

v. 5:1-9 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep [market] a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time [in that case], he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

Sometime during His sixteen month ministry in Galilee Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for a religious feast. The phrase "after this" is vague as to how much time had elapsed since the author's last account and the feast is unnamed. In all probability it was one of the pilgrim feasts, namely, Passover, Pentecost or Tabernacles. After the feast He will return to Galilee. (v. 6:1)

- a) In Jerusalem there was a pool located near the sheep gate. Around this pool were five pavilions where the infirm gathered. The pool was called "house of mercy." A certain man was there when Jesus arrived who had been sick with an unnamed disease for 38 years.

[It is useless to debate the phenomenon described. Some commentators try to explain away the supernatural and simply recognize this pool as a spring that had a natural ability to heal certain diseases. Others say that verse 4 is not a part of what they call the better manuscripts. The fact is that John matter-of-factly mentions the pool with little or no explanation. If this account was not true those to whom this gospel was written would have objected. His readers would have known if this pool existed as described and if his description was based on superstition instead of fact. However, the Jews did attribute most things that could not be explained to the work of angels. Also, the language in verse 4 does not limit the healing to one individual. Everyone who made it in while the water was in the "troubled" state could have very well been healed.]

- b) Jesus approaches this particular man already aware of his circumstance and heals him. Once again there is no question as to the miracle. The man probably represented one of the most pitiful cases, being sick for 38 years. No one could question the man's previous condition. The man immediately gets up at the command of Jesus, picks up his mat and walks into the crowd.
- c) Faith was not required on the part of the man, in fact, he didn't even know who Jesus was. From his response he probably thought Jesus was a man who might help him get into the pool. (v. 7)

v. 5:10-13 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry [thy] bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in [that] place.

The Jewish leaders, probably well aware of what had happened, confront the man carrying his bed, because it was the Sabbath. Jesus is their real target, however, they intimidate the man to get him to identify Jesus as the one who had healed on the Sabbath and also had, as a teacher, commanded another to work.

- a) *As concerning the Sabbath, the Jews once again misinterpreted the intent of the scriptures and superimposed many restrictions on the law. The law basically forbade work for gain while they forbade just about any physical activity. (Jer. 17:21-22; Neh. 13:15)*
- b) *The man in his excitement puts the emphasis on his being healed. Surely someone who had healed him from a 38 year illness had the authority to tell him to pick-up his mat. (v. 11) The Jewish leaders on the other hand, driven by jealousy of Jesus, ignore the healing and focus on the infraction of the law. (v. 12)*
- c) *The man did not know who had healed him and could not identify Jesus, for there was a large crowd at the place. The language used does not exclude the possibility that Jesus intentionally slipped away to avoid the confrontation at this particular time and place.*

v. 5:14-16 *Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.*

Sometime later, while in the temple, Jesus came across the man that He had healed. In all probability this was not a chance meeting. Jesus had healed the man's physical ailment, but now warns him that continued sin in his life would lead to a far greater problem.

- a) *So far in every instance, Jesus first spoke of the physical and then the spiritual. The same is probably true here also. Having physically healed the man, He now addresses the man's spiritual condition. The "worse thing" is probably not a physical illness but eternal condemnation.*
- b) *Was the man in the temple thanking God for his healing? Did Jesus in this meeting reveal himself to the man and forgive him his sins as He had so often done? (Mark 2:5, 9-11) Did he then warn him of sin?*
- c) *Another possibility is that Jesus knew the man's heart was not right and warned him of his spiritual condition. In support of this view is the fact that the first thing the man did after Jesus revealed himself to him was to run to the Jews and identify Jesus. (v. 15)*
- d) *The man had already been interrogated by the Jews (v. 10-12), from this confrontation he knew the intentions of the Jews and yet "blew the whistle" on Jesus. As a direct result of this man's testimony they persecuted Jesus and looked for ways to kill Him. Such was the jealousy and anger that the Light had already kindled in the darkness.*

[Whether the man by the healing and through his conversation with Christ in the temple had come to trust in Him as the Messiah, or was still in his sin despite the manifestation of the grace of God to him, is a tough call. On one hand Jesus finds him in the temple, but on the other the man runs to the Jewish leaders. Enough information is not given to properly judge this man. What we do know is that Jesus once again emphasizes the spiritual over the physical and proves His deity by an undisputable supernatural act.]

v. 5:17-18 *But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*

Having the man that Jesus healed as a witness the Jewish leaders quickly assembled to confront Jesus on supposedly violating Sabbath law. Probably still in or near the temple, Jesus now chooses to answer their accusations.

- a) He appeals to God, whom He says has already been working up to that very moment. The Sabbath was synonymous with idleness to the Jew. But wasn't God preserving the universe even to the point of making their hearts beat? Was not God at that very moment involved in the work of salvation according to His plan? In the coming discourse He will show them that He is doing the work of the Father and so, if He is a Sabbath violator, then so is God.
- b) Jesus calls God His own Father and claims the right to work in the same way that God works. It is implied that the healing of the man was the direct work of God. The Jews interpreted the words of Jesus to mean that He was of the same nature as God, that He was equal with God. This provoked the Jews all the more for they originally confronted Him as to violating the Sabbath, but now in their eyes He was guilty of the far greater sin of blasphemy.

v. 5:19-20 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

Jesus does not deny their conclusion that He claimed to be equal with God. Instead He goes into a lengthy discourse to verify His claims. He will explain His relationship with the Father and His participation in the Father's work. Jesus clearly claims to be God.

- a) The words "verily, verily" emphasize what is absolute truth. What He will say is indisputable. He explains to them the oneness that exists between himself and God. It is impossible for Jesus to act independent of the Father. The nature and will of Jesus and the Father are one.
- b) Jesus states that He sees or understands all that the Father does. Everything the Father does, Jesus does, and in the same way. Jesus explains himself to them as the manifestation of God to man.

[John began this gospel explaining this very truth. (v. 1:1) "The Word was with God" shows that He is a distinct person, however, "the Word was God" shows the oneness that existed in power, intent, and purpose. One in all ways and yet distinct. Being called "Word", Jesus is the manifestation of the very mind and being of God.]

"If the Son does all that the Father does, then, like Him, He must be almighty, omniscient, all-present, and infinite in every perfection, or, in other words, He must be God. If He had this power, then He had authority, also, to do on the Sabbath day what God did." Albert Barnes

- c) When the Word became flesh He voluntarily entered into the Father-Son relationship. This in no way changed the personal affection that existed in the Godhead. The Father loves the Son and so directly communicates His will to Him. God instructs Jesus as to the work He is to carry out. Jesus affirms His human nature and His dependence on the Father.
- d) Jesus tells them that God will instruct Him to do greater works than they have already observed. Works that will cause them to marvel or wonder. Works that will support His claims that He is God.

v. 5:21-22 *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth [them]; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:*

Jesus states that He has the power to raise the dead and to give them life. He states that He has been appointed supreme judge over all. The power of life, both physical and spiritual are works of God alone.

- a) There were instances in the Old Testament where the dead were raised by the hand of the prophets of God. (1 Kings 17:22; 2 Kings 4:32-35) Jesus, however, states that He gives life to whom He will, so making himself much more than a mere agent or instrument of God.
- b) Quickeneth or to give life, could refer to physical or spiritual life. Jesus in His ministry proved himself Lord over physical as well as spiritual life.
- c) Jesus is not saying that His will and the Father's will work independently. He started this discourse by saying that "the Son can do nothing of himself." The Father's will is the Son's will. The Father's authority is the Son's authority. The Father's power is the Son's power. The will of the Godhead is carried out by the Son with all the power and authority of the Godhead. The Son is much more than an agent for He is part of the Godhead.
- d) All judgment is committed to the Son but the Son's judgment is in harmony with the Father's judgment. Again, Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God's judgment, or the way in which the judgment of God is made known to man and carried out.

[Although difficult to understand some of the specific nuances of these verses, what Jesus is telling the Jews, is that He is God. He may be standing before them in the flesh and in the realm of time, but this was a decision made, a part of a plan of which He was both author and agent. Everything He does is in complete harmony with the one that they know as God and Father.]

v. 5:23 *That all [men] should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.*

Therefore, because He is of the same nature as the Father, possesses the same authority as the Father, has the same will and does the same works as the Father, he is due the same honor as the Father. Jesus tells them that He should be worshipped as God.

- a) Probably at this point it is only the restraining power of the Holy Spirit on His audience that allows Him to continue. Such supposed blasphemy would eventually lead to Him being put to death. The desire to do so was already in their hearts (v. 18), but it was not yet the appointed time.
- b) Jesus clearly tells them that if they do not honor the Son then they do not honor the Father. Such is the oneness in will, purpose and being. If they reject Jesus, they reject the Father. This is a timeless truth. Those who do not know the Son do not know God. (John 14:6)

v. 5:24-25 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*

Having established who He is, Jesus now gives them what amounts to the gospel message. The words “*verily, verily*” signal undisputable truth and something that is of the utmost importance. In this particular instance the words that follow are the difference between spiritual life and death.

- a) Jesus tells them that spiritual life depends upon belief. The word “*heareth*” means to receive or to accept as truth. So those that believe His doctrine or His message and believe that He was sent by God have spiritual life.
- b) Based on the explanation of Jesus as to the oneness that exists between himself and the Father, one who receives His word believes that He was sent by God. Conversely, one who believes that He was sent by God then must believe His word.

“*But there can be no faith in him who sent his Son, without faith also in him who is sent.*” Albert Barnes

- c) Those that believe pass from a state of spiritual death to a state of spiritual life. We have already seen that all men are in a state of spiritual death. (v. 3:18) This “*passing*” is spiritual regeneration. It is the act of being born again as explained to Nicodemus.
- d) Such a one “*hath eternal life*” and “*shall not come into condemnation.*” (Rom. 8:1) The process is irreversible. (John 10:28-29) They are kept by the very power of God. (1 Peter 1:4-5)
- e) The time of spiritual regeneration was at hand. It was already in progress and the work that would bring it to its fullness was soon to be accomplished. (v. 4:23) The Son had come in the flesh and was revealing the truth of God. The hour that He spoke of probably referred to His resurrection or possibly the day of Pentecost when the fullness of the Spirit would indwell believers.
- f) Only those that receive the message of the Son of God will be given spiritual life. Later, in speaking in terms of the physical resurrection, He states that all will hear and come forth. (v. 28) That the spiritually dead would be given life by receiving His message is verified by the apostle Paul. (1 Cor. 1:21; Rom 10:9-10, 17; Col. 2:13)

v. 5:26-27 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Jesus confirms His authority to give life and to execute judgment. In doing so he provides His believers with more insight into His relationship with the Father, the mystery of the incarnation and the workings of the Godhead.

- a) The Word, a distinct entity within the Godhead, had life within himself. That is, He was the source and giver of all life, physical as well as spiritual. (v. 1:3-4) Jesus is the Word made flesh. The Word humbled himself and took the role of the servant, putting himself in submission to the Father. In this sense, the Father gave the Son, as a man, to have life in himself. The Father gave the Son, as a man, the authority to execute judgment.
- b) The Word “*forfeited*” all power and authority in becoming man, but the Father then conferred all power and authority to Jesus Christ. This is His office as the Son of man and the mystery of His dual nature. He is man. He is God. The plan of God was to have our judge and source of life to be of our own nature.

"The appointment of a judge in our own nature is one of the most august and beautiful arrangements of divine wisdom in redemption." JFB Commentary

v28-29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

The Jews were obviously astonished at what Jesus had told them, especially that He, as a man, had life in himself and was the supreme judge. (vs. 26-27) Jesus, knowing their thoughts, tells them not to marvel at His words but to rest assured that it is He who would judge all men.

- a) *Jesus speaks of the physical resurrection as He says that all the dead will hear His voice and arise. This is in contrast to the imparting of spiritual life, where only those that receive His word are given life. (v. 25)*
- b) *Those who have done good or have been judged righteous will enter into His kingdom, while those judged as having done evil will go to hell. This judgment will merely finalize what has already been determined. The righteous are those who received His word during their lives and were regenerated. The only good works in the eyes of God are those done in Christ. (Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:5)*
- c) *The word translated evil means "worthless things." Anything that they might do to gain favor with God apart from Christ is worthless in His eyes. Anything that contradicts the truth is evil. So good is synonymous with belief, while evil is synonymous with unbelief. (v. 3:18; 3:36; 5:24)*
- d) *Jesus tells the Jews that their eternal fate rests in His hands as supreme judge and the giver of life. The basis of His judgment will be the acceptance or rejection of these truths.*

v. 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

Jesus concludes the portion of His discourse concerning His unity with the Father as it began. (v. 19) He tells them that He can do nothing on His own but that in every way His judgments are consistent with His Father's will.

- a) *He seems to say that the fact that He is a man, and so has human nature, cannot impair His judgment in any way. He judges according to the will of the Father through the Holy Spirit, which is His link to the Godhead. He judges according to the instruction of the Father or according to what the Father shows Him. (v. 20)*
- b) *Therefore, His judgment cannot be swayed or influenced by His human nature. It is based on the truth of the Godhead and so is just. He is committed to the will of God. The prayer of Jesus in the garden suggests that as a man He had a will, but always subjected this will to the will of the Father. (Mark 14:36)*
- c) *So here again, Jesus says that His judgment is just, because it is not based on the will of His human nature but on the will of the Godhead of which He is also a part.*

v. 5:31-32 *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.*

According to Jewish law the testimony of a man concerning himself did not hold much weight. Two or three witnesses were often required to establish the truth. (Deut. 17:6) Jesus, aware of their thoughts, or in response to an unrecorded question, acknowledges this and will appeal to other witnesses.

- a) Jesus is not saying that in the absence of other witnesses what He says is untrue. The word "true" in this case means "worthy of belief or established by suitable evidence." In other words, His testimony alone would not be enough to convince them. They had a right to expect other witnesses or confirmation of His testimony from other sources.
- b) Jesus appeals to another witness whom He does not immediately name. The implication is that this witness is the Father. This is confirmed in verse 36. There can be no doubt that the witness of God is true. The Father is the ultimate witness of the truth and Jesus is one with the Father as has already been established.

v. 5:33-35 *Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.*

There is a sudden change in these verses to the witness and testimony of John the Baptist. Once again perhaps Jesus perceived that they thought that He was referring to the witness of John or maybe just wanted to make the connection between John, himself and the Father as all testifying of the truth that they must receive.

- a) Jesus reminds them that they had inquired of John the Baptist and he in turn testified of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Jesus confirms John's testimony of Him as being the truth. (v. 1:19, 32-34)
- b) Jesus did not bring up the testimony of the Baptist for His sake but for theirs. As God, Jesus did not need the testimony of men. He did not rely on men in any way. It was He who came for man. The Baptist was sent for the benefit of men and Jesus brings up the Baptist that they might see the connection and believe.
- c) The word translated "light" is not the same word used by the writer earlier in this letter. The word used here means "lamp." John clearly lit the way with his teachings and doctrine. They had recognized John as a prophet and rejoiced in his teaching of a coming Messiah.
- d) Jesus literally says, "You accepted his teaching for an hour." The powerfully political Messiah that they sought did not come and John now sat in a dungeon soon to be executed. The fact remained that John did testify of the truth and his testimony was of Jesus.

v. 5:36 *But I have greater witness than [that] of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*

The witness that Jesus spoke of in verse 32 is now identified as the Father. This was a far greater witness than that of John. This was the witness and testimony not of man but of God.

- a) *Jesus specifically refers to the works or miracles that He did as being the witness of the Father. The things that He did no man could do. Nicodemus realized this. (v. 3:2) The works were proof that He was of God.*
- b) *He was sent with the task of performing specific works. His ministry was orchestrated by the Father to whom He willfully submitted. His reply to Mary at the wedding feast shows that these works were not random, but part of a specific plan. (v. 2:4) Not only the things that He did but even the things that He said fulfilled prophecy. The work would be completed with His death and resurrection. This is the ultimate work that would prove that He was of God and that He was God.*

v. 5:37-40 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Jesus rebukes the religious leaders telling them that God had borne direct witness of Him in the scriptures. They understood the scriptures as the means of eternal life but completely missed the message that they contained.

- a) *God had revealed His plan to the Jewish nation and had manifested himself to them in many different ways. They or their ancestors never really heard His word or comprehended His plan. Jesus holds them accountable just as He had held Nicodemus accountable. (v.3:10)*
- b) *They did not obey God, they disregarded His manifestations and rejected His revelations. They were not seeking after God and their hearts were far from Him. For this reason they were blinded to the truth. (2 Cor. 3:13-16) Without Jesus the Old Testament remains closed.*
- c) *Proof of their internal condition was that they did not believe Jesus whom the Father had sent and of whom the scriptures testified. They were looking for their own version of the Messiah and in so doing rejected the truth. (v. 1:11)*
- d) *The scriptures did hold the means of eternal life and they testified of Jesus whom the Jews would not accept. (2 Peter 1:19-21) They even treated Jesus with hostility, seeking to kill Him. If they would come to Him, He would give them life. (v. 1:12)*

v. 5:41-44 I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that [cometh] from God only?

Jesus continues to rebuke the religious leaders pointing out to them the true nature of their hearts. They did not love God but rather themselves. They sought honor and the praise of men. They were full of pride and their religion was an outward show.

- a) *Both before and after Christ there were many self-proclaimed Messiahs among the Jews that gained followings and general acceptance. These men told them what they wanted to hear and were honored. Truth was discounted. It was a system of men honoring men according to the judgment of men.*

- b) *Because they did not seek God or honor Him according to His truth, the love of God was not in them and they did not recognize God's witness of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 2:28-29) Jesus was not interested in the honor of men, but the honor that comes from God. He preached the truth and not what they wanted to hear.*

v. 5:45-47 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is [one] that accuseth you, [even] Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

Jesus Christ would be the judge but would not be the witness against them. He identifies Moses as the one who would accuse and testify against them in the heavenly court.

- a) *Jesus told Nicodemus that He did not come to condemn the world. (v. 3:17) He also conveys the same idea to these religious leaders. He wants them to be saved (v. 34), and did not come to be their accuser.*
- b) *The Jews identified with Moses. He was their deliverer and the giver of the law. They believed that they had salvation because they were the children and the disciples of Moses. (John 9:28-29)*
- c) *Jesus tells them the very one that they put their trust in will be their accuser! The Jews had a great reverence for the written law given to them by Moses, but in practice they put much greater emphasis on the oral law and traditions that they added to the writings of Moses over the centuries. In their religion they placed Moses on a level that no one else could ever attain. He became bigger than life which left no room for the coming Messiah that all of his writings pointed to. They had placed themselves in a position in which they could not accept the Christ.*
- d) *Jesus shows the connection between the Old Testament scriptures and himself. If they really understood and believed Moses they would believe Him. If they didn't believe Moses they could never believe Him. The entire Old Testament, its history, its types and figures, even its psychology pointed to Christ while its prophecies bore witness that the Old and New Testaments are one and the same plan.*

v.6:1-2 *After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is [the sea] of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.*

The chapter begins with the phrase “after these things.” It is a vague expression that gives no clue as to how much time had passed since the last recorded event. From studying the other three gospels that fortunately also record this next event, it can be estimated that somewhere between six months to a year had elapsed.

Author’s note:

With the end of John chapter 5, the twelve apostles were not yet ordained, the sermon on the mount was not yet preached and the centurion’s servant not yet healed. Between John chapter 5 and John chapter 6 is contained Mark 2:23-6:45 and Luke 6:1-9:10. Much of Mathew is also contained within this time period, but is more difficult to list because it is not always in chronological order. Now with the beginning of chapter 6 we are near the end of what is called the Galilean Ministry.

- a) With the healing of the boy at the end of chapter 4, John chose to record one of the first miracles that took place in the approximately 18 month Galilean Ministry. With the miracle recorded in this chapter he chooses to record one of the last. The previous chapter, that is, chapter 5, recorded events that occurred during one of His trips to Jerusalem during the Galilean Ministry.
- b) The reason behind this particular trip across the Sea of Galilee is recorded in both Matthew and Mark. The disciples had just returned from a missionary journey and Jesus had just found out about the death of John the Baptist. They took this trip to get away from the crowds and to have some quiet time together. (Mark 6:30-32; Matt. 14:12-13)
- c) Their time alone was cut short for the crowds saw that He got onto the ship, anticipated his destination and followed Him on foot. (Mark 6:33) Once again it is mentioned that they followed Him because of the miracles not because of the fact that He was the Messiah or proclaimed the word of God.

v.6:3-10 *And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up [his] eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

Jesus spent time with His disciples until the crowds began to arrive. From the other gospel accounts we see that Jesus was moved by the crowd and so taught them and healed the sick (Mark 6:34; Matt 14:14) Jesus had probably been moving through the crowd for several hours. As evening approached He lifted up His eyes surveying the entire mass of humanity that had assembled.

- a) The other gospel accounts show the disciples coming to Jesus, telling Him to send the crowds away so that they could get something to eat. Jesus insists that they should feed the crowd and asks Philip where they could buy bread. (They were near the city of Bethsaida, Philip’s hometown)

- b) Jesus knew that He would miraculously feed them, but asks the question to see how Philip, as well as the other disciples, would react. He desired to test them. They saw the water turned into wine and witnessed innumerable healings, so would they trust Jesus to supply the need or try to solve the problem by conventional means.
- c) Philip begins to calculate how much it would cost to feed the crowd. While Philip is calculating Andrew begins to brainstorm, mentioning a boy with five loaves and two fish. Both attempts to solve the problem come up far short. Jesus instructs them to make the crowd sit down, and the author estimates the crowd to be 5,000.

v.6:11-15 *And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered [them] together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*

The miracle is very simply recorded by John. Jesus prayed giving thanks, than broke the bread and the fish passing it to His disciples for distribution.

- a) *Many took more than they could eat, so Jesus instructed His apostles to gather up the leftovers. They collected twelve baskets. Implied is that 5,000 people all ate their fill.*
- b) *Once again, the miracle cannot be questioned. It was done before 5,000 plus witnesses. Just as at the wedding feast in Cana a huge surplus was created. Exactly when the actual miracle took place, in the Lord's hands or in the baskets, we are not told. Sometime in the process of distribution the loaves and fish were multiplied.*
- c) *The exact teaching of Jesus to the crowd is not recorded, but we know from this gospel that He taught a baptism of repentance, (v. 4:1-2) He taught that He was the Messiah who would be "lifted up" to save the people from sin. (v. 3:14-15) We know that He spoke of spiritual regeneration. (v. 3:6-8) He put the spiritual over the physical and spoke of all men worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth. (v. 4:23-24) There is no reason to believe that He taught anything different to this particular crowd.*
- d) *The miracle was meant to bear witness to His teaching, however, caught-up in the miracle itself, the crowd proclaims Him to be "that prophet" spoken of by Moses (Deut. 18:15)*
- e) *It is no wonder that this passage of scripture came to mind. It was near the feast of the Passover, they were in a desert-like area, and Jesus had just miraculously fed them with bread.*
- f) *Some even recognized Him as the Messiah, but a Messiah not according to His teaching, but according to their own political agenda. Jesus knew they were contemplating ushering Him into Jerusalem as their king, so He abruptly dismisses the crowd and retreats to the mountain alone. (Matt. 14:22-23)*

Author's note:

Today we have the benefit of full revelation, so it is difficult to understand the mindset of the crowds and even the disciples. Although closer to Jesus than the crowds the disciples many times acted in the same manner. Their minds were not opened to all the teachings of Jesus for their hearts were hardened. (Mark 6:52) Many times they should have understood and were rebuked by Jesus. (Mark 8:16-21)

v.6:16-21 And when even was [now] come, his disciples went down unto the sea, And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

As Jesus went up the mountain to pray, the disciples at the command of Jesus, went down to their ship in the Sea of Galilee and started out for Capernaum. The journey is estimated to have been about five miles across the sea.

Authors note:

In v. 17 John either "tips his hand" or knows that his readers are familiar with the other gospels. He states that they were in the boat, it was now dark and it was before Jesus had arrived. He tells them what is going to happen before he starts the story. Most of John's accounts are very brief and seem to merely add a few details not mentioned in the other gospel accounts. He tells the stories quickly but is very detailed when it comes to the words and discourses of Jesus.

- a) They had been rowing for many hours but because a strong wind blew the waves against the ship they had covered only about three miles. Jesus prayed as the disciples fought against the sea. Was He interceding on their behalf? (Matt. 14:23-24)
- b) Between 3:00AM and 6:00AM (the fourth watch) Jesus walks upon the waves toward the boat. The disciples think He is a ghost and are afraid. When Jesus perceives their fear, He immediately identifies himself to them. John skips over much of this story. Matthew, on the other hand, provides a detailed account. (Matt. 14:25-34; Mark 6:47-53)
- c) Verse 21 seems to suggest that the ship miraculously arrived at its destination when Jesus climbed into the boat. The word translated "immediately" in other places is translated "quickly." The other gospels tell us that when Jesus entered the boat the wind and the sea became calm. This would have enabled them to reach their destination quickly in comparison to the rate at which they were traveling against the wind.

v.6:22-25 The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but [that] his disciples were gone away alone; (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And

when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

The fact that Jesus walked across the sea is never revealed to the people. It was a miracle performed for the benefit of the disciples. The story of the people's confusion as to how Jesus got to the other side of the sea is told by John.

- a) *It was late when the crowd was dismissed so they did not go home, but spent the night. They knew that no other boat had been there except the one the disciples had taken to the other side. They searched for Jesus but He is nowhere to be found.*
- b) *In the meantime, other ships arrive from Tiberias. They probably heard of the crowd and so knew they could pick up some quick business. When the crowd makes sure that Jesus and the disciples did not return on these ships, they board and go to the other side. They find Jesus, are confused and so ask Him directly how He had gotten to the Capernaum side without being seen.*

v.6:26-27 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

These individuals had, the evening before, seen and experienced an awesome display of the power of God. These individuals waited for Jesus at the bottom of the mountain and crossed the sea to again meet up with Him. Their conclusion was that a man with such power to meet the needs of the people should be king.

- a) *Jesus strongly rebukes them for they completely missed the point. They saw the miracles but did not understand or comprehend the meaning. They were meant to substantiate His teaching that He was the spiritual Messiah. The people however, could only see the physical. His miracles had simply made them "Jesus groupies."*
- b) *Jesus begins to introduce them to the spiritual. He begins a discourse that upon its completion would turn most of the crowd away. He compares physical food to spiritual food in much the same way that He compared physical water to spiritual water in His conversation with the woman at the well.*
- c) *The message is that the physical is temporary while the spiritual is everlasting. The physical perishes while the spiritual endures. All living things need food and water to live. All men, on the other hand, need Jesus Christ to live spiritually, and so the comparison of himself to both food and water. (v. 4:13-14)*
- d) *Jesus does not directly identify himself as being this food, but simply states that it is He who will supply it. (He told the woman at the well that He would supply the living water) He states that He has been authorized by God to supply it. The miracles are proof that He has been certified by God for this task.*

v.6:28-29 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Jesus had just told them to labor or to work for the meat that does not perish, but endures. He stated that He was authorized by God to supply this meat. The logical question of the people is "What must we do to get it? What labor does God require so that you will give us this meat?"

- a) Jesus explains to them that what is required is not a work at all, but simply belief. What is required of them and acceptable by God is that they believe in Him as sent by God. Such belief would be the end of their futile attempt to labor for a righteousness that they could never obtain. (Rom. 10:2-4)

v.6:30-31 *They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*

The crowd had accepted Jesus as a great miracle worker and provider. They were prepared to make Him their temporal king. They had waited for Him all night and had followed Him across the sea, however, He now claimed to be sent by God and presented belief in himself as the supreme work. He said that He would supply food that would give everlasting life. These ideas they were not ready to accept.

- a) Accepting Him as the supreme work, which basically amounts to accepting Him as the way of salvation, would change the entire Jewish economy. What about Moses and the law? Only one possessing great authority could make such changes and so the request for a sign. (v. 2:18)
- b) Mindful of the healings that they witnessed and the feeding of the 5,000, they basically tell Jesus that a much greater sign is required. They refer to Moses their lawgiver and the one they considered to be the father of the system they put their hope in.
- c) Moses gave the Israelites manna, which fell from the heavens. It fed millions, not thousands, and not once but throughout a 40 year journey. It is implied that the miracles of Jesus are inferior to those of Moses and if they were to believe in Him as the supreme work of God then He would have to provide much greater signs. (Ps. 78:23-29)

v.6:32-34 *Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

Responding to their demand for a sign, Jesus emphatically and categorically refutes everything that they said about Moses and the signs that he performed. In its place Jesus provides His own comparison.

- a) Moses did not provide the manna. It was provided by God who ever continues to provide. (Ex. 16:4, 15) Furthermore, the manna came from the heavens above the earth and provided nourishment but it was not the true bread from heaven that would give life to the world.
- b) They do not comprehend the spiritual nature of this bread but see it as bread from God that would not only sustain life, but impart life. Based on the miracles they saw Him perform, they believe He might be able to give this bread as He had indicated. (v. 27) Without meeting His prerequisite of committing themselves to Him, as the one sent by God, they ask Him to give them this bread of which He speaks.

- c) Unlike the sarcastic request of the woman at the well asking for the living water, these individuals believe that the bread may be genuine and that Jesus just might be able to provide it. They sincerely ask Him to provide this bread forevermore.

v.6:35-36 *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.*

They seem to have missed the fact that Jesus personified the word bread in verse 33, and focus on the fact that the bread sustains life in some special manner. If provided evermore, it would be synonymous with everlasting life and so their request for it. Knowing their confusion as to the spiritual nature of the bread, Jesus clearly identifies himself as the bread of which He is speaking.

- a) *It is obvious at this point that Jesus is using figurative language when comparing himself to bread. All those who come to Jesus still physically hunger and thirst. Jesus speaks about the effect His spiritual presence has upon the soul. Jesus speaks of spiritual regeneration and what Paul describes as "the peace that passeth understanding."*
- b) *Bread of life literally means bread that provides life. In the original Greek the word "never" is twice emphasized, that is, those who come to Jesus will never be spiritually wanting. The relationship and its effect are permanent and everlasting.*
- c) *Jesus was sent by God to impart and to sustain life. He is bread or food for the soul. Just as physical bread is assimilated into the body, so must the individual become one with Jesus Christ.*
- d) *Jesus, probably referring to what He had said in verse 26, reminds them that they are on the outside. They did not accept Him in the capacity that He had just described. They heard His teaching and witnessed the miracles that bore witness of it, yet they did not believe. They asked for another sign.*

v.6:37-38 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

Their unbelief could not frustrate the plan of God. He was not at the mercy of their acceptance or rejection. Jesus spoke truth. It was in no way contingent on whether they accepted His words or not.

- a) *Jesus knew that the Father had secured a group that would come to Him. The work of Jesus would not be in vain. These believers are the Father's gift to the Son. This is the divine side of salvation and what we call predestination. (Eph. 1:4-6)*
- b) *The human side of salvation is that all that come and believe in Him will be accepted. He will turn no one away. Those that come exercise their will as moral agents just as those who choose not to come. (Matt. 11:28)*
- c) *Those who come, do so willingly. They realize their need and see Jesus as their only hope. They understand the truth of God which He communicates to the world. (v. 1:4, 9) It is God however, that works this willingness in them or that opens their eyes to the truth.*

"Hence, immediately following a statement in which human responsibility is emphasized we have one in which divine predestination is stressed. A person cannot be saved unless he comes to Jesus; he cannot come unless he is given. But 'all that' is given, certainly comes. The clause, 'And him who comes to me I will in no way cast out,' places the emphasis once more on human responsibility; as if to say, 'Let no one hesitate, saying, Perhaps I have not been given to the Son by the Father.' Whoever comes is welcomed heartily." Hendrickson

- d) *Jesus reminds them that it is the will of the Father that He explains and carries out. It is the will conceived in the Godhead in eternity past that He is committed to as a man. He does not work independently; therefore, those that oppose the words of Jesus oppose the will of God.*

v.6:39-40 *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Having stated that He came to do the Father's will, Jesus now very clearly states what the Father's will is. We can call these verses Christ's mission statement for He explains why He came and what He will accomplish.

- a) *He came for the sake of the Father. He is to secure those that the Father has given Him. None that are given will be lost but will be raised on the last day. Jesus teaches eternal security and a bodily resurrection. This is the divine aspect of salvation.*
- b) *He came for the sake of those who would come. Those who see the Son in the light of God's truth and accept Him will be given everlasting life by the Son. This is the human aspect of salvation.*
- c) *It is only the human aspect of salvation, that is, the coming according to the exercise of our will, which we can initially understand. Only after we come can we somewhat comprehend the divine aspect. It is the divine aspect in which we gain our assurance, knowing that we came because we were given and so cannot be lost.*
- d) *In Jesus Christ these two aspects of salvation are brought together. As God, He secures those that are given. As Man, He gives everlasting life to all who respond to His invitation to come.*

v.6:41-42 *The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?*

The Jews had compared the ordinary bread that Jesus had supplied to the manna or bread from heaven, that they believed Moses had supplied. Jesus told them that they were in error and told them that the true comparison was between the manna and Him.

- a) *They murmured at this comparison because Jesus called himself the true bread from heaven as opposed to the manna. He was the bread given by God that could both sustain and impart life. (vs. 33, 35) They murmured because He had told them that they were in error as to how they viewed the manna. Over the centuries it had become bigger than life. They murmured because He said that He came from heaven, that is, that He existed before His birth or was never born at all.*

- b) *Jesus was from Galilee, the region where this incident occurred. The people He addressed were familiar with Him. They state that they knew His father and mother. In all probability they knew Jesus as a child. How could He make the claim that He was somehow different, that He did not enter the world in a normal way but came down from heaven?*

Author's note;

These individuals correctly interpreted the words of Jesus when He said that He came down from heaven. This was not symbolic language referring to His mission or His being sent by the Father. He literally says that He came down from heaven and so affirms the virgin birth. He did not have a human father and so could not be a human person in the sense of all others.

v.6:43-45 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Jesus had told this particular crowd that He was greater than Moses and that He was more than a mere man. (vs. 32-33, 41-42) These were difficult things for them to comprehend. Yet despite the awesome display of the power of God as seen in the miracles and the wisdom of His teaching, the people would not believe. (v. 36) Those whom a day earlier wanted to make Him king, murmured against Him.

- a) *This murmuring was much more than a sense of wonder or questioning. It was born out of a bitter spirit that produced a scornful attitude toward Jesus. Any direct explanation as to His parentage would have been useless and so Jesus rebukes the crowd.*
- b) *He repeats and expands upon an earlier statement concerning the divine aspect of salvation. (v. 39) To believe in Him, they must be divinely drawn. To understand Him, they must be divinely taught.*
- c) *The word used for drawn literally means to drag. It refers to the powerful influence that God exerts upon the will of those whom He has chosen. This activity is accomplished in the divine realm by God.*

"The drawing of which these passages speak indicates a very powerful –we may even say, an irresistible – activity. He powerfully influences the mind, will, heart, the entire personality. These, too, begin to function in their own right, so that Christ is accepted by a living faith." Hendrickson

- d) *This drawing is accomplished by the teaching of God himself. God illuminates the minds and hearts of men. The truth has a powerful and irresistible effect on the will. From the human point of view, a man hears, learns and then freely exercises his will. Those that hear and learn, come to Christ. Those that come have been drawn. Again, the heavenly and the human view of salvation are placed side by side.*
- e) *Jesus tells them that these truths concerning the effectual teaching of God could be found in the writings of the prophets. This was not new information. The scriptures taught that with the coming of the new covenant God would instruct and call out a people unto himself. (Is. 54:13; Jer. 31:33-34; Joel 2:28; Micah 4:2; Zeph. 3:9; Mal. 1:11)*

v.6:46-48 *Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life.*

Jesus tells them that no man, except himself, has seen the Father, that is, no man can comprehend the Father or become familiar with Him. This privilege is reserved for the Son who is himself the manifestation of God. He again affirms that He is unique among men.

- a) This implies that the hearing and the learning is accomplished in the spiritual realm. Verse 45 strongly suggests that God speaks to man and teaches him through the scriptures. (v. 1:18) He now speaks and teaches through His Son.
- b) With the words “*verily, verily,*” Jesus solemnly assures them that those that believe on Him, that is, those who believe and accept His teachings, have everlasting life. This is in accord with the will of God that Jesus came to carry out. (vs. 39-40)
- c) Belief is once again shown to be the means of salvation. (vs. 3:5, 3:18, 3:36, 5:24, 6:29) Those that believe have eternal life. The giving of everlasting life is a clear and irrevocable act of God in accordance with drawing and teaching. He draws. He teaches. He bestows life.
- d) Jesus comes full circle as He again states that He is that bread of life. He has come from the Father. Only He can give and sustain life, both physical as well as spiritual.

v.6:49-51 *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

This crowd had initiated the comparison of Jesus to bread from heaven. They had compared the loaves that Jesus had multiplied to manna. This led to a comparison between Jesus and Moses. In these comparisons they had decided that Jesus was lacking. Jesus told them that the true comparison was between him and the manna, a comparison that he will now expand upon. (vs. 30-33)

- a) He tells them that their ancestors ate the manna and yet they all eventually died. With the phrase “*your fathers*”, He again distinguishes himself from them by emphasizing His unique nature. They were not His fathers, but theirs.
- b) The distinguishing factor of true bread from heaven is that those that partake will enjoy everlasting life, therefore, the manna cannot be the bread from heaven for those who ate it died.
- c) For the third time in this discourse Jesus identifies himself as the bread of life or the living bread. (vs. 35, 48) This is also the third time that He tells them that He came down from heaven. (vs. 33, 38) Those that partake of Him, that is, who become one with Him, will live forever.
- d) Jesus tells them of His sacrificial death. He tells them that He will give His flesh for the life of the world. His death will result in life. His body would be the sacrifice for sin. (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24)
- e) It is clear from this discourse that Jesus is simply comparing himself to bread or more specifically

to the manna which had great significance to the Jew as bread from heaven. Jesus is spiritual food for the soul so that those who partake in Him have everlasting life.

[According to the very argument of Jesus these words cannot be taken literally. Everyone who has ever taken part in the Lord's Table, either Catholic or Protestant, has died or will die, just as those who ate the manna. The common elements therefore cannot be the bread from heaven that gives everlasting life. The everlasting life is obviously spiritual life and so the eating or partaking must also be spiritual. Catholic doctrine violates this comparison for they insist that physical eating produces spiritual results. Jesus clearly explains the spiritual nature of His words at the close of this discourse. (v. 63) (Do Catholics teach that the bread is the actual body of Jesus? Catechism of the Catholic Church pp 346-348)]

v.6:52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat?

Jesus has established that He is the true bread from heaven given to them by the Father. More specifically, the bread is His flesh that He in turn will voluntarily give for the life of the world. Using figures of speech He had told them of His sacrificial death.

- a) *Being ignorant of the scriptures and in light of the fact that these truths were for the most part still hidden, they could not understand the words of Jesus. They argued among themselves as to what He meant when He implied that they must eat His flesh.*

v.6:53-55 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

Knowing their confusion Jesus seems to deliberately "fan the flames" so to speak by assuring them in a very solemn manner that unless they ate His flesh and drank His blood they would not have eternal life. They would remain in their condemned state.

- a) *The idea of drinking His blood would have been especially repulsive for such behavior was strictly forbidden by the law. So Jesus was not only suggesting to them that they do the unthinkable, but was also telling them that they must break the law to have life. (Lev. 17:10-14)*
- b) *We were told earlier in this gospel that Jesus knew the hearts of men. (vs. 2:24-25) He had already told this crowd that they did not believe (v. 36) and also had rebuked them for their antagonistic attitude toward Him. (v.43) Furthermore, many of His teachings and sayings were meant to be veiled. For these reasons Jesus continued using these figures of speech.*
- c) *They should have known that eating His flesh was simply a figure of speech for having a complete belief in Him for salvation. He had already established that eternal life and the raising-up on the last day depended on acceptance of Him (vs. 33, 39, 40, 47) Here He simply substitutes the idea of eating and drinking for belief.*
- d) *The phrase "drink my blood" has a special reference to the atonement. Only by the shedding of blood could sin be forgiven. This blood is personally applied to an individual by belief. He specifically says, "The flesh and blood of the Son of Man," which is reference to His role as*

mediator. So eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking His blood refers to having an all encompassing belief that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh and that His death is the atoning sacrifice for sin. This belief produces eternal life.

- e) So in a spiritual sense, the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ is real food and real drink. It is food that nourishes and sustains the soul. This is the bread that if one eats he will live forever and be spiritually filled. (vs. 33, 35)

v.6:56-58 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

Jesus explains the relationship that exists between Him, and those that believe in Him. Those who partake in His life, in His sacrificial death and in His resurrection, remain in Him, and Jesus in turn remains in them.

- a) The word translated "dwelleth" means to remain. It gives a sense of both intimacy and security. The believer becomes a partaker of the nature of God. (2 Peter 1:4) Paul described this relationship in his letter to the Galatians. (Gal. 2:20)
- b) Jesus further describes the relationship between himself and the believer by comparing it to the relationship between himself and the Father. (John 17:21-23) The believer is nourished, sustained and protected by the power of the Godhead.
- c) As a man, Jesus depended upon the Father of life. The Spirit within Him was His link to the Godhead and His divine nature. (v. 5:26) The believer linked in the same manner and by the same Spirit to Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 11:3; 3:23)
- d) In verse 58 Jesus summarizes and also concludes this discourse. The entire discourse was given in the context of a comparison between himself, as the true bread from heaven, and the manna, which they appealed to as a greater sign than anything Jesus had shown them. The underlying argument was that He was far greater than Moses. Jesus Christ was from heaven and belief in Him resulted in everlasting life.

v.6:59-63 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard [this], said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? [What] and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life.

Jesus had just concluded a lengthy discourse given in the synagogue in Capernaum. This is evidently where the individuals who had come across the sea had found Him. (v. 25) His audience consisted of the Jewish leadership, to whom most of the discourse had been addressed, and also those called His disciples. Those called disciples are probably those who had been following Him.

- a) His disciples had listened to the debate between Jesus and the Jews at the synagogue. Jesus had told them that He had come down from heaven, that He and not the manna was the true bread

from heaven and that they must eat of His flesh and drink His blood to have everlasting life. The Jews had objected to all of these points. (vs. 42, 52)

- b) Those who had been following Jesus, some of whom a day earlier had wanted to make Him king, also took exception with the teaching presented in this discourse. They began to argue among themselves, the consensus being that this was an impossible saying. The word "hard" means offensive. They immediately rejected the teaching.*
- c) It is assumed that the saying referred to is that of eating His body and drinking His blood, however, that He was from heaven, that He made himself out to be greater than Moses, and compared himself to manna cannot be discounted. These concepts were all foreign to them especially since they knew nothing of the sacrificial death of the Messiah as an atonement for sin, and so could not fully understand them in their true context.*
- d) Proof of their underlying unbelief was that they would not humbly come to Jesus for an explanation, but murmured their displeasure among themselves. Jesus knowing of their dissatisfaction with His teaching literally says, "Is this doctrine a stumbling block to you?".*
- e) Jesus may be rebuking them for being men of unbelief saying, "Even if you saw me raise into the heavens before your eyes you still would not believe." Another possibility is that He is referring to His resurrection, telling them that a far greater stumbling block will be put in their path. If they could not understand His death how would they understand if He told them He would be raised from the dead and ascend into heaven?*

[As is the case in almost every incident recorded in this gospel between Jesus and His disciples, He tries to get them to understand the importance of the spiritual as compared to the physical. He told Nicodemus of the need to be born again. He told the woman at the well of the living water. He told His apostles of the meat that they knew nothing about.]

- f) Here He simply tells them that the flesh profits nothing. If they would eat His literal flesh it would do them no good. If they physically made Him a king it would not change their relationship with God in the least. It is the spirit that gives life. The flesh without the spirit is nothing. The spirit operates on a higher plain.*
- g) Jesus tells them that He was talking of spiritual things. His words and comparisons were designed to enlighten the spirit, nourish the soul and to give eternal life. Carnal religion, eating and drinking, was not important to God. He had always been interested in the condition of the heart. Men must worship Him in spirit and in truth. (vs. 4:23-24)*

v.6:64-66 *But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that [time] many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

Jesus had insight into the hearts of men, knowing who would believe and who would not. It says that from the beginning, He knew who in His group of followers would desert Him.

- a) He reminds them that no one can accept His teachings unless they are enlightened to them by the Father. His words were spiritual and therefore must be spiritual discerned. (1 Cor. 2:13-14)*

Many of these however had the spirit of unbelief despite the miracles and the wisdom of His teaching.

- b) *Many, because of this discourse, left Jesus. Not only were the words of this discourse difficult, but it also put to rest any idea they might have had as to Jesus as being the political Messiah they were looking for. They wanted a Messiah of the flesh while He was the Messiah of the spirit.*
- c) *Another factor that may have caused some to leave was the fact that He had exposed the unbelievers. He said and demonstrated that He knew those who did not believe but only followed Him to in some manner further their own agenda.*

v.6:67-69 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

For the first time in this gospel John uses the phrase "the twelve." It is the designation for the inner circle of disciples who are also known as the apostles. Jesus uses the mass desertion of the other disciples to test the twelve. He asks them if they too would now leave Him as did the others.

- a) *Jesus asks the question in the negative seeming to express disappointment in what had just transpired. A large gathering had just rejected His message and walked away.*
- b) *Peter answers Jesus with a question of his own, namely, "To whom shall we go?" We know from other verses that the twelve were also confused as to the teaching and mission of Jesus. At this point they probably do not have a much better understanding than those who had left.*
- c) *There was no comparison in Peter's mind between Jesus and the religious hierarchy. If he left where would he go to receive the truth. He was convinced that Jesus had the words of eternal life and wanted to come to a full understanding.*
- d) *His answer showed that the conclusion arrived at by the apostles was not one born in emotion but arrived at by calculated deliberation. They weighed their options and scrutinized this man Jesus. The heathen philosophers did not have the words of eternal life. Neither did the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees.*
- e) *He goes on to profess Jesus as the Christ or the Messiah, the One sent directly by God. He speaks in the plural as the spokesman for all of the twelve. They obviously talked among themselves and Peter believed He could speak on their behalf in this regard. Even though they did not completely understand, they viewed the miracles as bearing witness of Jesus as sent by God and so having the words of eternal life. (Matt. 14:33, 16:16)*

v.6:70-71 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot [the son] of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

Jesus immediately issues a word of caution to Peter as well as to the others. They were not to be so confident in each other for one of them was an enemy. Peter many times made great proclamations only to later fall.

- a) *One of them, who had basically been handpicked by Jesus, and had fooled the others as to his beliefs and character, would eventually betray Him. Jesus knew who it was even at this stage of His ministry and issues a warning.*
- b) *John at this time did not know who it was. They all remained fooled and didn't find out until the traitor was identified by Jesus shortly before the deed. (John 13:21-26)*