

# Mark 8:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

## Analysis

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**They that had eaten were about four thousand** (τετρακισχίλιοι, tetrakischilioi)—the specific number underscores historical reality and witnesses' testimony. Matthew 15:38 adds 'besides women and children,' meaning the actual crowd exceeded 4,000, perhaps 10,000-15,000 total. The feeding demonstrates Jesus' messianic credentials—only God can create bread from nothing.

**He sent them away** (ἀπέλυσεν, apelysen)—Jesus dismisses the crowd after their physical and spiritual needs are met. Unlike demagogues who manipulate crowds for personal gain, Jesus refuses to exploit His popularity. After feeding the 5,000, crowds tried to make Him king by force (John 6:15); Jesus resists such temptation, maintaining His mission's spiritual focus. This 'sending away' prefigures the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)—Christ feeds His people then sends them forth as witnesses.

## Historical Context

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The number 4,000 held symbolic significance in Jewish numerology—four representing the earth's four corners (Revelation 7:1), suggesting universal scope. First-century rabbis debated whether the Messiah would perform miracles exceeding Moses' manna provision. Jesus' two feeding miracles answer definitively—He is the prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15) whom God promised. The dismissal after feeding contrasts with Roman imperial grain distributions (annona) designed to create political dependency and control.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Jesus' refusal to exploit the fed crowd challenge modern celebrity-Christianity and platform-building?
2. What does the 'sending away' teach about genuine ministry—meeting needs then releasing people rather than creating dependency?
3. How might Jesus be calling you to feed others spiritually without demanding ongoing allegiance or recognition?

## Interlinear Text

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ἦσαν δὲ οἱ φαγόντες ὡς τετρακισχίλιοι καὶ  
were And G3588 they that had eaten about four thousand and  
G2258 G1161 G5315 G5613 G5070 G2532

ἀπέλυσεν αὐτούς

away them  
G630 G846

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