

Matthew 15-17; Mark 7-9

Come, Follow Me



Matt. 15.1-20;
Mark 7.1-23;
John 7.1

Scribes and Pharisees
Contend with Jesus over
Cleanliness Traditions

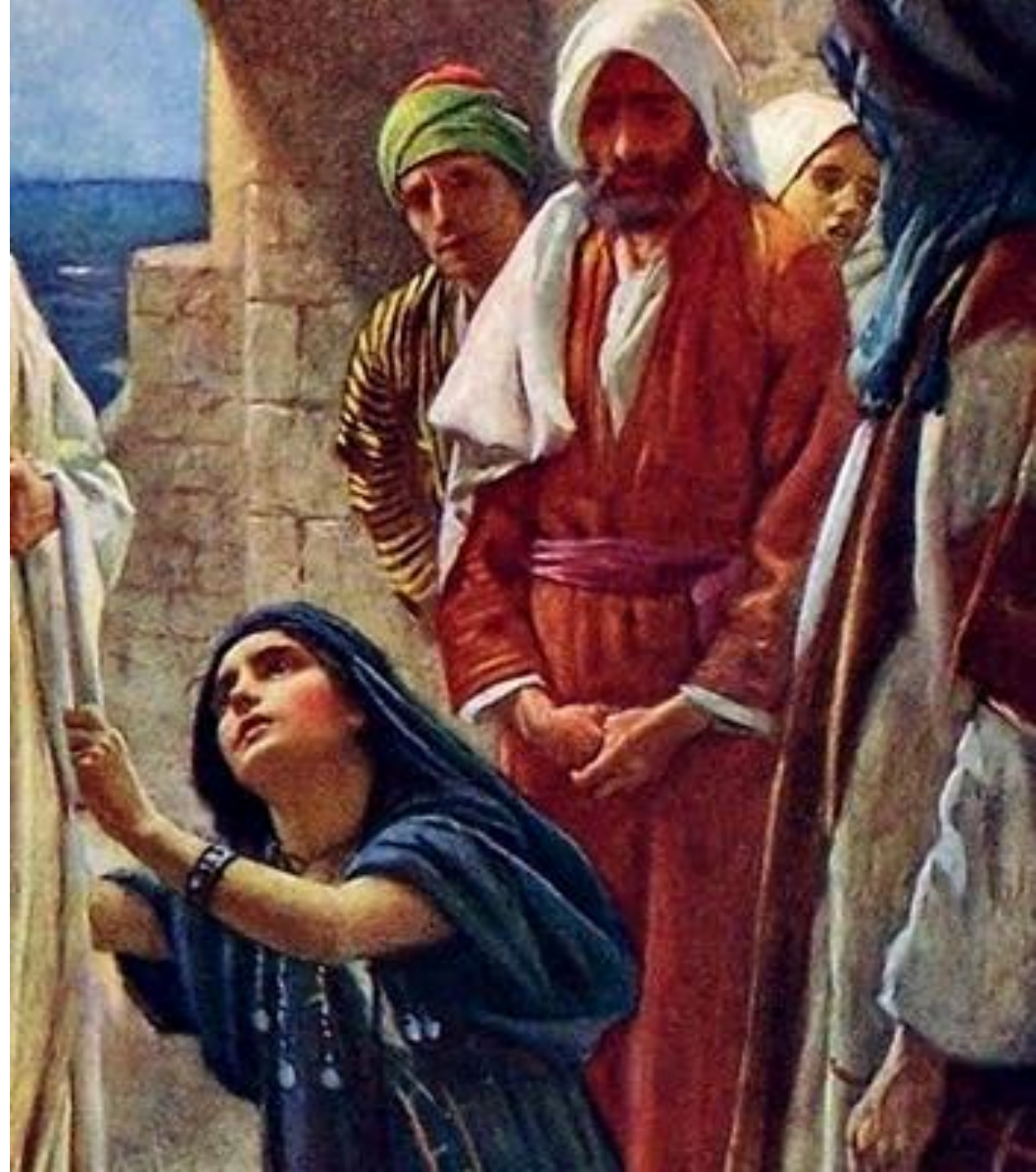
Matt. 15.21-28;
Mark 7.24-30

Jesus Heals a Phoenician Woman's
Daughter



Why does Jesus refer these people as “dogs”?
(Matt. 15.26)

This statement has been interpreted in different ways. Some scholars argue that Jesus was using a common Jewish insult at the time, referring to Gentiles (non-Jews) as "dogs." Others suggest that Jesus was using the word "dog" in a more affectionate way, as a term of endearment. Still, others argue that Jesus was testing the woman's faith, challenging her to demonstrate her persistence and trust in him. Regardless of the interpretation, it is clear that Jesus ultimately grants the woman's request, commending her for her faith: "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted" (Matthew 15.28, NIV).





Mark 7.31-37: Jesus
heals the multitudes
in Decapolis



“An impediment in his speech” (Mark 7.32)

And they bring to him a deaf man, and he had **an impediment in his speech**; and they petitioned him in order that he would put his hand upon him (Mark 7.32).



“And put his finger into his ears, and he spit” (Mark 7.33)

In the ancient world, healers operated in a variety of ways. One such method was the use of saliva or spittle. While it may seem strange to modern readers, there is historical evidence to suggest that the use of saliva as a healing agent was not uncommon. In fact, the ancient Greeks believed that saliva had healing properties, and physicians would sometimes use it to treat wounds and other ailments.



Matt. 15.29-39; Mark
7.31-37, 8.1-10

We must remember that Jesus also feeds 5,000 in another place in the narrative of the Gospel writers (see Matt. 14.13-21; Mark 6.30-4; Luke 9.10-17; John 6). While the feeding of the 4,000 and the feeding of the 5,000 share some similarities, there are also some significant differences:

The feeding of the 4,000

1. Location: The feeding of the 5,000 takes place near Bethsaida (Luke 9.10-14)[\[1\]](#), on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, while the feeding of the 4,000 takes place in the region of the Decapolis, on the southeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.
2. Number of people fed: The two miracles differ in the number of people fed. The feeding of the 5,000 involves five loaves and two fish and feeds 5,000 men (plus women and children), while the feeding of the 4,000 involves seven loaves and a few small fish and feeds 4,000 men (plus women and children).
3. Time of year: The feeding of the 5,000 takes place in the spring, as indicated by the mention of green grass (Mark 6:39), while the feeding of the 4,000 takes place later in the year, as indicated by the mention of the lack of food in the wilderness (Mark 8:1).
4. Duration of the miracle: In the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus tells the disciples to have the people sit down in the grass, then he blesses and breaks the loaves and fish, and the disciples distribute the food. In the feeding of the 4,000, Jesus first has compassion on the people, and then he blesses and breaks the loaves and fish, but it is not explicitly stated who distributes the food.
5. Number of baskets left over: In the feeding of the 5,000, the disciples collect 12 baskets of leftovers, while in the feeding of the 4,000, they collect seven baskets of leftovers.



Matt. 16.5-12; Mark 8.13-21: How is it that you do not understand?

Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (Matt. 16.9-12)

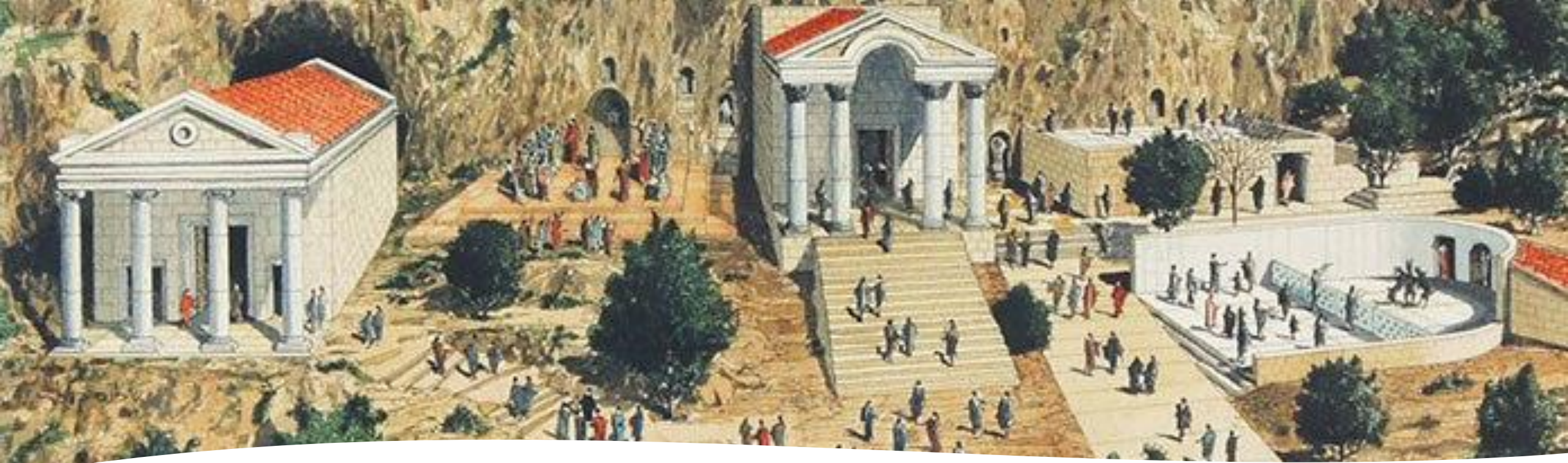
Symbolic Significance

The feeding of the 5,000 and the 4,000 may have symbolic significance, based on their numbers. This is one possible interpretation of the feeding miracles. Some scholars^[1] have suggested that the feeding of the 5,000, which took place in a Jewish area, may represent Jesus' ministry to the Jewish people, who were seen as the covenant people of God.^[2] In contrast, the feeding of the 4,000, which took place in the predominantly Gentile region of the Decapolis, may represent Jesus' ministry to the Gentiles, who were seen as being outside the covenant.

This interpretation is supported by other passages in the Gospels that suggest that Jesus' ministry was focused on the Jewish people, but also extended to Gentiles. For example, in Matthew 15.21-28, Jesus heals the daughter of a Canaanite woman, who is not of the House of Israel, after she demonstrates her great faith in the Savior Jesus Christ (see also Mark 7.24-30).

^[1] St. Augustine is one of these interpreters. He wrote, "Wherefore nothing is without meaning; everything is significant, but requires one that understands: for even this number of the people fed, signified the people that were under the law. For why were there five thousand, but because they were under the law, which is unfolded in the five books of Moses?" Augustine, [Tractate 24](#).

^[2] Origen, a third-century Christian theologian, believed that the number 12 in the feeding of the 5,000 represented the 12 apostles, and that the 12 baskets of leftovers represented the completeness of the Gospel message. See: Origen, [Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew \(Book XI\)](#).



“Flesh and blood
have not revealed
it unto thee...”
(Matt. 16.17)

The Temple of Pan (in modern day [Banias](#)) is where Jesus is having this conversation with his disciples in the text of Matthew 16. The purpose of the Temple of Pan, located in what is now modern-day Banias, was to worship the Greek god Pan. The temple was built during the Hellenistic period and was considered a major center of worship for the god Pan, who was associated with nature, fertility, and rustic music. The site was also believed to be the location of the grotto where Pan was born, which added to its religious significance. Behind this temple was a cave, known as “The Cave of Pan,” and in this cave there was much water.

Banias

The patrons of the Temple of Pan in Banias likely placed the carcasses of sacrificial animals in the water behind the temple as a form of offering to the god Pan. Pan was associated with nature and was often depicted as a protector of flocks and herds, so offerings of animals would have been considered particularly appropriate. Additionally, water was considered a sacred element in many ancient religions, and offerings made into water were believed to have a special spiritual significance.



“Upon this rock I will build my church” (Matt. 16.18)

There have many interpretations over the years as to the meaning of this passage.

1. The “rock” is Revelation. Joseph Smith taught, "Jesus in His teaching says, 'Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' What rock? Revelation." (TPJS, p. 274)
2. Jesus Christ is the Rock.^[1] Joseph F. Smith combines this idea with the concept of revelation to support this view.^[2]

^[1] "Some believe the rock to be Jesus himself. This was the interpretation of St. Jerome (A.D. 347-419), and his views were adopted eventually by St. Augustine (A.D. 354-387). Keep in mind that these two men are considered among the greatest doctors of the Roman Church." Sidney Sperry, *The Meaning of Peter's Confession, Improvement Era*, 1949.

^[2] "Some have held that revelation alone was the 'Rock' referred to. This could not be, because without Christ, revelation would not avail. Some have held it was 'Christ alone' that was meant as the 'Rock'; but this could not be, because without revelation, not even Simon Bar-jona could know that Jesus was 'The Christ, the Son of the Living God.' See: Joseph F. Smith, *From Prophet to Son: Advice of Joseph F. Smith to His Missionary Sons*, compiled by Hyrum M. Smith III and Scott G. Kenney, 87-88.

“Upon this rock I will build my church” (Matt. 16.18)

There have many interpretations over the years as to the meaning of this passage.

3. Peter is the rock.

4. The rock is a confession of faith in Jesus Christ. . In this view, the "rock" is the faith of Peter and the other apostles in Jesus as the Son of God, which forms the foundation of the Church.[\[1\]](#)

5. The rock is the gospel message. This seems to be the idea conveyed in some passages of the Doctrine and Covenants. For example, in D&C 33 we read: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for a remission of sins, yea, be baptized even by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost. Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and remember that they shall have faith in me or they can in nowise be saved; and upon this rock I will build my church; yea, **upon this rock ye are built**, and if ye continue, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you” (D&C 33.11-13).

6. A combination of these ideas.

[\[1\]](#) Sperry, “Confession.”



“The gates of hell shall not prevail against it”
(Matt. 16.18)

Jesus is proclaiming war on the forces of Hades. In the New Testament context, from my reading of the Enoch literature, Jesus is claiming his right to take possession of the earth against the forces of the rebellious Watchers who departed God’s presence. See Enoch 6-8^[1] and Michael Heiser’s book *The Unseen Realm*.

[1] The fallen angels swear an oath (Enoch 6.4-5), and do so, binding themselves with curses on this oath upon Mount Hermon (Enoch 6.6). They teach the sons of Adam the art of war (Enoch 8.1), and how to make jewelry (Enoch 8.1), as well as “to commit fornication” (Enoch 8.2), how to “cast spells and cut roots... and release spells” (Enoch 8.3).



Matt. 16.21-23; Mark
8.31-33; Luke 9.21-22:
Jesus Foretells his Death

Mark 8.22-26: A Blind Man of Bethsaida is Healed... “Men as Trees, Walking”





The Mount of Transfiguration

Matt. 17.1-13; Mark 9.2-13; Luke 9.28-36

The Mount of Transfiguration

An Endowment

Joseph Fielding Smith stated that these men received their endowment at this time:

“I am convinced in my own mind that when the Savior took the three disciples up on the mount, which is spoken of as the ‘Mount of Transfiguration,’ he there gave unto them the ordinances that pertain to the house of the Lord and that they were endowed. That was the only place they could go. That place became holy and sacred for the rites of salvation which were performed on that occasion.”

(Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:169.)

Who were the messengers that appeared at the Mount of Transfiguration?

From the records that we now have, we can ascertain that the following were present at the Mount:

- Heavenly Father – Matthew 17:5.
- Jesus, in a glorified state – Matthew 17:2.
- Moses – Matthew 17:3.
- Elijah – Matthew 17:3b.
- The Holy Ghost
- John the Baptist – Matthew 17:3, Joseph Smith Translation – Matthew 17:14. 5
- Another Elias who should come and restore all things – Joseph Smith Translation – Matthew 17:14.

There is much we simply do not know about this event

“In the providence of the Lord the saints know some things that the world does not know about the spiritual outpouring of divine grace that fell on the Mount of Transfiguration. ***But even latter-day revelation does not set forth the full account, and until men attain a higher state of spiritual understanding than they now enjoy, they will continue to see through a glass darkly*** and to know only in part the visionary experiences of the presiding officers of the meridian Church. That which is known, however, singles out this night as one of the most important and glorious in the lives of those who saw within the veil and who heard the voices of the heavenly participants.”

(Bruce R. McConkie, [The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary](#), 3: 54, emphasis added.)



Matt. 17.14-21; Mark 9.14-29; Luke 9.37-42:
Jesus heals the man's son with the demon

Why could we not cast him out? (Matt. 17.19) Because of your unbelief... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you! (Matt. 17.20)

Luke 8.26-40; Matt. 8.28-34; Mark 5.1-20: Jesus Casts out Legion into the Gadarene Swine (see also Luke 9.37-43; Matt. 17.14-21; Mark 9.14-29, where a boy who has a demon is healed).