

Healing and Feeding of Gentiles

📖 Matthew 15:29-39

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Matthew's gospel charts the offer of the kingdom to the nation Israel, the rejection of the kingdom by that generation of Israel and the postponement of the kingdom during which time Jesus is training His disciples for ministry during the period of postponement and preparing for His cross work. We are in the section that devotes a lot of interest to Jesus' training of His disciples for ministry in the postponement during His absence.

We saw last time in the pericope of Matthew 15:21-28, the interaction between Jesus and the Canaanite woman from Tyre. This fascinating event begins in 15:21 with Jesus withdrawing into the district of Tyre and Sidon due to opposition from the scribes and Pharisees. This departure into a region so heavily associated with heathenism was a marked step toward the future global mission to the Gentiles. It must have surprised the disciples. Their future ministry would be characterized by even more surprises. The parallel in Mark 7:24 adds that when He arrived He went into a house, hoping not to be noticed. His most likely purpose was to escape opposition so that He could teach His disciples in a quiet atmosphere. However, Mark also reveals that His presence in the territory did not go unnoticed. One woman who noticed, in 15:22, was a Canaanite woman. Her reference to Jesus by two Messianic titles, Lord and Son of David, evidences that she recognized Him as the Messiah. What follows is four requests. First, she requested mercy be shown to her since her daughter was demonized. This meant that her daughter was constantly being injured by and under the control of a demon. The mother was obviously in a very frustrating situation which she was powerless to resolve. In 15:23 Jesus, seemingly without compassion, ignored her first request. However, we gather that He ignored her because she was not recognizing that blessing comes through the Jews and it was the Jews mission to take blessing to Gentiles outside the land. The location of this interaction outside the land is of tremendous importance in understanding His lack of response. If Jesus had begun to complete Israel's mission outside the land on a large scale it would have been infringing on their responsibility. Second, despite rejection the woman kept on shouting at them from behind, obviously requesting mercy. The disciples, being annoyed, implored Him to send her away. In 15:24 He answered her second request saying, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This also seems that Jesus did not care about anyone that was not Jewish. However, what He was doing was teaching her a theology lesson. The Gentile woman had to understand that God has a covenant only with the nation Israel and thus Jesus'

mission was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Third, in 15:25, she still did not give up. Instead “she came and took the posture of worship saying, “Lord, help me!” And yet, in 15:26 He rejected her yet again saying, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” His responses have moved from a seeming lack of compassion and care to insults. But this was a continuation of the theology lesson that was so important for this woman to learn in order to receive blessing. Blessing comes only through the Jewish people. Gentiles cannot receive blessing directly as this woman was requesting. The blessing was given to Israel by the covenant and so only as those blessings were cast aside could a Gentile partake of them. In this sense she was not a child but a dog and the bread did not belong to her. In 15:27 she demonstrates that she learned the theology lesson and acquiesced to the truth that Gentiles receive blessing only as they are mediated to them by Israel. So we find a fourth request, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.” At this Jesus answered in 15:28, “O woman, your faith is great, it shall be done for you as you wish. And her daughter was healed from that hour.” The reason Jesus healed the woman’s daughter at this point was precisely because she submitted to the theology of the word of God. She recognized that she was not in the position of the natural children of Israel and admitted that her place was a family pet. On these grounds any scraps that the children cast aside could be salvaged by her. When she admitted that Gentile blessing was only received through the nation Israel she received blessing.

This is another example in Matthew of Gentiles seeking the King in contrast to Jews who were increasingly rejecting Him. We think the interaction was recorded by Matthew because in hindsight he realized that it foreshadowed the Gentile predominance in the Church. Therefore, what Jesus seems to be doing is preparing His disciples for their future mission outside the land to Gentiles. This would initially even cause shock then but at least Jesus had paved the way and they could recall this circumstance.

Tonight we come to Matt 15:29-31 where we find another instance of Jesus interacting with Gentiles. We know these were Gentiles because at the end of verse 31 it says and they glorified the God of Israel. Toussaint says, “This again is a forecast of Gentile blessings, and the Gentiles here glorify the God of Israel.”¹ Therefore, Jesus was continuing to prepare His disciples for their future ministry to Gentiles.

In 15:29 the stage is set. And departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee. Where had He departed from? From “the district of Tyre and Sidon,” the two districts referred to earlier in 15:21. Again, Tyre and Sidon were within the larger region of Phoenicia north of Israel, a very heathen territory that corresponds to modern day Lebanon. So in 15:29 Jesus went back to the land of Israel and was now going along by the Sea of Galilee. The parallel in Mark 7:31 says He was in “the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis.” So Mark actually prompts us to think of the route He took; how they moved north from Tyre through the district of Sidon. I don’t know the exact political boundaries so I don’t have an exact route but basically a little north through Sidon and then east toward Dan and Mt Hermon.² Schlegel has them passing through the same region and both of them view the transfiguration as occurring later in the

chronology of Matthew 16.³ At this point the main thing is they travel north from Tyre, west near Dan and Mt Hermon and then south into the region known as the Decapolis. The reason the route is designated by Mark is to show that Jesus avoided the territory of Herod Antipas, who had previously sought to kill Him, because it was not yet His time. The "Decapolis" was a territory designated by the two parts of the word, "deka" meaning "ten" and "-polis" meaning "city" and so the Decapolis refers to a region of "ten cities."⁴ Of the ten cities, nine lay east of the Jordan River and one, Bethshan, lies to the west. The significance of these cities is that they were all predominately Gentile. Shepard says, "The ten cities were occupied by heathen people, the Jews never having recovered them after the Babylonian captivity. The reception accorded to Jesus on arrival in this semi-pagan district seems to have been favorable."⁵ So Jesus' intent in going to this region was, once again, to minister to the Gentiles in order to prepare His disciples for their future ministry to Gentiles. Remember that there was a very strict boundary between Jews and Gentiles and so such preparation would be necessary in the age to come where Gentile salvation is the primary thrust.

The Matthew text simply says and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there. He is on the eastern banks of the Sea of Galilee. In the topography these banks are steeper than those around Capernaum and so they are more like mountains than the hillsides one observes near Capernaum. It was these steeper cliffs that the swine, that Jesus cast the legion of demons into, descended into the lake and drowned (Matt 8:28ff). On this occasion He was sitting there...up on the mountain and 15:30 says large crowds came to Him bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others. The list of diverse disabilities caused by the effects of the Fall are astonishing. No human after Adam and Eve are without some disabilities, some marring effects of sin. We have become weak compared to our original estate. The natural inclination of those with less disabilities is to bring those with the greater disabilities to the One who can do something about it, the Master Physician. Matthew simply records that there were large crowds bringing with them many disabled people and laying them down at His feet. He does not mention any specific individuals that were healed, simply that He healed them all. However, the parallel in Mark 7:32ff spends a significant amount of time on one man who was both blind and mute. Jesus healed him by putting His fingers into his ears, seemingly boring a new ear hole, and after spitting, touched his tongue with saliva; looked into heaven and with a deep sigh said, "Be opened!" At that instant his ears were opened and his tongue was released so that he could speak clearly. Jesus told the man not to tell anyone. However, in the Matthew account the large crowds may have come to Him with their sick and lame and blind and crippled and mute precisely because the individual mentioned in Mark did not keep silent but spread the word of his healing.

If we look ahead to verse 32 we see that they were bringing people that needed healing for "three days." And the end of verse 30 says He healed them. We are to conclude that He healed them all. There was nothing too difficult for Him. No one challenged whether He could heal them. It is plainly stated in the text that He healed them. This, of course, demonstrated that Jesus was the King and He had the power and authority to bring in the fifth kingdom conditions, the kingdom of heaven on earth. When He comes in His kingdom He will restore all

things. His kingdom will not be populated by the lame, the crippled, the blind and the mute but by those who have been restored from such physical disabilities and made whole again. We do not really understand what true wholeness is until we are resurrected. But this is a truth of the word of God that we are to look forward to. It is one of many reasons we should seek His kingdom first because the time of the kingdom is the time when the effects of the Fall are dramatically decreased and One will rule with perfect righteousness!

Now when these healings happened in 15:31, the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing. Again, everyone they brought to Him was healed and they marveled or were astonished. These were congenital physical disabilities. The nerves that connect the thinking patterns in the brain to the tongue were corrected, the nerves, muscle tissue and bone strength were instantaneously restored and so forth and so on. These were tremendous Messianic miracles that foreshadowed the kingdom. J. Vernon McGee says, "Again I call your attention to the multitudes of folk whom Jesus healed. There were not just a few isolated cases that could not be substantiated, but there were so many that nobody denied He performed miracles of healing."⁶

In light of the many miracles the large crowds responded properly by glorifying the God of Israel. That was not only proper but obvious. What else would you do? This response indicates at least three things. First, it indicates that the crowds were Gentile. Otherwise Matthew would not have specified that they glorified the God of Israel. The Gentiles had many gods and goddesses. They were polytheists. But they recognize here not only that their gods and goddesses were powerless to do these miracles but that the God of Israel is powerful to do them. Therefore, they are coming to know the one true God and that He has a unique relationship to the people of Israel. Second, they understood that it was the God of Israel who was healing them through Jesus. They had brought the disabled to Jesus and they saw Jesus heal them all. But they worshipped the God of Israel. This means that Jesus was evidently giving credit for His healing power to the God of Israel. Therefore, they would have to know that Jesus had a special relationship with this God. Third, they understood that glory was due to the God of Israel for the marvelous things that were being done. This is the proper response. The God of Israel had power and authority over all physical disabilities. There was nothing too hard for Him. Therefore, He is to be glorified.

So why does Matthew record this short pericope? Again, to forecast the great Gentile blessing that will come in the Church age and the fact that Gentiles *en masse* will glorify the God of Israel in that age. This was already a settled matter since that generation of Israel had committed the unpardonable sin in Matt 12. Now the disciples needed to see that their ministry will by and large be bringing blessing to Gentiles who will worship the God of Israel. We are quick to point out that just because Israel rejected God did not mean that God rejected Israel. He is still the God of Israel. That is who they worshipped and that is who we worship.

In 15:32 we come to another feeding. What's the title of this pericope? Most Bible's say something like, "The Feeding of the Four Thousand." But again I would highlight from the start that if we take into consideration

verse 38, how many might have been there? “four thousand men, besides women and children.” Then we can imagine that if each man had a wife and one child that is already 12,000. Is 20,000 too high an estimate? It seems not to me. Probably at least 20,000 were fed on this occasion.

Now you can imagine that it is common for people to confuse the feeding of the 25,000 with the feeding of the 20,000. Much effort is made to blend these two accounts into one picture and thereby put the inerrancy of Scripture into question. Therefore, it is important to point out that there are two types of intertextual evidence that prove these are two separate feedings. First, the direct statement of Mark 8:18-20. Here Jesus treated the two feedings as separate saying, “And do you not remember, ¹⁹when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?” They said to Him, “Twelve.” ²⁰“When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?” And they said to Him, “Seven.” This statement alone is sufficient proof that there were two different feedings. Second, the differences noted here as well as further comparison also show two separate feedings. In the earlier they were near Bethsaida Julias, in the latter they were on the other side in the Decapolis; in the former he fed Jewish people, in the latter He fed Gentile people; in the earlier there were 5,000 men, in the latter there were 4,000 men; in the earlier they had five loaves, in the latter they had seven loaves; in the earlier they had two fish, in the latter a “few small fish;” in the earlier they picked up twelve full baskets, in the latter seven large baskets full. There are other differences beyond these that should not simply be glossed over. Jesus fed two separate crowds and there is a very good reason why. That is the entire point of the lesson as we will see.

Earlier Feeding	Later Feeding
Bethsaida-Julias	Decapolis
Jews	Gentiles
5,000 men	4,000 men
Five loaves	Seven loaves
Two fish	A “few small fish”
Twelve full baskets	Seven large baskets full

Let’s look at this feeding. In 15:32, Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, “I feel compassion for the people, 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.” Now a point of similarity between the two feedings is that in both of them Jesus felt compassion for the people. When Jesus saw their lack of food He had compassion on them. They had been with Him for three days and during those three days had nothing to eat. That is a pretty long time to go without food but obviously they were able to withstand it because what is three days without food when your loved ones are being healed? Nevertheless, as Jesus notes at the end of the verse, they might faint on the way back home. Human beings are limited physically. We have limited energy resources. Look at what this is

saying if He provides them with energy? Isn't it saying that He is unlimited in energy resources? Isn't it saying that He is omnipotent? Of course it is.

Now in 15:33 we see a key to the pericope. This is the disciples question. "Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?" Now I thought they had been through this before. What happened the previous time when Jesus was told to send the people away so they could go buy some food? Jesus told them, "you give them something to eat!" And they said, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." The point was they had resources but they lacked sufficient resources for feeding thousands of people. Then He took the five loaves and two fish, told the people to sit down, looked up to heaven, blessed the food, broke the loaves and gave it to the disciples to give to the crowds. What happens here? Same basic thing. Why is this happening twice? J. Vernon McGee says, "Let's not miss the message that is here. Frankly, it seems like just a rerun of the feeding of the five thousand. It appears to be a repetition, and we wonder why Matthew included it since it doesn't seem to add any further advancement of the messianic claims of the Lord Jesus...this miracle shows how slow the disciples were to learn. They had already witnessed the feeding of the five thousand...yet here they raise the same old objections..."⁷ Where are we going to get so many loaves in this desolate place? If they had learned the lesson the first time they would have known when you are standing in the middle of a desert with Jesus you have access to more food than the whole world can contain. But evidently they didn't learn the lesson. They had not thought through the lesson. They had heard and seen the lesson but soon forgotten. How fickle. You can condemn the disciples but if you are honest you are just as fickle. How many times have you heard a lesson from the word of God and you forgot it by next week, falling right back into your habit patterns of thinking in terms of the ordinary? This is the lesson of repetition. Repetition, they say, is the mother of all knowledge. Jesus is going to get on to them later on for not remembering these things, for forgetting these lessons. The real reason people forget the lessons is because they don't go back and think through the lessons. Instead they leave, get thinking about something else and get wrapped up in that and so when the time comes to apply the lesson they don't remember. What would the disciples have said in verse 33 if they had remembered the lesson? They would have said, "Remember when you fed the 5,000? Why don't you do that now, we have seven loaves and a few small fish." I think that would have got Jesus' attention! Instead they say, "Where could we possibly get so many loaves out in a desert like this?" The point is they were lagging behind. They were slowing down the training because they were not keeping up with the lessons. J. Vernon McGee says, "This chapter reveals that our Lord's disciples are not keeping up. They are slow to believe and slow to understand. This is actually hindering the Lord Jesus...Frankly, He is very patient with you and me, also. Many of us need to catch up; we are far behind in our belief and understanding. Oh, that we might *believe* Him!"⁸ If we are to believe Him we need to review the lessons we have been through time and time again. That is because faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Unfortunately, too many of us are listening to other voices, inundating ourselves with politics, world events or other things. These voices become so impressive that we forget the word of God and function in unbelief, just like Jesus' disciples.

In 15:34 Jesus has to teach the same lesson again. He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish." The amount of resources is different than before but the issue is the same; they did not have sufficient resources. In 15:35 Jesus directed the people to sit on the ground, same as before.⁹ In 15:36 He took the seven loaves and the fish, same as before, He took all that they gave Him. and giving thanks, same as before, He broke them, same as before, and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people, all the same as before. This is the exact same lesson. 15:37, And they all ate and were satisfied, same as before. And they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full, the amount left over is different than before but the issue is the same; there was more than sufficient resources for all. The lesson is the same. How many of you remember the lesson? What is this teaching? If you don't remember it, you're the same as the disciples. You're not setting your mind on Scripture, you are listening to other voices and you think those other voices are more important than the word of God and so they drown it out. The lesson is that when we give Him all we have, even though it may be very little, He will make it sufficient for all. That is the way ministry to others works. As Pentecost says, "This miracle was designed not only to meet the physical need of the multitude but to impress on the Twelve a lesson that Christ had first taught them in the feeding of the five thousand. This lesson was that when they saw a need which they were unable to fulfill, Christ could work through what they made available to Him...The ministry would not depend on their ability but on their availability."¹⁰ Are you making available to Him what you have whether talents or gifts? It is critical to understand that we are not just working with what we can make available. We see that we have only a little to offer and are overwhelmed by the situation? We can't see any way to address it and so we don't address it. When we realize that the equation involves much more than what we can make available we are thinking correctly. They took what little they had, obviously that was not enough to feed thousands of people, but when connected with what Christ could make of it it was enough to feed thousands of people, and even more. This is right thinking. All that is being requested of us is that we make available to Him the little we have as far as talents and gifts are concerned. He is the one responsible for making that little go a long way. That is the kind of Savior we have. He makes the seemingly impossible not only possible but achievable.

In 15:38, And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. Again, if each man was married to one woman and had one child the crowd numbered at least 12,000. Certainly we can imagine much more in a world where larger families were commonplace. The number may have easily reached 30,000 or more. Of course, even feeding four thousand from seven loaves and a few small fish would have demonstrated the same point. And that point is what? If we make available to Him what little we have, He is able to take that and make it go a long way, so long that it is not only sufficient for all, but more than sufficient, with some left over. This ultimately gets into the teaching of the word of God and what little I or you can offer but which God can use to stretch a long way.

However, there is one further lesson that we can learn. The previous feeding related to Israel only. Jesus as sufficient to minister to the nation Israel. However, on this occasion, Jesus ministered to Gentiles. Toussaint says,

"This incident no doubt made a profound impression on the disciples. By it the King taught that He was not only sufficient to minister to Israel but to the world as well. In addition, the disciples were instructed that they would be empowered to minister not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles."¹¹

In 15:39, And sending away the crowds, Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan. He would have travelled from the east side of the Sea of Galilee to the west side in order to reach Magadan. This is the only reference to Magadan in the NT. The parallel in Mark 8:10 says they went to "the district of Dalmanutha." Pentecost says, "Magadan was the name of a town, while Dalmanutha in Aramaic meant "the harbor." Thus Dalmanutha was the harbor of Magadan and was located near Capernaum."¹² There is a location today that is identified as Magdala and is traditionally identified as the birthplace of Mary Magdalene. If this identification is correct then Magadan/Magdala is about three miles north of Tiberias.

In summary, we have two periscopes: the healing of many Gentiles in 15:29-31 and the feeding of the 4,000 Gentiles in 15:32-39. Both are intensively Gentile relative to earlier portions of Matthew signifying that Jesus was training His disciples for their future ministry to Gentiles in the Church age. In 15:29 Jesus departed from Tyre, moved north through Sidon, east toward Dan and south into the Decapolis along the eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee. There He went up on the steeper cliffs of the mountain and was sitting there. The parallel in Mark 8 mentions that a man who was both blind and mute came to Him and He healed him telling him not to tell anyone. However, it appears that the man did not remain silent and so in 15:30 large crowds came to Him bringing all with physical disabilities to Him and laying them at His feet and He healed them all. As a result, the crowd was astonished as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, the lame walking and the blind seeing. Jesus as able to bring in the kingdom conditions. These conditions involve the restoration of those with physical disabilities. As a result they glorified the God of Israel indicating that they were Gentile, connected Jesus with the God of Israel and understood that He alone was worthy of being glorified. In 15:32 we have the feeding of the four thousand. By direct statements of Scripture and comparison of the two feedings we conclude that they are distinct events that set the stage for Jesus' later rebuke of His disciples for forgetting the lessons He had taught them. The first feeding was of Jews, the second of Gentiles; the first occurred in Bethsaida-Julias, the second in the Decapolis, the first was of 5,000, the second of 4,000; the first started with five loaves and two fish, the second with seven loaves and a few small fish. So while there are similarities, when we study the Bible the differences are more important than the similarities. In 15:32 Jesus had a compassion for these Gentiles who had remained with Him for three days without anything to eat. He was about to send them away but knew that humans were physically limited and needed food lest they faint along the way. In 15:33 the disciples manifest that they had not learned the prior lesson. They said to Him, "Where do we get so much food out in this desert?" In 15:34, very patiently Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have? And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish." In 15:35 He directed the people to sit down on the ground, perhaps so that all could see what He was doing. In 15:36 He took the seven loaves and fish, gave thanks, broke them and started giving them to the disciples who gave them to the people. In 15:37 they all ate and were satisfied. They then picked up seven large

baskets full. In 15:38 the number who ate is stated to be four thousand men, besides women and children, which when included could easily be 20-30,000. After this the crowds could make their way home without fainting and so in 15:39 He sent them away and went by boat across the lake from Decapolis to the region of Magadan.

In conclusion, what can we learn? The first pericope teaches that the God of Israel would bless many Gentiles through Jesus in the coming Church age. This great blessing does not necessarily refer to physical miracles but simply to the fact of blessing coming upon Gentiles. This has been and is taking place. In the current age in which we live the majority of those who respond positively to the gospel are Gentiles. In agreement with this, Paul says in Romans 11 that when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in all Israel will be saved. In other words, when the last Gentile believes who is to be a part of the Church then the Church will be complete and God's plan for Israel will resume resulting in Israel being saved and brought into the kingdom. The second pericope teaches the same lesson as the first time this miracle was done. If we make our gifts, talents and possessions available to Him then He will take them and make them sufficient for bringing satisfaction to all. It is not how much ability we have but how much availability. A third lesson the second pericope teaches is that the King is sufficient not only for Israel but for the entire world as well. He had fed both a multitude of Israel and a multitude of Gentiles. The intense Gentile interest is certainly there to prepare His disciples and us for ministry in this Church age. Oh that we would realize that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation and therefore it is not our ability to express it but our availability to share it which results in salvation. Then we might share it more often and with more expectation of God using it, knowing that it does not depend upon us but Him. Finally, a fourth and important lesson, let us not lag behind in learning the Scripture. The disciples were lagging behind. They should have been much further down the road to maturity. Let us pursue maturity. In 1 Cor 3 Paul chided the believers at Corinth for not having grown to partake of solid food but being able only to receive milk. God expects growth and when we're not growing fast enough it's a tragedy, not a victory. In Hebrews 5 the author rebukes the believers saying, "by this time you ought to be teachers... but you have need of someone to teach you the elementary things of the word of God." Don't fall back like the Hebrews, they were regressing in the spiritual life. That is a deplorable scenario. Where are you? God expects growth and that means applying yourself to the word. Are you applying yourself to the word? Are you seeking mastery of the Scriptures?

¹ Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 196.

² Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Historical and Geographical Maps of Israel and Surrounding Territories*, page 158.

³ William Schlegel, *Satellite Bible Atlas*, map 9-6.

⁴ "These cities were Scythopolis, i.e., "city of the Scythians", (ancient Bethshean, the only one of the ten cities on the west of Jordan), Hippos, Gadara, Pella (to which the Christians fled just before the destruction of Jerusalem), Philadelphia (ancient Rabbath-ammon), Gerasa, Dion, Canatha, Raphana, and Damascus." M. G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893).

⁵Shepard cited by J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 245.

⁶J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Gospels (Matthew 14-28)*, electronic ed., vol. 35 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 40.

⁷J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Gospels (Matthew 14-28)*, electronic ed., vol. 35 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 41.

⁸J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Gospels (Matthew 14-28)*, electronic ed., vol. 35 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 42.

⁹It's important to look at the similarities in passages that describe similar events but the differences are more important. This may not be too critical in passages like this but when you study something like the timing of the rapture it becomes much more important. People have a tendency to link passages to the same event because of the similarities. For example, 1 Thess 4:13-18 has a trumpet and clouds and Matt 24:30 has a trumpet and clouds. These superficial similarities result in concluding that the two passages are speaking of one event and the rapture occurring in conjunction with the second coming. Similarities are important but when classifying things the differences are more important. All trees have similarities but it is the differences which allow us to classify them differently and not confuse one tree for another.

¹⁰J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 246.

¹¹Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 197.

¹²J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 246-47.