

John Chapter 6

Author: John the Apostle (brother of James and son of Zebedee)

Date of writing: A.D. 66-98

Location of this writing: Ephesus- located today near the modern shores of modern-day Turkey

Explanation of the Synoptic Gospels: The Synoptic Gospels are the first three books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These three books plus John are called the “Gospels” because they chronicle the good news of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection—the basis of our salvation. The Gospel of Matthew was written by Matthew the apostle, one of the twelve commissioned by Jesus. The Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark, a close associate of the apostle Peter. The Gospel of Luke was written by Luke the physician, a friend and traveling companion of the apostle Paul.

The first three Gospels are called “synoptic” because they “see together with a common view” (the word synoptic literally means “together sight”). Matthew, Mark, and Luke cover many of the same events in Jesus’ life—most of them from Jesus’ ministry in Galilee—in much the same order. Nearly 90 percent of Mark’s content is found in Matthew, and about 50 percent of Mark appears in Luke. All the parables of Christ are found in the Synoptics (the Gospel of John contains no parables).

The Gospel of John is built around seven miracles / signs and seven “I am” statements of Christ. We will be studying the following in Chapter 6:

- **Fourth Sign:** Christ Feeds 5,000
- **Fifth Sign:** Christ walks on the Water
- **Christ Announces:** “I Am the Bread of Life”

Verses 1- 4 Summary: A great multitude had been following Jesus for several days, listening to His teaching and beholding His miracles. Jesus had tried to “get away” to rest, but the needs of the crowd pressed on Him (Mark 6:31-34). Because of His compassion, He ministered to the multitude in three different ways.

- A. Jesus Feeds the Multitude (6:1-14)
- B. Jesus Leaves the Multitude (6:15-21)
- C. Jesus Teaches the Multitude (6:22-71)

A. Jesus Feeds the Multitude (Verses 1-14)

Passover Feast in Galilee - The feeding of the five thousand was a miracle of great magnitude that it is recorded in all four gospels. We will study all four gospels in the Feeding of the 5,000 and take notice of any similarities and / or differences.

In feeding the 5,000, the issue was how to meet the needs of such a large crowd of people. The 5,000 people were men and the women plus children was about 20,000 people altogether! *Four solutions were proposed from the gospels.*

Proposal #1 came from the disciples – First, the disciples suggested that Jesus send the people away. But Jesus knew that the hungry people would faint on the way if they did not have food. It was evening and late for traveling.

Mark 6:35-36 The Message

“When his disciples thought this had gone on long enough—it was now quite late in the day—they interrupted: “We are a long way out in the country, and it’s very late. Pronounce a benediction and send these folks off so they can get some supper.”

Matthew 14:15 New Living Translation

“That evening the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.”

Luke 9:12 New Living Translation

“Late in the afternoon the twelve disciples came to him and said, “Send the crowds away to the nearby villages and farms, so they can find food and lodging for the night. There is nothing to eat here in this remote place.”

Proposal #2 came from Philip – This solution came from Philip in response to the Lord’s ‘test question’ (John 6:5-6).

Jesus’ Test Question - John 6:5-6 New International Version

5 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “*Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?*” 6 He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

Philip’s Response in John 6:7 Amplified Bible -

Philip answered, “Two hundred denarii (200 days’ wages) worth of bread is not enough for each one to receive even a little.”

Note: How many to feed?

Matthew 14:21 New International Version

“The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children”.

Disciples Response to Jesus in addition to Philip -

Mark 6:37 New International Version - But he answered, “*You give them something to eat.*” They said to him, “That would take more than half a year’s wages[a]! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?”

People often think that money is the answer to every need but here we see Jesus was simply testing the strength of Philip’s faith. Philip had the knowledge, but his knowledge did not provide a solution to the situation. Perhaps Philip had placed limitations on God to do something small, but we know we serve a God that has no limitations and can do more than we can imagine or think; He exceeds all our expectations. Imagine including Jesus in the equation...Selah

Proposal #3 came from Andrew – Andrew was not quite sure how the problem would be solved but he found a little boy that had a small lunch. The boy had two little fish and five barley cakes. The interesting thing is that Matthew, Mark, and Luke state how many fish and bread are available but do not identify where they came from.

John 6:8-9 New International Version

8 Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, **9** "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" *Little is much when God is involved.*

Could it be that Andrew was busy bringing people to Jesus (see John 1:40-42). The first thing Andrew did when he found the Messiah was to tell his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. Andrew did not have a prominent place in the gospels, but he was apparently a 'people person' who helped solve problems.

Proposal #4 came from Jesus – This was the true solution. Jesus took the boy's lunch, blessed it, broke it, handed it out to His disciples, and they fed the whole crowd! The miracle took place in the hands of Jesus, not the hand of the disciples. Jesus multiplied the food, and the disciples had the pleasure of distributing the food.

John 6:10-11 New International Version

10 Jesus said, "*Have the people sit down.*" There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there).

One might say that Jesus here fulfilled the role of the loving Shepherd in Psalm 23:1-2. He makes me lie down in green pastures. That Psalm also gave the picture of the Lord as a host, serving a meal to His servant as a guest: you prepare a table for me...you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over...I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever (Psalm 23:5-6).

The men sat down, in number about five thousand: Jesus administered everything in an orderly way. Yet, they had to come under Jesus' order to receive Jesus' miraculous provision. The ones who came under Jesus' order would soon be filled to the full.

11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as **much as they wanted**. He did the same with the fish.

We see in this, the order that the message in the church should come. The message must come from our Lord to the minister, and then the minister must deliver this bread (Word of God), to the people. The preacher should give this Word (bread) until the whole congregation is full.

John 6:12-13 New International Version

12 When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, *“Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.”* **13** So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

These fragments are showing us that there is always enough of the Word of God left over to feed the hungry of all ages.

John 6:14 New Living Translation

“When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, “Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!”

This miracle Jesus had performed was of such magnitude that the people witnessing it believed Jesus to be the great Prophet which had been promised in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 18:15 Moses).

Deuteronomy 18:15 New International Version

“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him”.

Takeaways from John 6:1-14:

- Jesus is the Answer; He was the solution to feeding the 5,000
- Our God is unlimited; don't set limitations on Him
- Be like Andrew and bring others to God
- Jesus is our Source, the Bread of Life
- Jesus, the Bread of Life, never runs empty

Instead of complaining about what we do not have, we should give thanks to God for what we do have, and He will make it go further. Selah.

B. Jesus Leaves the Multitude (Verses 15-21)

Jesus walks on Water – Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John

Note: This was the second time Jesus dealt with His disciples on a stormy Sea of Galilee. In the first storm (Matthew 8:24), Jesus was present with them in the boat, and He rebuked and calmed the storm. In this storm Jesus asked His disciples to trust His unseen care and concern for them.

Jesus compelled the disciples to get into the boat (see scriptures below) because He knew they were in danger. The crowd was aroused and there was a movement to make Him King.

John 6:16 New Living Translation – “That evening Jesus’ disciples went down to the shore to wait for him”.

Matthew 14:22 New Living Translation – “Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home”.

Mark 6:45 New Living Translation – “Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the people home”.

Question: Did Jesus know the storm was coming? Of course He did! So why did He deliberately send them to the boat where more danger was waiting?

Answer: Jesus was rescuing them from a greater danger, the danger of being swept away by a fanatical crowd. But there was another reason for this storm on the water.

The Lord must balance our lives, otherwise we can become proud and then fall. The disciples had experienced great joy in being part of a miracle. The disciples would now face a storm and learn how to trust the Lord more. *The feeding of the 5,000 was the lesson, but the storm was the examination after the lesson.*

Sometimes we are caught in a storm because we have disobeyed the Lord. Jonah is a good example. But sometimes the storm comes because we have *obeyed* the

Lord. When that happens, we can be sure that our Savior will pray for us, come to us, and deliver us.

So what miracles were witnessed by the disciples during this storm?

Jesus walked on the water and so did Peter:

Note: The Sea of Galilee was and is well known for its sudden, violent windstorms that quickly make the lake dangerous.

“The Sea of Galilee is six hundred feet below sea level, in a cuplike depression among the hills. When the sun sets, the air cools; and as the cooler air from the west rushes down over the hillside, the resultant wind churns the lake. Since the disciples were rowing toward Capernaum, they were heading into the wind; consequently, they made little progress.” (Tenney)

John 6:18-21 New International Version

18 A strong wind was blowing, and the waters grew rough. **19** When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. **20** But he said to them, *“It is I; don’t be afraid.”* **21** Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

Mark 6:47-51 New International Version

47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. **48** He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake.

He was about to pass by them, **49**, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, **50** because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, *“Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”* **51** Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, **52** for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

Note: We see here from the Book of Mark that their “hearts were hardened”. They were in this place of frustration at the will of Jesus, doing exactly what He

told them to do. Additionally, Mark 6:48 says that Jesus watched the disciples as they rowed across the lake. His eye was on them all the time. They were in the will of Jesus and watched by Jesus yet working hard in frustration all the time.

Question: Have you been in this situation? Wondering, where is my God; why am I here; yet we say He is all knowing and always present (Omnipresent). Selah

The disciples were not ready for any kind of supernatural help. They knew what Jesus commanded them to do, and they set out to do it – but without any direct help from Jesus. So, they were surprised and afraid to see supernatural help coming to them.

Jesus also gave them reasons and reminders to trust His supernatural help. Undoubtedly, they took with them at least some of the twelve baskets of leftover bread (John 6:13), yet they were still shocked when the supernatural help came to them on the sea.

Matthew 14:24-35 New Living Translation

24 Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. **25** About three o'clock in the morning[a] Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. **26** When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!" **27** But Jesus spoke to them at once. *"Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!"*

28 Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." **29** *"Yes, come," Jesus said.* So, Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. **30** But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

31 Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. *"You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"* **32** When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. **33** Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

- **John 6:20** - The calming words of Jesus. *But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."*

For Jesus, it was enough to announce His presence. He was with His disciples and would meet them in their frustration and fear. Jesus came to bring supernatural help and comfort to His disciples. His presence gave them what they needed, even though He came in an unexpected way.

- **John 6:21** - Immediately the boat was at the land where they were going: When they had willingly received Him into the boat, *the miraculous happened*. This was a remarkable miracle. The work that was so frustrating a few moments before suddenly was divinely accomplished.

“From this detail given by John it is inferred that the ship seemed to move automatically, without sail or oar, in obedience to His will: so that without effort of the disciples or crew it quickly passed over the remaining distance (two miles or so) and came to shore.” (Trench)

One could say that Jesus rescued His disciples from frustration and futility. Jesus wants us to work hard; but He never wants us to work in futility. Their work had not been a waste, but it waited for the touch of divine power and presence.

Takeaways from John 15-21:

- Jesus is a rescuer and a deliverer
- Jesus wants balance in our lives; depend on Him and trust Him (Faith)
- Pay attention to the lessons and prepare for the examinations
- Jesus prays for us and intercedes for us
- His ways and thoughts are not the same as ours
- God is Omnipresent and He promises not to leave us nor forsake

So, we see in these passages that Jesus calmed the storms, and they made it to the other side of the lake. Jesus had led His people into the green pastures (John 6:10), and now He brought them into the still waters (Psalm 23:2). What a wonderful Good Shepherd, He is!

C. Jesus Teaches the Multitude (6:22-71)

Introduction of the Bread of Life sermon:

The purpose of the sign / miracle was that Jesus might preach His sermon. In grace, Jesus fed the hungry people, but in truth, He gave the Word of God. The people wanted food, but they did not want the truth, and, in the end, most of them abandoned Jesus and refused to walk with Him. He lost His crowd with one sermon!

We see the next day began with a mystery; how did Jesus get to Capernaum? The crowd saw the disciples go across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum, and the men were in a storm. The crowd also saw Jesus leave the place and go by Himself to a mountain. But the next morning, here were Jesus and His disciples together in Capernaum. Certainly, He had not walked around the lake, and there was no evidence that He had taken another boat. Other boats had arrived, no doubt driven in by the storm, but Jesus had not been in any of them.

The “Bread of Life” sermon is a dialogue between Christ and the people, especially the religious leaders. We will see four responses of the crowd to the Lord Jesus in **John 6**:

- Seeking (verses 22-40)
- Murmuring (verses 41-51)
- Striving (struggling) (verses 52-59)
- Departing (verses 60-71)

C – Response #1 Seeking (Verses 22-40)

John 6:22-26 The Message

22-24 The next day the crowd that was left behind realized that there had been only one boat, and that Jesus had not gotten into it with his disciples. They had seen them go off without him. By now boats from Tiberias had pulled up near where they had eaten the bread blessed by the Master. So, when the crowd realized he was gone and wasn't coming back, they piled into the Tiberias boats and headed for Capernaum, looking for Jesus. **25** When they found him back across the sea, they said, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

26 Jesus answered, “You’ve come looking for me not because you saw God in my actions but because I fed you, filled your stomachs—and for free.”

The disciples may have been impressed that so many people stayed through the storm to seek Jesus, but Jesus was not impressed. He knows the human heart and that the people originally followed Him because of His miracles (John 6:2). But

now their motive was to get fed! Yet, there was still the possibility that they might get saved.

John 6:27-29 New Living Translation

27 But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man[a] can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval. **28** They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?" *29 Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."*

We see Jesus points out that there are two (2) kinds of food: food for the body, which is necessary but not the most important, and food for the inner man, the spirit, which is essential. What the people needed was not food but *life*, and life is a gift. Food only *sustains* life, but Jesus *gives* eternal life.

The people picked up the word, 'work' or 'job' depending on your translation. They misinterpreted the word to mean they had to *work* for salvation. They completely missed the word "*give*". Because of legalistic religion, the people thought they had to '*do something*' to merit eternal life.

But Jesus made it clear, that only one 'work' necessary was to believe on the Savior. When a person believes on Christ, he / she is not performing a good work that earns salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9 New International Version

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— **9** not by works, so that no one can boast

John 6:30-31 New Living Translation

30 They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? **31** After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'^[a]"

The crowd began by seeking Christ, but then started to seek a sign from Him. (See 1 Corinthians 1:22, Jews demand / require a sign). If Jesus was truly sent by God, then let Him prove it by causing manna to fall from Heaven. They wanted to '*see*' and '*believe*'. But faith that is based on signs alone, and not on the truth of the

Word, can lead a person astray, for even Satan is able to perform 'lying wonders' (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10).

2 Thessalonians 2:6-10 The Message

6-8 You'll also remember that I told you the Anarchist is being held back until just the right time. That doesn't mean that the spirit of anarchy is not now at work. It is, secretly and underground. But the time will come when the Anarchist will no longer be held back but will be let loose. But don't worry. The Master Jesus will be right on his heels and blow him away. The Master appears and—puff! —the Anarchist is out of there.

9-10 The Anarchist's coming is all Satan's work. All his power and signs and miracles are fake, evil sleight of hand that plays to the gallery of those who hate the truth that could save them.

John 6:32-40 New Living Translation

32 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. 33 The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

In Jesus' reply, He sought to deepen their understanding of the truth. It was God not Moses, who gave the manna, so they must take their eyes off Moses and focus them on God. God gave the manna in the past, but the Father is now giving the true bread in the person of Jesus Christ. The past event is finished, but the present spiritual experience goes on! Amen!

34 "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."

*35 Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever **comes** to me will never be hungry again. Whoever **believes** in me will never be thirsty. 36 But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me."*

Jesus clearly identifies what the bread is: He is the true Living Bread that came down from Heaven. But He did not come down only for Israel but for the whole world. Jesus came not only to sustain life but to give life!

Several times in His sermon our Lord refers to His coming down from Heaven (John 6:33, 38, 42, 50-51, and 58) a statement that declared Him to be God.

Like the woman at the well (John 4:15), this group also was not ready for salvation. The woman at the well wanted living water so she would not have to keep going to the well. The crowd wanted the bread so they would not have to toil

to maintain life. People today still want Jesus Christ only for the benefits He can give.

Jesus used two key words in His reply to the crowd: *come* and *believe*.

- Come to Jesus – to believe on Him
- Believe on Him – come to Him

Note: John 6:35 contains the first of seven great “I Am” statements recorded by John, statements that are found nowhere else in the Gospels. (The six statements are in John 8:12, 10:7-9, 11-14; 11:25-26; 14:6; 15:1, 5). God revealed Himself to Moses by the name “I AM” (Jehovah) (Exodus 3:14). God is the self-existent One who “is, and ... was, and ... is to come” (Revelation 1:8). When Jesus used the name, I AM, He was claiming to be God.

37 However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. 38 For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. 39 And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. 40 For it is my Father’s will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day.”

John 37-40 contains Jesus’ explanation of the process of personal salvation. These are among the most profound words He ever spoke. He explained that salvation involves both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. The Father *gives* men and women to the Son (John 6:37, 39), but these men and women must *come* to Him, that is, *believe* on Him. He assured them that nobody who came to Him would ever be lost but would be raised on the last day. Even death cannot rob us of salvation!

C – Response #2 Murmuring (Verses 41-51)

We see that the crowd (religious leaders) was disturbed with the Lord’s statement, “For I came down from Heaven”, for they knew it was a claim of deity. They thought they knew Jesus, who He was and where He came from (see Matthew 13:53-58, Jesus rejected in Nazareth).

Jesus was the *legal* son of Joseph but not his natural son, for He was born of a virgin (Luke 1:34-38). The leaders identified Jesus with Nazareth in Galilee, not Bethlehem in Judea, and they thought that Joseph was His natural father.

“This was one of the real difficulties of the contemporaries of Jesus. The Messiah was to come ‘in the clouds,’ suddenly to appear; but Jesus had quietly grown up among them.” (Dods)

John 6:41-51 New Living Translation

41 Then the people[a] began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, *“I am the bread that came down from heaven.”*

The reaction of the synagogue crowds to Jesus’ statements was the same as the Jews in the wilderness who grumbled against God both before and after the manna was given to them. Because Jesus said that “I am the bread which came down from heaven”, the Jews anger centered in two things:

- (1) That Jesus said He was the bread, and
- (2) That He came down from heaven.

Both the Jews in Jerusalem and the Galileans reacted negatively when Jesus placed Himself equal with God.

42 They said, “Isn’t this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

These Jews could not see through spiritual eyes. They thought of Jesus as Joseph's son. Jesus was in fact, the Son of God. They didn't believe Him because they had seen Him grow up and they did not believe He was their Messiah. On a human level, they knew Jesus as a fellow Galilean.

43 But Jesus replied, “Stop complaining about what I said.

Murmuring (complaining) has always displeased God. Just as God punished those who murmured on the way to the Promised Land, God dislikes this murmuring here.

44 For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up.

It is the Father's will that all should be saved. He sent Jesus into the world to save the world. Whosoever believes in Jesus as Savior and Lord shall be saved.

45 As it is written in the Scriptures, [b] 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

Jesus is saying in all of this “If you really know the Scriptures as you say you do, then you will accept me.

Notice that those who hear and those who learn from that hearing are separated here. Many hear, but few understand and learn. If they had heard the words of the Old Testament and understood what they heard, they would receive Jesus with open arms.

46 (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.)

Jesus is speaking of Himself here. Jesus has seen the Father. Even Moses saw His presence in the bush that was burning and did not burn up. He also met with God on the mount where he received the Ten Commandments, but he did not see God's face.

47 "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life.

Romans 10:10 “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Jesus is saying if you really believe on Him, you will be saved. All the other things are like icing on the cake. Our belief is what saves us.

48 Yes, I am the bread of life!

Jesus is saying that He alone can bring you eternal life

Luke 4:4 “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”

The Word of God is really a Christian's bread. The Passover bread is symbolic of Jesus' body and the fruit of the vine is symbolic of His blood.

The manna that was given in the wilderness, although sent from heaven to help sustain the Israelites for their physical needs but could not impart eternal life nor meet their spiritual needs as could the “bread of life” that came down from heaven

in the person of Jesus the Messiah. The proof of this contrast centers in the irrefutable fact that all the fathers died who ate the wilderness manna.

In (verses 49 & 50), Jesus contrasted the earthly and heavenly bread.

49 Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died.

This manna in the wilderness sustained these Israelites' needs for food. It did not bring eternal life to those who ate it. Jesus is Life, when you partake of Him, ye shall never die.

50 Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die.

This manna, spoken of (in verse 49), was a symbol of the true Bread (Jesus Christ), which would come down from heaven and save the world.

In the same sense, the male lamb which was sacrificed each year at Passover was symbolic of the true Lamb which would be crucified for the sins of the world for all time.

51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh."

This pronouncement exactly reiterates (verses 33, 35, 47, and 48).

"Bread ... Is my flesh":

Jesus refers here prophetically to His impending sacrifice upon the cross where Jesus voluntarily laid down His life for evil, sinful mankind.

In 1 Timothy 3:16 we read "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

- This just says that Jesus gave His flesh on the cross that we might live forever.
- The Spirit of God hovered over Mary, and she conceived by the Spirit of God.
- Jesus means Jehovah Savior.
- Jesus gave Himself that we might have life by just partaking of Him.
- When we receive Jesus into our lives, it is symbolic of partaking of His flesh.

C – Response #3 Striving (Verses 52-59)

The word striving means “to fight and quarrel”.

52 Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” they asked.

Once again, the perplexity of the Jews indicates that they failed to understand the spiritual truth behind Jesus’ illustration. Every time Jesus had given them a veiled saying or physical illustration, the Jews failed to see its spiritual significance.

The Mosaic Law prohibited the drinking of blood or the eating of meat with blood still in it. The Jews, unable to go beyond the mere physical perspective, were perplexed and angered. These Jews are not looking with spiritual eyes.

They saw Jesus as a man, not as their Messiah. Some of these Jews believed one thing and some others believed another. They are not ready to accept Him as the Lamb of God. They hear His words, but they do not understand.

The eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood metaphorically symbolize the need for accepting Jesus’ cross work. For the Jews however, a crucified Messiah was unthinkable. Once again, the Jews in their willful and judicial blindness, could not see the real spiritual significance and truth behind Jesus’ statements.

In verses 53-58 we see “eat ... drink”. Jesus’ point was an analogy that has spiritual rather than literal significance: just as eating and drinking are necessary for physical life, so also is belief in His sacrificial death on the cross necessary for eternal life.

53 *So Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you.”*

This is the very thing we are doing when we take communion. We eat the unleavened bread in memory of Jesus sacrificing His body on the cross for us, taking our sins upon His body, nailing the sins of the world to the cross.

Some people say Jesus spilled His blood for us, but that isn't true. It was no accident that Jesus' blood was shed for us. His blood washes us white as snow.

When we take the fruit of the vine, we are remembering that He freely shed His blood to do away with our sins. The only way we can inherit life eternal is to believe that the sacrifice of His body and His shed blood was for us. In believing this and acting upon it, we receive eternal life.

54 But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.

We see from this again, that the only way to receive life everlasting is to partake of Jesus. If we receive His blood to cleanse our heart and accept His flesh as the perfect Lamb sacrifice, then and only then, will we be saved.

In Revelation 7:9-10, we read of those who have fully partaken of Jesus.

9 After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands.

10 And they were shouting with a great roar, “Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!”

56 Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.

When we receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, He takes up His abode with us. He lives in us.

Galatians 2:20 New Living Translation

“My old self has been crucified with Christ. [a] It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So, I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”.

In other words, if I belong to Jesus, my life is conducted in such a manner that others can see Jesus in me.

57 I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me.

Jesus Christ is the Living Bread. Jesus Christ in His divine humanity gave His body so that we might receive the fullness of God. His power is the power of the Father; our power is in the name of Jesus the Christ.

The life within us was breathed in by God. Our new life is breathed of God, as well. We are nothing without Him. Our total being is because of Him.

58 I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever.”

The manna which came down from heaven was a type and shadow of the true Bread (Jesus Christ our Lord).

The shadow could not bring eternal life, only a temporary taking care of needs. The shadow was done away, and the real Bread came down who was the Word of God (Jesus Christ), which gave eternal life to whosoever will.

59 He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

This remarkable discourse of Jesus, starting at John 6:26 and including the back and forth with His listeners happened during a synagogue service. Jesus likely was given the freedom of the synagogue, the opportunity to speak to the congregation.

C – Response #4 Departing (Verses 60-71)

The Lord’s teaching was not hard to understand but hard to accept once you understood it. The Jewish religious leaders both misunderstood His words and rejected them. They were “offended” by what He taught. (The Greek word is “scandalized”). They stumbled over the fact that He claimed to come down from heaven. They also stumbled over the idea that they had to eat His flesh and drink His blood to be saved. But if they stumbled over these two matters, what would they do if they saw Him ascend back into heaven (John 6:62)?

From (verses 60-71), these verses constitute the reaction of Jesus’ disciples to the sermon on the “bread of life.”

John lists two groups and their reactions:

- (1) The false disciples’ reaction of unbelief in verses (60-66).
- (2) The true disciples’ reaction of belief in (verses 67-71).

After this sermon, only a small nucleus of disciples remained (verse 67).

60 Many of his disciples said, “This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?”

In the previous verses, we studied about Jesus' body being the Bread of life and His blood cleansing us from all unrighteousness. He had said we must eat of His body and drink of His blood to receive eternal life.

These disciples were looking at this in the natural state instead of spiritual and they did not fully understand what He was saying here. The disciples which left were not numbered among the twelve.

61 Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, *“Does this offend you?”*

Many of Jesus' disciples had the same reaction as the Jews (in verse 41), and of the first generation of Israelites to manna, i.e., they grumbled (Exodus 16:20).

Jesus realizes what they are thinking and scolds them for murmuring. He asks them if this offends them, all the time He knows it does. They were with Him, but did not understand what He was teaching them.

62 Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again?

Jesus calls Himself Son of man because they are looking at Jesus as just a man. He says, “If you believe I am Joseph's son, then you won't believe that I came from heaven, or that I will go back to heaven.” Jesus is saying “Would you believe, if I ascended into heaven in front of you?”

63 The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

God is a Spirit and those that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and truth. In 1 Corinthians 15:44 “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” The body that goes to heaven is spiritual.

64 But some of you do not believe me.”

(For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.)

Betray here is referring primarily to Judas, who has not yet been named in this gospel, but will be in verses 70-71. Jesus, even at this time, knew that Judas Iscariot would betray Him. Of course, it was not just Judas that would deny Him.

In the fear of cruel death, even His beloved Peter would deny Him. When the authorities came and took Jesus, the disciples fled for fear of like punishment.

Speaking of the ones who believed not, the scribes, Pharisees, and rulers of the synagogues did not believe Jesus.

Jesus' words in John in 2:23-25: Jesus knew the hearts of men, including those disciples who followed Him. He supernaturally knew that many did not believe in Him as Messiah and Son of God, so He did not entrust Himself to them.

These false disciples were simply attracted to the physical phenomena, meaning miracles and food, and failed to understand the true significance of Jesus' teaching (verse 61). Very few were truly loyal to the Lord Jesus. Jesus had just told them a few verses back that they only followed Him because of the miracles and to be fed.

65 Then he said, *“That is why I said that people can't come to me unless the Father gives them to me.”*

- Although men and women are commanded to believe and will be held accountable for unbelief, genuine faith is never exclusively a matter of human decision.
- Once again, in the face of unbelief, Jesus has reiterated God's sovereignty involved in selection for salvation. The offer of salvation is to whosoever will.
- God already knows your heart, and He knows whether you will accept the call. God doesn't predestine but has foreknowledge of what you will do.
- God reveals Himself to those who will accept Him. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you..." (James 4:8). The opportunity to be saved is a gift from God. When offered, we must accept it. The Father puts the hunger in our hearts.

Jesus Christ our Lord provides the Bread (Himself). God will not always strive with man. He offers salvation, we must accept it.

66 At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him.

Question: From what time is being discussed here?

From the time He said they must eat of His flesh and drink of His blood. In the natural, this does seem to be like being a cannibal, but Jesus had already told them that they must worship in spirit.

This great number of followers of Jesus who had just wanted to make Him king and ruler of all Israel, now suddenly leave Him. The language indicates that the abandonment was decisive and final. They really did not have the love of God in their hearts.

They wanted a great warrior to lead them against Rome. They followed Him in His power. They wanted no part in His weakness. They were like people in our churches today, who just look at the words and not at the meaning of the Word.

It is impossible to follow Jesus in the flesh. We must follow Jesus Christ by our spirit.

67 Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, *“Are you also going to leave?”*

Here is the first mention of the twelve in John’s gospel. Only five of them have been named thus far: John, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael.

In the seventh chapter of Judges, we read of a man about to do battle with the enemy of God. Thirty-two thousand men came to take up arms, but God told Gideon to send all the fearful and all who were not prepared for battle home. Only 300 out of the 32,000 men stayed to do God's battle.

That is what happened above. The mass of disciples left and the twelve remained. God does not get the glory when it is possible for us to win a battle on our own. God gets the glory when an impossible (in the flesh), job is to be done, and God brings the impossibility into being.

These twelve had seen the multitude fed, seen blind eyes opened, seen the lame to walk. Is all this not proof enough that He is Messiah?

Are they like the others, so void of understanding the spiritual meaning of what He had said? He had taught these twelve to look beyond the physical, or literal, and see the hidden message. He had taught them how to interpret parables, and those lessons were a look into the spiritual. Jesus says to them “Can you not trust me?”

This one percent of true followers, that is seen in the Gideon lesson, is about the way in most Christians today.

68 Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. **69** We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.”

Simon and the other eleven had the opportunity to follow whoever they desired. When Jesus called, they came. They know from all the miracles who Jesus is. They also know that if they are to have life eternal, it is through Jesus and none other. They have heard the words of His preaching and have been totally sure that His Words are true. There is no one like Him.

Speaking for the twelve disciples, Simon Peter gave a wonderful statement of faith.

- He recognized Jesus as Lord.
- He recognized Jesus as the preferred alternative, despite the difficulties.
- He recognized the value of spiritual things, more than the material and earthly desires of those who walked away (the words of eternal life).
- He recognized Jesus as Messiah (the Christ) and God (Son of the living God).

70 Then Jesus said, “I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil.”

In response to Peter’s words that the disciples had come to believe in Jesus, He reminds them that He sovereignly chose them. Jesus would not allow even a whisper of human pretension in God’s sovereign selection.

In Matthew 22:14 we read “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Out of the great number called as Jesus' followers, Jesus had chosen twelve.

In Luke 6:12-13 we read “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” “And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;”

You see, Jesus Christ had many followers He called disciples (disciplined ones who follow Him), but there were twelve (a representative number) He set aside to be apostles.

Judas Iscariot (the betrayer) was among the twelve. This really is no different than it is today. Many proclaim to be Christians, but few really know Jesus as Savior and Lord. Even of those the world thinks to be close followers of the Lord, there is always a Judas. “Devil” means adversary, slanderer or false accuser.

71 He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.

Many people believe that Judas did not have a choice, because of this Scripture. As we have said so many times before, Judas had a choice, but Jesus could look ahead in time and know what Judas would do.

John Chapter 6 Takeaway

The preaching of God's Word always lead to a sifting of the hearts of the listeners. God draws sinners to the Savior through the power of truth, His Word. Those who reject the Word will reject the Savior. Those who receive the Word will receive the Savior and experience new birth, eternal life.

Praise God that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever more.

- He is a Provider
- He is a Deliverer
- He is the Bread of Life

Resources:

The Bible Exposition Commentary, Warren Wiersbe, John Chapter 6

The Leadership Bible NIV

www.bible-studys.org (John Chapter 6)

www.biblegateway.com

enduringword.com (David Guzik, Commentator, John Chapter 6)

Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts (Third Edition)

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Synoptic-Gospels.html>