

## John 6:1-71

### *Jesus, The Bread of Life*

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This chapter of John records the high point of Jesus' popularity—the feeding of 5,000. From here antagonism continues to increase. This is the only section in John that narrates Jesus' later Galilean ministry, which occupies so much of the Synoptic Gospels.

**Why is the crowd initially following Jesus?** They have seen Him heal people, they want to see another miracle.

**What does Jesus ask Philip—and why?** “Where shall we buy bread?” To test him.

Their problem is in two parts. First, they don't have the resources to feed the multitude. Second, even if they did have the money it would be impossible to purchase enough bread to feed them all. We often limit God the same way when we can't foresee an answer.

**Application:** How has God tested you? Has Jesus asked you to do anything lately? Did you pass the test?

**What message can we draw from the leftovers?** God supplies all our needs in abundance. (John 10:10). Jesus avoids waste.

**Why does Jesus have the disciples participate in this miracle by passing out the food as seen in Luke 9:16, Matthew 14:19 and Mark 6:41?** So they could see firsthand a miracle being worked out through them. It strengthened their faith.

**What does this miracle tell us about God's nature?** He is a God of compassion, mercy and grace. He cares about and provides for our everyday needs.

**Why does Jesus withdraw by Himself in verse 15?** To defuse the crowd. Having witnessed the miracle first-hand, the people wanted to force Him to be their political, worldly king and be freed from Roman oppression. But Jesus' kingdom is spiritual.

**Why are the disciples terrified at the sight of Jesus walking on the water?** Mark reports that the disciples thought Jesus was a ghost (Mark 6:49). John simply describes them as terrified or frightened.

**What does the walking-on-water-incident reveal about Jesus?** He is not limited by His creation. His timing is perfect.

**Verse 26 According to Jesus, why are the people now looking for Him?** They are not interested in Him because they identify Him as the Messiah, but because He can fill their stomachs.

**Verse 28 What does it tell you about the people when they ask Jesus the question “What must we do to do the works God requires?”** They think they need to earn God's favor. There is something within the fallen nature of human beings that makes the thought of working for eternal life more attractive than receiving it as a gift.

**How does Jesus answer the question?** “Believe in the one He has sent.” It is clear what God desires of us. Jesus first and foremost commands us not to *do*, but to *trust*. If we want to do the work of God, it begins with trusting Jesus. This is one of the most important verses in the Bible. It refutes the idea of work-based salvation.

**Jesus tells the people what work they need to do to obtain eternal life. What do they now ask Him to do in order to prove that He is God's authorized representative as He claims?** They ask Him to do a miracle. If He is the Messiah, He ought to be able to do greater miracles than Moses when he produced bread from heaven for 40 years. Their unwillingness to believe the sign that Jesus had given them the previous day shows the hardness of their hearts. No matter what Jesus does, unbelievers will always demand more.

**Verse 30 What's wrong with saying “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you?”** Like most unbelievers they want to see first and then believe. But this is not God's order. God says *Believe. Then you will see.* (John 11:40).

**How does Jesus correct their thinking?** Jesus now identifies Himself as the bread about which He has been speaking. He does not say He *had* the bread of life but that He *was* that bread. He claims to be able to satisfy completely whereas bread only satisfied physically.

**Note:** Verse 35 is the first of the “I AM's”. We will see six more as we study through the Gospel of John.

Light of the World	John 8:12	Gate	John 10:7
Good Shepherd	John 10:11	Resurrection and the Life	John 11:25
Way Truth and the Life	John 14:6	True Vine	John 15:1

**Note:** We can trace the “I AM” statements back to Exodus 3 when God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” In the Greek translation of the Bible (the Septuagint), the “I AM” of Exodus 3:14 and the “I AM” of John 6:35 are the same Greek words: *Ego eimi*. When Jesus says “I AM” He is declaring Himself to be God.

**Application: In what ways is Jesus the Bread of Life?** He nourishes us spiritually, satisfying the deep spiritual longings of our souls and our hunger to know God.

**Note:** Different theological perspectives may result in disagreement on verses 37-40

**What is the message of verses 37 and 39?** It is a picture of God’s electing grace. Once you’ve embraced a relationship with Jesus, you can’t lose your salvation because it is God-given not man-earned. Christ will hold us close in a permanent relationship.

**What is the message of verses 40 and 45?** Salvation involves an element of human responsibility. The sovereignty of God and the free will (or responsibility) of man coexist in God’s plan of salvation. However the way they work together is unexplainable and incomprehensible. Even though God has chosen the elect for salvation, they still must believe in Jesus. If anyone is saved it is because of the free grace of God. But if anyone perishes forever it is his own fault. All men are condemned by their own sinfulness and wickedness. But God offers eternal life to any person who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**What is the people’s objection in verses 41 and 42?** Jesus’ claim to a heavenly origin offends them. After all, they have known Him and His family all His life. They struggle to believe Him without first harmonizing all the apparent contradictions they observe.

**What is the message of verses 44 and 65?** Salvation is a work of God. God draws us. In and of ourselves, we don’t have the moral or spiritual ability to come to Christ. We like to feel as though we are in charge and that we give ourselves to God. In truth, He calls and we come. It is imperative that we believe in Jesus. This is the human responsibility element of salvation.

**Three times Jesus says, “I will raise him up at the last day.” What is Jesus stating?** The promise/assurance of our resurrection.

**Verses 53-57 When Jesus talks about eating His flesh and drinking His blood what is He talking about?** Jesus is introducing a metaphor for believing on Him, namely, eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Compare verses 47 and 54: eat and drink = believe in Him. Jesus is using physical things to teach spiritual truth. The idea of drinking blood is repulsive to the Jews (Read Leviticus 3:17, 17:10-14). Jesus’ hearers should understand that He is speaking metaphorically, but this reference offends many of them.

**Note:** As of this point, Jesus has not yet said anything about the Christian communion service. He is clearly speaking about belief metaphorically, not about the communion elements. When the Lord institutes the Last Supper and introduces the New Covenant on the night of His betrayal, His body has not yet been broken and His blood has not yet been shed. When the disciples partook of the bread and the wine but they did not literally eat His flesh and drink His blood.

**What does Christ mean in verse 63?** Eternal life is not gained by eating flesh but by the work of the Holy Spirit. Flesh cannot give life, only the Spirit can do that. They have taken His words literally and have not realized that they are to be understood spiritually.

**What is the reaction of disciples?** They reject Jesus when He tells them what they don’t want to hear.

**Why don’t the twelve abandon Jesus?** They recognize that Jesus is the only one who can offer eternal life. Note the sequence in verse 69: believe and then know. They first placed their faith in Christ then they came to know him as Messiah

**Application:** What will you do when tragedy strikes or difficulties arise? Will you abandon Jesus?

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**MEMORIZE: John 6:68-69**