman's Great Faith⁶

21 Jesus went away from there and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying out saying:

Have mercy on me Lord, Son of David (κύριε υἱὸς Δαβὶδ)!⁷ My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed!

23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples approached and asked him saying:

Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.

24 But he answered and said:

I was not sent (ἀποστέλλω, aor.) except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

⁴ The Pharisees, as disciple-makers, are blind guides. The disciples and crowds who follow them are also blind. They all have the same destiny.

⁵ Jesus offers parables to the crowds of believers, then explains the parables to the disciples. He expects the disciples to explain the parables to the crowds. The disciples's ministry is an explaining ministry. **Ne 8:7-8** 7 Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiiah, the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people remained in their place. 8 They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.

⁶ Mk 7:24-31 is a parallel passage.

⁷ It is amazing for a Canaanite woman to beg for mercy from the Son of David.

25 But she came and began to bow down (προσκυνέω, imperf.)⁸ to him saying:

Lord (κύριε), help me!

26 And he answered and said:

It is not good to take the children's bread (ἄρτος) and throw it to the dogs (κυνάριον).⁹

27 But she said:

Yes, Lord. For even the dogs (κυνάριον) eat from the crumbs (ψιχίον)¹⁰ that fall from the table of their master (κύριος).

28 Then Jesus said to her:

O woman, great (μέγας) is your faith (πίστις)!¹¹ It is done for you as you desire.

And her daughter¹² was healed from that hour.

*Jesus Feeds Four Thousand Gentiles*¹³

29 Departing from there [Tyre and Sidon], Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee [in Decapolis, a Gentile region].¹⁴ And having gone up on the mountain (τὸ ὄρος) he was sitting there [to teach].¹⁵ 30 And large [Gentile] crowds (ὄχλοι πολλοὶ) came to him, bringing with them the lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others. And they placed them down before his

⁸ Gentiles, even Canaanites, who believe in Messiah Jesus will be blessed.

⁹ Jesus is talking not as he thinks, but as a typical Jew thinks. **Mt 7:6** 6 Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

¹⁰ **Mt 15:37** 37 They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.

¹¹ Ironically, it is Gentiles who demonstrate the greatest faith in Jesus.

¹² **1 Ki 17:22-24** 22 Yahweh heard the voice of Elijah, the life of the child [of the widow of Zarephath in Sidon] returned to him, and he revived. ...24 Then the woman said to Elijah: Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of Yahweh in your mouth is truth.

¹³ Mk 8:1-21 is a parallel passage.

¹⁴ **Mk 7:31** 31 [Jesus] went out from the region of Tyre and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis [a Gentile region]. **1 Ki 17:3-4** 3 Go away from here [Samaria], turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. ...4 I have commanded the ravens to provide for you [Elijah] there. **Is 9:11** In earlier times [Yahweh] treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt. But later on he will make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

¹⁵ Matthew hints at a teaching ministry (Blomberg, *Matthew*, 245). **Mt 5:1-2** 1 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain. And after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 He opened his mouth and began to teach them.... **Mt 13:2-3** 2 Large crowds gathered to [Jesus], so he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach. 3 And he spoke many things to them in parables....

feet, and he healed (θεραπεύω, aor.)¹⁶ them. 31 So the [Gentile] crowd (ὄχλος) marveled (θαυμάζω, aor.) as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, the lame walking, and the blind seeing.¹⁷ And they glorified (δοξάζω, aor.)¹⁸ the God of Israel.¹⁹

32 Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said:

I feel in my gut (σπλαγχνίζομαι, pres.)²⁰ for the [Gentile] crowd (ὄχλον) because they have remained (προσμένω)²¹ with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry,²² for they might give out (ἐκλύω, aor.) on the way.²³

33 The disciples said to him:

¹⁶ **Mt 4:23** 23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing (θεραπεύω) every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. **Mt 9:35** 35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing (θεραπεύω) every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. **Mt 12:15** 15 Many followed [Jesus], and he healed (θεραπεύω) them all. **Mt 14:14** 14 When [Jesus] went ashore, he saw a large crowd, felt compassion for them, and healed (θεραπεύω) their sick. **Mt 19:2** 2 Large crowds followed [Jesus], and he healed (θεραπεύω) them there. **Mt 21:14** 14 The blind and lame came to [Jesus] in the temple, and he healed (θεραπεύω) them.

¹⁷ **Mt 11:4-5** 4 Jesus answered and said to [John's disciples]: Go and report to John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. **Is 35:5-6** 5 The eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the Arabah. **Ac 2:22** 22 Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God performed through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know....

¹⁸ **Mt 5:16** 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify (δοξάζω) your Father who is in heaven. **Mt 9:8** 8 When the crowds saw, they were awestruck and glorified (δοξάζω) God who had given such authority to men. **Mk 2:12** 12 They were all amazed and were glorifying God saying: We have never seen anything like this. **Lk 5:26** 26 They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God. And they were filled with fear saying: We have seen remarkable things today. **Lk 7:16** 16 Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God saying: A great prophet has arisen among us! and: God has visited his people!

¹⁹ Based on Jesus' miracles, Gentiles are glorifying the "God of Israel." Blomberg, *Matthew*, 245. **Ge 33:20** 20 [Jacob] erected [at Shechem] an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל).

²⁰ **Mt 9:36** 36 Seeing the [Jewish] crowd, [Jesus] felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. **Mt 14:14** 14 When [Jesus] went ashore, he saw a large crowd [of Jews], felt compassion for them, and healed their sick. **Mt 20:34** 34 Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. And immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

²¹ **Ac 11:23** 23 When [Barnabas] arrived [in Antioch] and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to keep staying close to (προσμένω, pres.) to the Lord [Jesus]. **Ac 13:43** 43 Many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes [in Pisidian Antioch] followed Paul and Barnabas, who...were urging them to keep staying with (προσμένω, pres.) the grace of God.

²² **Mt 6:31-32** 31 Do not worry then saying: What will we eat? or What will we drink? or What will we wear for clothing? 32 For the nations eagerly seek all these things. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

²³ **Mk 8:3** 3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way, and some of them have come from a great distance. **1 Ki 19:7-8** 7 The angel of Yahweh came again a second time, touched [Elijah], and said: Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you. 8 So he arose, ate, and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Where would we get so many loaves in this isolated place²⁴ to satisfy such a large crowd?²⁵

34 So Jesus said to them:

How many loaves do you have?

And they said:

Seven, and a few small fish.²⁶

²⁴ **Ex 16:3** 3 The Israelites said to [Moses and Aaron]: If only we had died (מות) by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread. For you have brought us out into this wilderness (מִדְבָּר) to kill (מות) this whole assembly with hunger (רעב). **Mt 4:1-4** 1 Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. 2 And after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he then became hungry. 3 And the tester came and said to him: If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. 4 But he answered and said: It is written: Man will not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

²⁵ **Nu 11:22** 22 Should flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to be sufficient for them? Or should all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to be sufficient for them? **2 Ki 4:42-44** 42 A man came from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he said: Give them to the people that they may eat. 43 His attendant said: What, will I set this before a hundred men? But he said: Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says Yahweh: They will eat and have some left over. 44 So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of Yahweh. **Jn 6:5-7** 5 Jesus, lifting up his eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to him, said to Philip: Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat? 6 This he was saying to test him, for he himself knew what he was intending to do. 7 Philip answered him: Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.

²⁶ **Jn 21:9** 9 When [the disciples] got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire laid and fish placed on it, and bread.

35 So he directed the crowd (ὄχλος) to sit down on the ground.²⁷ 36 And he took the seven loaves and the fish, and after giving thanks,²⁸ he broke²⁹ them and began to give (δίδωμι)³⁰ them to the disciples (μαθηταῖς), and the disciples to the [Gentile] crowds (ὄχλους). 37 And they all³¹ ate and were full (χορτάζω, aor.).³² And what was left over³³ of the broken pieces

²⁷ **Eze 34:11-16** 11 Thus says Yahweh God: Look, I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for my sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. 13 I will bring them out from the nations, gather them from the countries, and bring them to their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. 14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will lead them to rest, declares Yahweh God.

²⁸ **Mt 14:19** 19 Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, [Jesus] took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, he blessed the food.... **Mk 8:6** 6 Taking the seven loaves, [Jesus] gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to his disciples.... **Jn 6:11** 11 Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, he distributed to those who were seated. **Jn 6:23** 23 There came other small boats from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord [Jesus] had given thanks.

²⁹ **Is 58:6-7** 6 Is this not the fast which I choose...? 7 Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry...?

³⁰ Matthew uses the verb δίδωμι, while Mark uses the verb παρατίθημι. Mark, writing after Matthew, clarifies the illustration that the disciples' job is to teach crowds of believers with the teaching they have received from Jesus. **Mk 8:6** 6 [Jesus] started giving [the loaves] to his disciples to serve (παρατίθημι) to them, and they served (παρατίθημι) them to the crowd (ὄχλος). **Mt 13:24** 24 Jesus presented (παρατίθημι) another parable to them.... **Mt 13:31** 31 [Jesus] presented (παρατίθημι) another parable to them.... **Ac 17:3** 3 [Paul was] explaining and giving evidence (παρατίθημι) that the Messiah had to suffer and rise again from the dead....

³¹ **Mt 14:20** 20 They all ate and were satisfied. **2 Sa 17:27-29** 27 When David had come to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the sons of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, 28 brought beds, basins, pottery, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans, lentils, parched seeds, 29 honey, curds, sheep, and cheese of the herd, for David and for the people who were with him to eat. For they said: The people are hungry, weary, and thirsty in the wilderness. **2 Ki 4:42-44** 42 A man came from Baal-shalishah and brought the man of God [Elisha] bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he said: Give them to the people that they may eat. 43 His attendant said: What, will I set this before a hundred men? But he said: Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says Yahweh: They will eat and have some left over. 44 So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of Yahweh. **Ps 107:8-9** 8 Let them give thanks to Yahweh for his loyal love and for his wonders to the sons of men! 9 For he has satisfied the thirsty soul, and the hungry soul he has filled with what is good. **Lk 1:53** 53 [God] has filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty-handed.

³² **Ex 16:18-21** 18 Those who gathered much had nothing over and those who gathered little had no shortage. They gathered as much as each of them needed. ...21 Morning by morning they gathered it, as much as each needed. **Ex 16:32** 32 Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations, in order that they may see the food with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt. **Ex 16:35** 35 The Israelites ate manna forty years until they came to a habitable land. They ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. **Ps 81:10** 10 I, Yahweh, am your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. **Ps 107:4-9** 4 They wandered in the wilderness in a desert region. They did not find a way to an inhabited city. 5 They were hungry and thirsty. Their soul fainted within them. 6 Then they cried out to Yahweh in their trouble. He delivered them out of their distresses. 7 He led them also by a straight way, to go to an inhabited city. 8 Let them give thanks to Yahweh for his loyal love and for his wonders to the sons of men! 9 For he has satisfied the thirsty soul, and the hungry soul he has filled with what is good.

³³ **1 Ki 17:14-16** 14 Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel: The bowl of flour will not be exhausted, nor will the jar of oil be empty, until the day that Yahweh sends rain on the face of the earth. 15 So [the widow of Zarephath in Sidon] went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she, he, and her household ate for many days. 16 The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of Yahweh that he spoke through Elijah.

(κλάσμα)³⁴ was seven³⁵ large baskets (ἑπτὰ σπυρίδας πλήρεις).³⁶ 38 And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.³⁷

39 And sending away the [Gentile] crowds,³⁸ Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan [a Jewish region].³⁹

³⁴ **Mt 15:27** 27 [The Canaanite woman of Sidon] said: Yes, Lord. But even the dogs [Gentiles] feed on the crumbs (ψιγίον) which fall from their masters' table.

³⁵ Seven is the number of completeness or universal influence (Blomberg, *Matthew*, 246). Twelve stands for Israel, seven for Gentiles. **Mt 14:20** 20 They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets (δώδεκα κοφίνους πλήρεις). **1 Ki 18:31** 31 Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob....

³⁶ The word for baskets here is σπυρίς, a more Hellenistic term than the κόφινος of Mt 14:20 (Blomberg, *Matthew*, 245). **Mt 16:8-11** 8 You little-faiths, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? 9 Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets (κόφινος) full you picked up? 10 Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets (σπυρίς) full you picked up? 11 How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

³⁷ Pairs of feeding miracles occurred in the days of Moses (Ex 16; Nu 11) and Elijah/Elisha (2 Ki 4)(Blomberg, *Matthew*, 245).

³⁸ Again Jesus sends away the crowds of believers and gets in a boat with his disciples. Notice there is no mention of the Jewish leaders. This scene is about Jesus, disciples, and believers only.

³⁹ Magdala is a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, just north of Tiberias, the birth-place of Mary Magdalene (Mt 27:56, 61). It played an important role in the Jewish resistance to Rome and was besieged by the Roman army (Avraham Negev, *Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1990).

Biblical Theology

1. Messianology.

- a. Jesus doesn't care what the culture or society deems politically correct (Mt 15:12).
 - (1) **Mt 15:12** 12 Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?
- b. Jesus heals one Gentile on a small scale, then many Gentiles on a large scale (Mt 15:28, 30).
 - (1) **Mt 15:28** 28 Jesus said to [the Canaanite woman]: O woman, your faith is great. It will be done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed at once.
 - (2) **Mt 15:30** 30 Large crowds [of Gentiles] came to [Jesus], bringing with them the lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others. And they laid them down at his feet, and he healed them.
- c. Jesus' compassion extends to Gentiles as well as Jews (Mt 14:14; 15:32).
 - (1) **Mt 14:14** 14 When [Jesus] went ashore, he saw a large crowd [of Jews], felt compassion for them, and healed their sick.
 - (2) **Mt 15:32** 32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said: I feel compassion for the [Gentile] crowd because they have remained with me now three days and have nothing to eat.
- d. To prove his power, Jesus often does more with less (Mt 15:34).
 - (1) **Mt 15:34** 34 Jesus said to [the disciples]: How many loaves do you have? And they said: Seven, and a few small fish.
- e. Jesus is in complete command of each situation he and his disciples face (Mt 15:35; Jn 6:5-6).
 - (1) **Mt 15:35** 35 [Jesus] directed the crowd [of Gentiles] to sit down on the ground.
 - (2) **Jn 6:5-6** 5 Jesus, lifting up his eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to him, said to Philip: Where are we to buy bread so that these may eat? 6 This he was saying to test him, for he himself knew what he was intending to do.
- f. Jesus feeds a mixed multitude in the wilderness, just as Moses did (Mt 15:36; Ex 12:37-38).
 - (1) **Mt 15:37** 37 [The Gentile crowd] all ate and were satisfied.
 - (2) **Ex 12:37-38** 37 The sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. 38 A mixed multitude also went up with them.
 - (3) **Ex 16:15-18** 15 When the sons of Israel saw [the manna], they said to one another: What is it? For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them: It is the bread that Yahweh has given you to eat. 16 This is what Yahweh has commanded: Gather of it every man as much as he should eat. You will take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent. 17 The sons of Israel did so, and some gathered much and some little. 18 When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack. Every man gathered as much as he should eat.
- g. Jesus' resources are unlimited. He is able to feed the whole world if he wants to (Mt 15:37).
 - (1) **Mt 15:37** 37 They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.

2. Bibliology.

- a. The intake of biblical truth is what changes a believer's heart to produce what is good.
 - (1) **Mt 15:17-18** 17 Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated? 18 But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.
 - (2) **Ro 12:2** 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the desire of God is, that which is good, acceptable, and perfect.
- b. Eating bread provided by Jesus symbolizes the believer's daily intake of biblical truth (Mt 15:36-37; 4:4; 6:11; Ex 16:4).
 - (1) **Mt 4:4** 4 [Jesus] answered and said: It is written: Man will not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.
 - (2) **Mt 6:11** 11 Give us this day our daily bread.
 - (3) **Mt 15:36-37** 36 [Jesus] took the seven loaves and the fish. And giving thanks, he broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples to the [Gentile] crowd. 37 And they all ate and were satisfied. So they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.
 - (4) **Mt 16:5-12** 5 The disciples came to the other side [of the sea of Galilee], but they had forgotten to bring bread. 6 And Jesus said to them: Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. 7 They began to discuss this among themselves saying: He said that because we did not bring any bread. 8 But Jesus, aware of this, said: You little-faiths, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? 9 Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you picked up? 10 Or the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you picked up? 11 How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. 12 Then they understood that he did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching (διδαχή) of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - (5) **Mt 28:19-20** 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.
- c. The source of believers' spiritual food must be Jesus himself, not his disciples (Mt 15:36).
 - (1) **Mt 15:33** 33 The disciples said to [Jesus]: Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?
 - (2) **Mt 15:36** 36 [Jesus] broke [the loaves and fish] and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowd.
- d. The food sourced by Jesus and distributed by disciples must not be contaminated (Mt 15:36; 16:8-12).
 - (1) **Mt 15:36** 36 [Jesus] broke [the loaves and fish] and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowd.
 - (2) **Mt 16:8-12** 8 You little-faiths, why do you [disciples] discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? 9 Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you picked up? 10 Or the seven loaves

of the four thousand and how many large baskets you picked up? 11 How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. 12 Then they understood that he did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching (διδασχῆ) of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

3. Hamartiology.

4. Israelology.

- a. It is the God of Israel, not the god or gods of some other nation, who must be glorified (Mt 15:31).

5. Soteriology.

- a. The greatest faith is found in the most unlikely of persons (Mt 15:28).
 - (1) **Mt 15:28** 28 Jesus said to [the Canaanite woman]: O woman, your faith is great. It will be done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed at once.
- b. The Gentile crowd demonstrates its faith in Jesus by: (1) bringing their sick to him from far away; (2) marveling at Jesus' miracles; (3) glorifying the God of Israel; and (4) staying with Jesus for three days with nothing to eat (Mt. 15:30-32; Mk 8:2-3).
 - (1) **Mt 15:30-32** 30 Large [Gentile] crowds came to [Jesus], bringing with them the lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others. And they laid them down at his feet, and he healed them. 31 So the [Gentile] crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing. So they glorified the God of Israel. 32 And Jesus called his disciples to him and said: I feel compassion for the crowd, because they have remained with me now three days and have nothing to eat....
 - (2) **Mk 8:2-3** 2 I feel compassion for the crowd because they have remained with me now three days and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from a great distance.
- c. Jesus' response to the crowd also shows this crowd believes in him (Mt 15:28, 30-32; Mk 8:2-3; Mt 13:58).
 - (1) **Mt 15:28** 28 Jesus said to [the Canaanite woman]: O woman, your faith is great. It will be done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed at once.
 - (2) **Mt 15:30-32** 30 Large [Gentile] crowds came to [Jesus], bringing with them the lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others. And they laid them down at his feet, and he healed them. 31 So the [Gentile] crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing. So they glorified the God of Israel. 32 And Jesus called his disciples to him and said: I feel compassion for the crowd, because they have remained with me now three days and have nothing to eat....
 - (3) **Mt 13:58** 58 [Jesus] did not do many miracles [in Nazareth] because of their unbelief.
- d. Jesus' miracles alone provide a sufficient basis to believe in him (Mt 15:31; Jn 14:10-11; 20:30-31).

- (1) **Mt 15:31** 31 The [Gentile] crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing. So they glorified the God of Israel.
 - (2) **Jn 14:10-11** 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father abiding in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Otherwise believe because of the works themselves.
 - (3) **Jn 20:30-31** 30 Many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples that are not written in this book. 31 But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.
- e. To be justified, non-Jews must glorify the God of Israel (Mt 15:31; Ac 17:22-25).
- (1) **Mt 15:31** 31 The [Gentile] crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing. So they glorified the God of Israel.
 - (2) **Ac 17:22-25** 22 Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said: Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. 23 For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and all things in it, because he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, because he himself gives to all life, breath, and all things....
- f. Gentiles who want to be fed by Jesus will get much more than crumbs (Mt 15:27, 37; Eph 3:4-10).
- (1) **Mt 15:27** 27 [The Canaanite woman] said: Yes, Lord. But even the dogs feed on the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.
 - (2) **Mt 15:37** 37 [The crowd] all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.
 - (3) **Eph 3:4-10** 4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Messiah, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit, 6 that the Gentiles are co-heirs, co-members of the body, and co-partakers of the promise in Messiah Jesus through the gospel, 7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of his power. 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Messiah 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things, 10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.
- g. Jesus is the only one who can give unbelievers ultimate satisfaction (Mt 15:36-37; Ps 107:4-9).
- (1) **Mt 15:36-37** 36 [Jesus] took the seven loaves and the fish. And giving thanks, he broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples to the

[Gentile] crowd. 37 So they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.

- (2) **Ps 107:4-9** 4 They wandered in the wilderness in a desert region. They did not find a way to an inhabited city. 5 They were hungry and thirsty. Their soul fainted within them. 6 Then they cried out to Yahweh in their trouble. He delivered them out of their distresses. 7 He led them also by a straight way, to go to an inhabited city. 8 Let them give thanks to Yahweh for his loyal love and for his wonders to the sons of men! 9 For he has satisfied the thirsty soul, and the hungry soul he has filled with what is good.

6. Sanctification.

- a. The disciple's allegiance must be to Jesus, not religious tradition (Mt 15:2).
- b. Disciples are set apart from believers in that they have an insatiable desire to understand Jesus words (15:15).
- c. Believers will give out on the journey of life if they don't take in biblical teaching (Mt 15:32; 4:4; 6:11; Ex 16:4; 1 Ki 19:7-8).
 - (1) **Mt 15:32** 32 I feel compassion for the crowd [of Gentile believers], because they have remained with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.
 - (2) **Mt 4:4** 4 [Jesus] answered and said: It is written: Man will not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.
 - (3) **Mt 6:11** 11 Give us this day our daily bread.
 - (4) **Ex 16:4** 4 Yahweh said to Moses: Look, I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people will go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in my instruction.
 - (5) **1 Ki 19:7-8** 7 The angel of Yahweh came again a second time, touched [Elijah], and said: Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you. 8 So he arose, ate, and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.
- d. Jesus tests the faith of his disciples by giving them problems to solve (Mt 15:32-33; Jn 6:5-6).
 - (1) **Mt 15:32-33** 32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said: I feel compassion for the crowd because they have remained with me now three days and have nothing to eat, and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way. 33 The disciples said to him: Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?
 - (2) **Jn 6:5-6** 5 Therefore Jesus, lifting up his eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to him, said to Philip: Where are we to buy bread so that these may eat? 6 This he was saying to test him, for he himself knew what he was intending to do.
- e. Disciples are expected to apply past experiences of God's faithfulness to new situations (Mt 15:33; 14:15-16).
 - (1) **Mt 15:33** 33 The disciples said to [Jesus]: Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?
 - (2) **Mt 14:15-16** 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said: This place is desolate and the hour is already late. So send the crowds away that they

may go into the villages and buy food for themselves. 16 But Jesus said to them: They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat!

- f. It is fitting to give thanks to God before each physical and spiritual meal (Mt 15:36).
 - (1) **Mt 15:36** 36 [Jesus] took the seven loaves and the fish, and giving thanks, he broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples to the [Gentile] crowd.
 - (2) **Mt 14:19** 19 Ordering the crowd to sit down on the grass, [Jesus] took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward the sky, he blessed the food, and breaking the loaves he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to the [Jewish] crowds.
- g. Jesus will provide for the physical and spiritual needs of believers in the wilderness (Mt 15:32-33, 37-38).
 - (1) **Mt 15:32-33** 32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said: I feel compassion for the [Gentile] crowd, because they have remained with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way. 33 The disciples said to him: Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?
 - (2) **Mt 15:37-38** 37 [The Gentile crowd] all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full. 38 And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.

7. Ecclesiology.

- a. False teachers outside the church should be ignored (Mt 15:14).
- b. It is the job of disciples to feed believers with teaching they have received from Jesus (Mt 15:36; 4:4; 28:19-20).
 - (1) **Mt 15:36** 36 [Jesus] broke [the loaves and fish] and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowd.
 - (2) **Mt 4:4** 4 Man will not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.
 - (3) **Mt 28:19-20** 19 Go...and make disciples of all the nations, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, 20 by teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.
- c. Disciples must feed Gentile believers just as they feed Jewish believers (Mt 14:19; 15:36).
 - (1) **Mt 14:19** 19 Breaking the loaves [Jesus] gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to the [Jewish] crowds [of believers].
 - (2) **Mt 15:36** 36 [Jesus] broke [the loaves and fish] and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples to the [Gentile] crowd [of believers].

8. Eschatology.

- a. Blind guides and those who follow them all have the same destiny (Mt 15:14).

Comparison of Matthew's Miraculous Feeding Accounts

Feeding of the 5000	Feeding of the 4000
Jesus goes to an isolated place by the Sea of Galilee (14:13).	Jesus goes up on an isolated mountain by the Sea of Galilee (15:29).
The crowds follow Jesus on foot from the cities (14:13)	Large crowds come to Jesus, bringing their sick (15:30).
Jesus feels in his gut for the crowds and heals their sick (14:14).	As Jesus heals their sick, the crowds marvel and glorify the God of Israel. Jesus feels in his gut for the them (15:31-32).
At evening the disciples ask Jesus to send the crowds away to buy food (14:15).	Jesus does not want to send the crowd away hungry (15:32).
Jesus wants the crowds to eat right where they are (14:16).	The disciples question how they would be able to feed such a large crowd (15:33).
The disciples have only five loaves and two fish (14:17).	The disciples have seven loaves and a few small fish (15:34).
Jesus orders the crowds to sit down on the grass (14:19).	Jesus directs the crowd to sit down on the ground (15:35).
Jesus gives thanks, breaks the loaves and fish, and gives them to the disciples (14:19).	Jesus gives thanks, breaks the loaves and fish, and starts giving them to the disciples (15:36).
The disciples give the loaves and fish to the crowds (14:19).	The disciples give the loaves and fish to the crowds (15:36).
All eat and are satisfied (14:20).	All eat and are satisfied (15:37)
Twelve full baskets are left over (14:20).	Seven large baskets of broken pieces are left over (15:37).
Five thousand men eat, plus women and children (14:21).	Four thousand men eat, plus women and children (15:38).
No enemies of Jesus are present.	No enemies of Jesus are present.
Jesus sends the crowds away and leaves with his disciples (14:22).	Jesus sends away the crowds and gets into a boat with his disciples (15:39).

Notes