

# Matthew 14:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

## Analysis

---

'And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.' Matthew specifies the miracle's scope: approximately 5000 men (ἄνδρες/ andres, adult males) 'beside women and children' (χωρὶς γυναικῶν καὶ παιδίων/ chōris gynaikōn kai paidiōn). Total crowd likely reached 15,000-20,000 people. This massive number eliminates natural explanations: no one secretly distributed hidden food to such multitudes. Reformed theology sees this as demonstrating Christ's divine power—only God creates from nothing or multiplies matter. The specification 'men, beside women and children' shows Matthew's historical precision and reveals Jesus's counter-cultural ministry: He valued and served women/children, groups often marginalized in ancient society. The feeding demonstrates Jesus's compassionate provision for all—regardless of age, gender, or status. This anticipates gospel's universal scope: salvation for all who believe, regardless of human distinctions (Galatians 3:28).

## Historical Context

---

Ancient censuses typically counted only adult males—women/children weren't enumerated. Matthew follows this convention while noting their presence. If 5000 men, and assuming many had families, total could easily reach 15,000-20,000. This massive crowd testifies to Jesus's enormous popularity in Galilee. The setting—remote area near Bethsaida—shows people traveled significant distances, walked miles, to hear Jesus. Their commitment despite inconvenience demonstrates hunger for His teaching. The miracle's public nature—thousands of witnesses—

meant it couldn't be fabricated or explained away. All four Gospels record this miracle, emphasizing its significance. Early church saw this as demonstrating Jesus's deity and foreshadowing eucharistic provision. Throughout history, this miracle has encouraged believers facing material need: the God who fed multitudes can meet any legitimate need.

## Related Passages

---

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

---

1. What does the massive crowd size teach about the miracle's undeniability and Jesus's popularity?
2. How does Jesus's inclusion and provision for women and children demonstrate God's heart for all people?
3. When have you witnessed God provide for large needs in ways that eliminated natural explanations?

## Interlinear Text

---

οἱ	δὲ	ἐσθίοντες	ἥσαν	ἄνδρες	ώσει	πεντακισχίλιοι
G3588	<b>And</b>	<b>they that had eaten</b>	<b>were</b>	<b>men</b>	<b>about</b>	<b>five thousand</b>
G1161		G2068	G2258	G435	G5616	G4000

χωρὶς	γυναικῶν	καὶ	παιδίων
<b>beside</b>	<b>women</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>children</b>
G5565	G1135	G2532	G3813

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Philippians 4:19** (Parallel theme): But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

**Acts 4:4** (Parallel theme): Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

---

From KJV Study • [kjvstudy.org](http://kjvstudy.org)