Jesus: The Bread of Life

John 6:35-52

John records only seven of our Lord's miracles and he uses these miracles to record a discourse from our Lord.

- Jesus feeds 5,000 with bread and fish and then gives His discourse, claiming to be the Bread of Life.
- Jesus heals a blind man, and then claims to be the Light of the world.
- Jesus claims to be the Resurrection and the Life, and then raises Lazarus from the dead.

This is the first of seven "I Am" statements in the Gospel of John. Jesus declares:

~I Am the Bread of Life – 6:35
~I Am the Resurrection and the Life – 11:25
~I Am the Light of the World – 8:12; 9:5
~I Am the Way, Truth, Life – 14:6
~I Am the door – 10:7,9
~I Am the Vine – 15:1,5
~I Am the Good Shepherd – 10:11,14

These discourses, more than anything else, presents our Lord's deity.

- These "I Am" statements are set against the background of the burning bush in Exodus 3. Moses asked the God of the burning bush who was sending him to deliver the people of God from Egyptian bondage, "What is your name?" God said, "My name is I Am" - "I always have been; I am now; and I will always be."
- There is no absolute definition of God! Any attempt to define God is to limit Him! It is not possible to describe or even to declare His total majesty, glory, might, power, knowledge or person!
- He declares that He is the covenant-keeping God – The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In this first "I Am" statement, Jesus takes on the Name and the Identity of God and links Himself to God the Father. He declares to be of Divine origin in His Incarnation because He declares Seven times in John 6 that He came down from Heaven – 6:33,38,41,42,50,51,58

- In other words, Jesus claimed to be God!

This is a hard discourse that Jesus gave on the Bread of Life. It was hard for the people then to understand and accept, and it's hard for us today to accept.

- 6:41 – They murmured (grumbled, complained) at Him
- 6:52 – They strove (argued, quarreled) among themselves
- 6:60 - "This is a hard saying; who can understand (accept) it?"
- 6:66 – Many walked away or left Him
- 6:67 – He even asked His 12 men, "Do you want to leave, too?"

Some church denominations have made these verses even more confusing because they misapply these verses to the Lord's Supper.

- Some take 6:52-58 literally and say that Jesus is teaching cannibalism.
- The Roman Catholic church use these verses to teach transubstantiation: “Trans” means across; and “substance”, referring to the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. They teach that when you take of the Lord's Supper, a miracle takes place. They teach that as you take the wafer in your mouth, it actually becomes the body of Christ, and as you take the wine, it actually becomes the blood of Christ. Thus, you have His strength, spiritually and His life eternally; thus, you have the life of Christ in you, which is eternal life.

There are several problems with this:

1. This could not refer to communion, because our Lord didn't institute the Lord's Supper until almost a year after this discourse.
2. These verses were spoken to unbelievers and the Lord's Supper is intended only for
believers.

3. The Lord's Supper is taken as a visible reminder of our Lord's sacrifice for us.

Three things I want to share with you:

I. Our Lord's Claim – 6:35, 48, 51

It is interesting that Jesus was born in Bethlehem – the house of bread.

The question is, “Where did Jesus come from?” Seven times in John 6, Jesus declares that He came down from heaven.

-That means that Jesus existed and existed As God before He was born on this earth.
-He didn't just claim that He was going to heaven, but that He had already been in heaven. No wonder folks said, “That is a hard saying.” If we had been there that day, it would have been a hard saying for us, too.

Jesus then makes a strange suggestion. He said, “Many of you don't believe me, do you? What is it going to take for you to believe?”

-Then He makes the strange suggestion – 6:62 “What if I put everything in reverse so you can see with your own eyes: me as I am now; then at age 12; then as a baby; then ascending back to heaven where I came from.”

-It's like watching a film in reverse. Have you ever watched America's Funniest Home Videos, and watched as they put it in reverse?

-The main issue here is, “Where did Jesus come from?”

II. Our Lord's Comparison – 6:49-51

When Jesus called Himself “The Living Bread”, He was not claiming to be exactly like the manna in Moses’ day. He was claiming to be even Greater!

- Manna was only for Israel; Jesus was for the whole world.
- Manna only sustained life; Jesus gives life.
- The Jews ate the manna daily for 40 years and eventually died; when you receive Jesus as the Bread of Life one time, you will live forever and never die.
- There was no cost to God in sending the manna each day, but it cost the Father the life of His Son to send the Living Bread.
- The manna was temporary and physical; Jesus, the Living Bread is eternal and spiritual.
- Jesus not only gives bread; He IS Bread.
- This was one piece of bread that was hard for the crowd to swallow!

III. Our Lord's Challenge – 6:58

The heart of these verses is two-fold:

-Jesus wants us to know who He is and where He came from. He is God and He came down from heaven to provide a sacrifice for sinful man.

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-Jesus wants us to know How a person is saved.

A. Salvation is God's work on man's Behalf – 6:35,37,44

These are very important verses. There is a theological argument that rages today on election or free will.
-There are some who put all their eggs in the basket of election; that's called Calvinism.
- There are others who put all their eggs in the basket of free will.
- You say, “Preacher, can you reconcile the two?” No, sir. And you can’t either. Any man who says that he can is a liar or deceived or both.
- Someone asked Charles Spurgeon to reconcile the two, and he said, “I don't have to reconcile old friends.”

Look at John 6:37: Election and free will are both in this verse.
- “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me” states a truth, and that is election.
- But wait a minute! “And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” is also true, and “him that cometh to me” is free will. I don't know how to reconcile them, but they are both true. The Father gives men to Christ but men have to come. And the ones that come are the ones, apparently, whom the Father gives to Him.
- You say, “Well, what if I’m not one of God's elect and I come to Christ?” Well, God will make an exception in your case because you came to Him.” Friend, if you come to Christ, you will be the elect!
- The wonderful thing is that it is God’s will for all to come and for none to perish. “Whosoever will, let him come!”
- How can you know if you are one of the elect? Come to Jesus in faith!

Notice 6:4  Without God’s drawing, no one would ever come to Christ.
- The word “draw” speaks of a Divine activity, sometimes called conviction, when by the power of God’s grace He pulls us from sin’s darkness and pulls our heart toward His glorious Son. With His loving kindness He tenderly, yet powerfully, wins our hearts to Himself.
- Drawing implies resistance. Christ draws all men, but not all respond to Him. The offer of salvation is for all to be saved, but we must all make the choice and we are all responsible for our choice.

B. What does God “draw” us to do?

John uses several terms as we respond to His drawing:

- 6:35 – coming to Jesus and believing on Jesus
  Joh 6:35  
  (35) 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.

- 6:40 – to behold or see with the eyes of faith
  Joh 6:40  
  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

- 6:45 – to listen to Jesus
  Joh 6:45  
  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.

Now Jesus introduces a new metaphor: Eating His Flesh – 6:52-58
Jesus is speaking figuratively, referring to His whole person. This is a figure of speech which means to appropriate and assimilate Christ into our own lives by faith until we are joined as one.

Notice 6:56  The analogy of eating suggest several things:

1. Bread must be internalized or it will do no good
   You may examine bread or study it, smell it, read about it, but it will be useless until you eat it;
take it into yourself.

2. The Holy Spirit must create a hunger and awaken our spiritual need for Christ. God must give the lost man a hunger for forgiveness, deliverance, peace, hope, cleansing.

3. Eating is personal
   Watching someone else eat will do me no good. No one else can eat for me.

4. What I eat becomes a part of me.

C. What does God promise to those who receive the Bread of Life?

1. Life – 6:57
2. Everlasting Life – 6:47, 51, 58
3. He will be secure in Christ – 6:37, 39
4. God will raise him up bodily on the last day – 6:39, 40, 44, 54
5. We will abide (be joined to) in Christ both here on earth and in heaven – 6:56

Jesus offers a beautiful invitation in 6:35

Joh 6:35  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.