

# Mark 8:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

## Analysis

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**When the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven**—Jesus continues the catechism, forcing disciples to recall the second feeding's details. The seven large baskets (σπυρίδες, spyrides) from the 4,000 feeding (Gentile audience) parallel the twelve kophinoi from the 5,000 feeding (Jewish audience). Both demonstrate superabundant provision—different numbers but identical principle: Christ provides more than enough for all who come to Him.

Seven signifies covenant completeness (creation week, sabbatical cycles)—Jesus' provision for Gentiles is just as complete as for Jews. The parallel interrogation (v. 19: five/five thousand/twelve; v. 20: seven/four thousand/seven) emphasizes dual testimony—two feeding miracles establish irrefutable witness to Jesus' creative power (Deuteronomy 19:15). Yet disciples worry about one loaf (v. 14). Jesus exposes the absurdity: He who made twelve baskets from five loaves and seven baskets from seven loaves can certainly sustain them with one loaf—or with no loaves at all.

## Historical Context

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The large baskets (spyrides) were substantial containers used for cargo transport (big enough to hold a person, Acts 9:25). This emphasizes the magnitude of surplus—not handfuls but massive quantities remained. The Gentile feeding in Decapolis (Mark 7:31-8:9) demonstrated Jesus' mission beyond Israel's borders, fulfilling

Isaiah's prophecy of Gentile inclusion (Isaiah 49:6; 56:6-7). Early church saw these two feedings as foreshadowing the gospel's proclamation to Jews first, then Gentiles (Romans 1:16).

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How do the two feedings (twelve and seven baskets) demonstrate that Christ's provision doesn't discriminate between ethnic or social categories?
2. What does Jesus' patient questioning teach about the process of spiritual awakening—leading people to recognize truth rather than forcing conclusions?
3. How might anxiety about present needs be revealing failure to remember and apply past experiences of God's faithfulness?

## Interlinear Text

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Ὅτε δὲ τοὺς Ἐπτά εἰς τοὺς τετρακισχιλίους πόσων  
when And G3588 Seven among G3588 four thousand how many  
G3753 G1161 G2033 G1519 G5070 G4214

σπυρίδων πληρώματα κλασμάτων ἤρατε Οἱ δὲ εἶπον,  
baskets full of fragments took ye up G3588 And they said  
G4711 G4138 G2801 G142 G1161 G2036

Ἐπτά

Seven  
G2033