

JESUS FEEDS FOUR THOUSAND

Mark 8; Mark 9:1; 2 Samuel 7:10–16; Daniel 7:13–14

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In today's society, we are familiar with the term "followers." From big-time celebrities to your neighbor next door, we all have a group of people who "follow" us because they want a look into our lives—they want to know who we are and what we are about. We sometimes follow others because we want to emulate their marriage, parenting style, home décor, or eating habits. We think we are getting a clear picture on who this person actually is just by following pieces of their story. When Jesus invited His disciples to follow Him, He was asking them to watch what He did and learn from Him. Little did they know what Jesus was actually inviting them into. He wasn't just asking them to take bits and pieces of His teachings; He wanted them to learn to emulate His whole life.

His followers watched as He took a few loaves of bread and fish and fed four thousand people. Not four, not forty, not four hundred, but four thousand people! Yet, the disciples still did not quite understand who they were following (Mark 8:21). They observed closely as He healed a blind man with the spit from His mouth and the palm of His hands. A miracle! Yet, some still didn't really understand who they were following. So Jesus asked them, "But you . . . who do you say that I am?" (v.29).

If we choose to follow Him, it's important to ask ourselves, "Who is Jesus?" Because, unlike a celebrity we can choose to follow or unfollow with little to no consequence, following Jesus costs us our lives. Jesus said, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me and the gospel will save it" (Mark 8:34–35).

So, who is Jesus?

Peter wisely replies, "You are the Messiah" (Mark 8:29). The Greek word used for Messiah here is *Christos*, which means "anointed one." Peter recognized that Jesus was more than a magician or healer; He is the Son of God. He is the anointed King described in Daniel 7:13–14, the one who has been given dominion and glory and a kingdom that will never be destroyed.

The disciples were following the King of kings, and we have the opportunity to follow Him too. But we must discern the truth: Do our perceptions of Jesus flow from who He actually is? Or have we designed our own "personalized" Jesus, one whose teachings we can take or leave, depending on how we feel about them? As we learn to follow Jesus wholeheartedly, He continues to teach us more about Himself than we could imagine. Feeding four thousand people, healing the blind—these were just the start.