

In this second part of the lesson on Chapter 6, the crowds are still following Jesus, but for all the wrong reasons. They have an incorrect understanding of Him and His identity. They misunderstood the Messiah's work on earth, and Jesus sets the record straight. His teaching causes many to leave Him, including many previously faithful disciples (not the 12) because they do not understand His teachings, which they consider "hard." Jesus ultimately asks the closest circle of 12 disciples if they want to leave as well. We also see that one disciple does not believe, and will eventually betray Him.

²²*On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone—²³however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks—²⁴when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.*

- The people following Jesus could not figure out where He went. They knew His disciples entered the only boat they had, without Him, and headed out onto the lake. That boat was gone, and they (Jesus and His disciples) had no other means of travel across the lake. There were probably many other boats on the lake, some from Tiberias nearby, so they all headed up to the most logical place they could think of – to Capernaum.
- **It is a credit to these people that they did indeed look for Him.** They knew He was different, and they were attracted to Him by many things, including His track record of healing, miracles and the obvious supply of free bread. Some were probably seeking the truth, and the Messiah. Some were only seeking more free food. Regardless of their motives, they did seek Him.
- **"...after the Lord had given thanks ..."**
This is the first use by John of the word (the title) *Lord*— a Greek word (Kurios) meaning "Master."



²⁵*And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."²⁷"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."*

- **"Rabbi, when did You come here?"** The people are still scratching their heads trying to figure out how and when Jesus got where they found Him. We always seem to be interested in the trivia rather than the real truth of any matter.

- ***“Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.”*** The people following Jesus had seen the signs (His miracles, including this feeding of thousands of which they were recipients), but that was not why they were following Him. He chastises them here, rebuking them for coming after Him only for more free food. The signs they witnessed proved He was indeed the Messiah. They proved He is God! Yet their most pressing need was not to follow the Messiah – a spiritual filling, but to fill their stomachs, a physical filling. Because times were so hard for the people in the countryside, this free bread was something they did not take lightly. Any meal blessed by Jesus was perhaps the best meal ever consumed (just like the wine He changed from water). It was worth their time to follow Him just for that reason. But it wasn’t what Jesus was looking for.
- ***“Most assuredly, I say to you,..”*** Four times in this discourse Jesus uses the words “most assuredly” to underscore a comment and teaching. In the KJV, these are the words “verily, verily.” In the original Greek, they are “*amen, amen.*” “Amen” means “surely” and “truly.” In others words, ***“you can most definitely believe and trust what I am about to say.”***
- ***“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life,...”*** Jesus tried to show them that there was more to Him than physical food. He could also give them spiritual food which would last forever, leading to eternal life – unlike the physical bread which would perish. It is not wrong to seek God’s hand for physical needs, but our spiritual well-being is by far the most important priority for us. ***“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*** (Matthew 6:33) Jesus Himself is the food they should be seeking.
- **The woman at the well in Chapter 4 had the same approach.** She wanted the physical water that she thought Jesus had access to. He told her He was the source of “living water” a spiritual quenching for spiritual thirst. Especially in these times, bread and water are critically important to maintain life. Jesus is both Bread and Water. He is communicating right where the people lived, but unfortunately they only saw the physical meanings. He said that He is Water and that He gives Living Water. He said that He is Bread. We know what water is and we know what bread is, and we know we can't survive without them. Spiritually, we can’t survive without Jesus.
- ***“...because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”*** Jesus’ authority to provide everlasting life was found in the **seal** (testimony) of the Father through His signs and miracles. The Father has set “His seal” on Jesus, just like a wax seal used in ancient days to indicate who owned or authenticated something. Even sacrificial animals were sealed to show they were set apart (consecrated) for a special purpose. Jesus is indicating he has been sealed, owned and authenticated and set apart for a special purpose, by the Father himself. Although it is not so common in our culture and times, the people then would have understood what this meant.
- After all this, notice that Jesus **did not answer their question** about how he got there. It doesn’t matter! Jesus also knew their hearts, and knew their intentions. This incident of walking on water was private, between Jesus and His disciples. Their question would not be answered because it didn’t deserve or need an answer. Sometimes neither do ours! We may get a completely different answer than the one we are seeking, but it will always be the right one if we are earnestly and honestly seeking God’s direction.

²⁸Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” ²⁹Jesus answered and said to them, “**This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.**”

- **“What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”** Jesus had just told them to “labor” for bread that provides eternal life. They must have been listening, because **they asked a good question**. But they were still only thinking in the physical realm, and could not understand (or accept) the spiritual answer.
- **“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”** The answer surprised and confused them. They were expecting probably a list of “good deeds” that would please God. Instead they got an answer that seemed a bit too simple. That’s the problem today, as well. Man has invented thousands of “religions” that require keeping a list of “to do’s” for a false god. The only thing we must do, and our eternal salvation depends on this, is to believe in Jesus, whom God sent to save us. Most of these people were Jews, and they had been taught to obey the Law all their lives. Now Jesus tells them all they have to do is believe in Him. **That is very foreign to them**. Today people also have a problem with this. It is in our human nature to want to “earn” our way into heaven. It can’t be done. Jesus earned our way for us, and all we do is believe in the One who did that work. No other “work” will get us to heaven.
- **Although this is a simple answer and a simple response on our part, we should not be fooled by the “simplicity” of it.** Believing involves a lot more than just acceptance by the mind as being true. The word used here implies putting complete trust in the object of this belief. To believe means to fully trust God and yield our wills, our desires, our plans, our strengths, our weaknesses to Jesus’ direction and safekeeping. It is moment-by-moment yielding to him. And this is **the hardest work we will ever do!**

³⁰Therefore they said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?” ³¹“Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ ”

- **The Jews are beginning to tune into what Jesus is saying.** They are willing to accept that He might be someone special, but to be the Messiah, He had to prove it by doing more to convince them. They are looking for more signs. These are the ones, for the most part, who had been present the day before when Jesus fed the thousands of people gathered to hear Him teach. They watched Him miraculously feed everyone by making more bread out of a little bread. In other words, something from something. They are now claiming that Moses actually did greater works, because he provided “manna” the bread from heaven – something out of nothing. Moses fed hundreds of thousands for years, not a one-time event. In their minds, this made Moses greater than Jesus. They are asking Jesus to perform greater signs than Moses performed, so they can believe what He says about Himself.
- It was common at that time among the Jews to believe that **when the Messiah came, he would also bring manna from heaven**. This crowd knew this, and wanted this man who claimed to be the Messiah to do this as a sign. When comparing the feeding of about 20,000 people to Moses’ feeding of perhaps millions for years upon years, Jesus didn’t come out on top. Jesus did it one time, Moses did it for 40 years. Jesus provided regular bread, Moses provided “bread from heaven.” These people wanted to see more. In essence they are saying, “if you are more than Moses, DO more than Moses.”

- **It is interesting to note that someone else provided bread in the Old Testament.** Elisha performed a similar miracle as Moses. He fed 100 men with 20 loaves: 2 Kings 4:42-44 *“A man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. “Give it to the people to eat,” Elisha said. “How can I set this before a hundred men?” his servant asked. But Elisha answered, “Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the LORD says: ‘They will eat and have some left over.’ ” Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.*
- **Elisha is also a type for the Messiah, for Jesus.** Jesus fulfilled this foreshadowing here by feeding the 5,000, with leftovers. Elisha fed 100 men with 20 loaves, a ratio of 5 to 1. But Jesus fed over 5,000 with 5 loaves – a ratio of 1,000+ to 1.
- **Jesus is fulfilling all the Old Testament types for the Messiah,** including those who provided bread. The people knew of Elisha, and Moses, and they wanted still to see more from Jesus. If He was greater than either of these, He should prove it with greater works. Both the bread from Moses and Elisha were mere types for the “real bread” to come.

³²*Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.”* ³³*“For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”*

- *“Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.”* **Jesus makes a few corrections of their thinking here.** First, he states that it was not Moses who brought the manna, it was God the Father. Secondly, the true and authentic bread from heaven is also from Him. He is pointing out a difference between *manna*, a physical bread eaten for nourishment, and the *“true” bread*, a spiritual food “eaten” for eternal life. The Jews were placing far too much faith in Moses, a great prophet, but still only a man. They were placing their trust, and even their worship, in Moses and his writings – the Law. This is one of the reasons John contrasts Moses with Jesus so often in this book. Yes, Moses was great, but he was only a man. Anything divine he appeared to do was actually done by God, not Moses. Jesus is more than a man. He is God in the flesh.
- The Father **still “gives”** (the present tense is important) the true bread from heaven (life through the Son). The present tense of this word means God is still providing this bread from heaven. It is still available to all who seek it.
- *“For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”* Jesus is setting up the moment when He will clearly claim to be this true bread from heaven. Here he says this bread is actually a person, One who comes down from the Father, from heaven, to bring life to the world. He is talking about Himself, and He will openly state this.
- Another important key word in the gospel of John is the word **TRUE**. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the OT types – the shadows of things to come. Jesus is the TRUE bread, not the shadow (manna) of what went before, but the fulfillment of it.
- **COMMENTARY: In a solemn revelation (I tell you the truth;) Jesus corrected their ideas in three ways. (1) The Father, not Moses, gave the manna. (2) The Father, was still giving “manna” then, not merely in the past. (3) The true Bread from heaven is Jesus, not the manna. Thus the supposed superiorities of Moses and his sign vanish. Manna was food for the body, and it was useful. But Jesus is God’s full provision for people in their whole existence. Jesus repeatedly said He had come down from heaven. (Walvoord and Zuck)**

- The attempt to correct the Jewish thinking and faith in Moses rather than Jesus continues throughout the New Testament. Consider this passage in Hebrews 3:5-11 *“Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast. So, as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' ”* Jesus did not want the same thing to happen to this generation!

³⁴*Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.”* ³⁵*And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”*

- *“Lord, give us this bread always.”* Some say this statement shows a lot of cynicism and scoffing. Others say it is sincere. If it is sincere, then they still do not understand the bread Jesus speaks of. They remember being filled full the day before, and naturally would desire this every day of their lives. They would never have to plant, weed and reap or even bake bread anymore. Whatever their motives, they still did not understand what Jesus was saying.
- *“I am the bread of life....”* Now Jesus clearly states that HE is the bread of which He speaks. He is what they should be seeking, and “working” for through their belief in Him. He is the One who can provide eternal life. “The bread of life” in this context can mean either “the bread that gives life,” or “the bread that is living.” Both are correct.
- **This is the first of seven “I AM”** descriptive statements made by Jesus in this Gospel (see also 8:12; 9:5; 10:7,9; 10:11,14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1,5). In the Greek the words are emphatic and relate back to Exodus 3:14. *“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.’ ”* These “I AM” statements are a definitive declaration about Jesus’ deity and equality with the Father. Every one of these statements caused the Pharisees to become angrier and angrier.
- *“He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”* Bread is known as the STAFF OF LIFE. In the ancient world, and even today, it is considered the dietary mainstay. Without bread, man will die. In addition to bread, water is the other necessity. Food and water....Jesus says that our bodies can live better without physical bread than our spirits without the bread of heaven. The physical is temporary, the spiritual is eternal.
- **There are some interesting notes about the “bread.”** Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a city whose name literally means “house of bread.” It was in this place, “the house of bread,” that the lambs were raised for Passover. For the Jew, the bread is typified by the “showbread” in the tabernacle and temple. The sacrifices offered by the Levites were called the “bread of God.” Are these all coincidences?



- We should note the verbs **comes** and **believes**, (to Jesus, in Jesus). These words indicate continuous action. We don't believe once, come get fed, then leave. We continue believing, continue trusting, continue coming to Jesus. Salvation may be a one-time event, but it begins a lifetime walk with Him.

³⁶*"But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe."* ³⁷*"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."*

- These crowds saw Jesus and all the works He did with their own eyes. Yet, still they didn't believe. We see the same thing today – even miracles cannot overcome a hard heart.
- **At these verses, usually the subjects of election and free will come up.** Are we predestined, or do we have free will to come to God? BOTH are in this verse 37. God has predestined ALL men to come to Him, and be saved by Jesus. He has not elected just some, but all. Remember that He desires that "none perish" (*"The Lord is....not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* 2 Peter 3:9) But the choice is still ours. We must decide to come, decide to believe, decide to be saved by Him.
- **COMMENTARY:** There is a theological argument that rages today on election or free will. ...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. (McGee)
- *"I will by no means cast out."* Those who do make the choice to come to Him, He will never "cast out." He embraces all who come, and keeps all in Him for eternal life with Him.

³⁸*"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."* ³⁹*"This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."*

- *"For I have come down from heaven, ..."* Jesus repeats this statement six times in this context (vv. 33,38,41,50-51,58). He is emphasizing His divine origin and nature. He keeps repeating it to drive this message home.
- *"...not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me...."* Repeatedly throughout this Gospel Jesus also emphasizes that **He came out of obedience**, to fulfill the will and the plan of the Father for the salvation of all mankind. He came to save and to give life. He did not come for personal gain or to get attention. He came only to pay the price for our lives, at the Father's direction and by His will.
- **It is the will of God that all who come to Jesus be preserved to eternal salvation.** We cannot slip out of His hands, because it is not His will. No one who comes will be lost. But we still must decide to come. (see Romans 8:29–30; Philippians 1:6; II Timothy 2:19; I Peter 1:4–5).
- We could say that **"predestination" is only for those who come to Jesus**, because God has predestined everyone to do this. He does not predestine the lost to be lost. **COMMENTARY:** The term predestination applies only to the saved. It means just exactly what He is saying here. When a person accepts Christ, he is justified; and just as surely as he is justified, he is going to be glorified. When Jesus starts out with one hundred sheep, He's going to come through with one hundred sheep. He will not lose one. That is what this means. Everyone who believes and receives Christ has everlasting life and will be raised up again at the last day.

- **“...at the last day.”** This is an **expression found only in John** in the New Testament. It is found repeatedly in the Old Testament. The word for “last” means “superlatively final.” This is a term for the last “day of man.” The “Day of the Lord” begins on this day, when Jesus comes again.

⁴⁰**“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”**

- Jesus clearly states the will of the Father, which is also His will. That everyone who believes on the Son, Jesus, is to be saved. Period. They will be raised to eternal life. The Father, and the Son, will that ALL should be saved. But the choice is ours! The heart of Jesus and His Father is revealed further in Matthew 18:14 **“In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.”**
- **“...everyone who sees the Son...”** Only a few select people literally saw Jesus walk this earth. This statement does not mean by physical sight, but by spiritual sight. When we SEE Jesus, we understand who He is, and accept Him as the Messiah, the promised Savior of God.

⁴¹**The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.”** ⁴²**And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”**

- Remember that when John uses the term **“Jews”** he is indicating the spiritual leaders of that time – the Pharisees, Saducees, and others. They are the ones questioning now. This is the same response we see from these “Jews” any time that Jesus makes His claims. Not only are their hearts hardened, but they are also responsible for turning the hearts of the people away from Him. Even though they had seen the miracles, had even eaten them, they could not understand and accept the words of Jesus. Their hearts were dead. They needed to come alive in the Spirit to understand Jesus.
- **“Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph...”** We know that Jesus was teaching this lesson in Capernaum, which is relatively close to Nazareth. These would have been local Jews, who knew Jesus was from this area, and they probably knew his earthly parents. How in the world (the physical world) could His statements be true? How could He come down from heaven?? This echoes Jesus statement that a prophet is not honored in His home town. (**“For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.”** John 4:4)
- Jesus is actually **proclaiming his virgin birth here** – He is the one who came down from heaven. The Jews are immediately cynical of this statement, which they understood completely. They knew Jesus’ parents, including Joseph, so since they knew His human heritage, how could He be the One who came down from heaven? They had closed their minds to any possibility that He was the Messiah. It simply wasn’t possible to them, because they weren’t looking for Him.

⁴³**Jesus therefore answered and said to them, “Do not murmur among yourselves.”** ⁴⁴**“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”**

- Jesus doesn’t have to overhear their grumbling, their comments designed to be heard by others and turn their hearts away also. Jesus knows their hearts. He tells them to stop it(!) but doesn’t spend any more time on these hypocrites.

- ***“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him;...”*** Jesus returns to His message obtaining eternal life. In order for a person to come to the Bread of Life, the Father must **draw him**. This verb is correctly translated *draws* in the sense of “drags” (Acts 16:19; 21:30). People cannot be saved at all unless God through the Holy Spirit draws them. God had predestined all to come to Him, and draws all, but some resist. How many of us have had to be dragged? We must first overcome our sinful, prideful self nature. Pride is always between us and God, and was the wall between Jesus and these Pharisees.
- This is the third time Jesus talks of being **raised at the last day**. This is the power of this message. We have overcome death through Him. It is repeated often because He wants them (and us) to hear this and know it.

⁴⁵***“It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.***

- ***“It is written in the prophets,...”*** Jesus is referencing the “prophets” of the Old Testament, and in particular here he quotes from the book of Isaiah (54:13) ***“All your sons will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children’s peace.”*** The meaning here is that for us to learn truth, we must learn it directly from God, by His Holy Spirit, with open hearts. If we have open hearts ready to receive what He wants to teach us, we will indeed be taught by God, as the prophets mention.
- ***Therefore everyone who has heard and learned ...”*** It is not enough to simply hear to the Word of God. **We must also learn**, and the only way we can learn is to desire to be taught from Him. Only those who learn from God come to salvation, and all who learn from Him are saved. The Jews heard, but did not learn. Jesus is indicating that if these people had truly learned from God, they would have been drawn to Jesus, the promised Messiah. Their hearts would have been ready to this “hard” teaching, and they would have understood it with spiritual understanding, which only comes from being taught by God.
- This scripture is also a reference to the **Millennial Kingdom** reign of Jesus, where everyone will be taught by God Himself. Here, at this time of His first coming to earth, Jesus (God in the flesh) did indeed teach the people. Those who desired to learn were drawn to Jesus. Those who did not, were repelled by His teachings.
- This may also indicate that those who truly desire to learn of God will be **taught by Him directly, by the power of the Holy Spirit**. We are filled with the Holy Spirit, who is charged with teaching us all things, all truth. Our text book is the Word of God in print. At that time, the text was the Old Testament scriptures and Jesus Himself. He is the “Word” of God, the very nature and character of God standing before them. We don’t rely upon or put our faith in the knowledge of man. That is not knowledge.
- Solomon, the author of Proverbs, opened his book with these words: ***“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.”*** (Proverbs 1:7) “Fear” is not being scared as we would think. This word means having the proper reverence for such an awesome power as God. This is the right heart needed to be taught by God. The Pharisees and other “Jews” in this crowd did not have this right heart.



- ***“...comes to Me.”*** Jesus’ statement means that everyone who truly desires God, is taught by Him and learns of Him, **will automatically come to Jesus**. They will know Him. This is the automatic, foreordained conclusion of being taught by God. If you seek God, you will find Him, you will be taught by Him, and you will come to Jesus.

⁴⁶***“Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.”***

- ***“Not that anyone has seen the Father,...”*** Jesus is explaining that although we are taught by God, we do not physically see him. We spiritually see him through the eyes of our hearts. God plants His “teaching” in our hearts directly through the Holy Spirit.
- ***“...except He who is from God He has seen the Father.”*** Jesus reiterates what all Jews already knew, that no one has seen the Father with physical eyes. However, there is One who has seen Him. There is one man, who happens to be “from” God, who has seen Him. And that man is standing before them, teaching them now. He is the **ONLY** man to have seen the Father.
- Some in that crowd understood completely what Jesus was saying because they desired to be taught by God, and were drawn to Jesus as a result. Others, however, may have heard His words, but they bounced right off their hearts.
- Another reminder (we have seen others in John) about **no human ever “seeing” God**. Jesus says He is the only One who has seen God because as John tells us, He was with God, and he was God. Too hard for mere mortals to comprehend, we can only believe!

⁴⁷***“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.”*** ⁴⁸***“I am the bread of life.”*** ⁴⁹***“Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.”*** ⁵⁰***“This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.”*** ⁵¹***“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”***

- **Now begins the “hard” teaching.** Jesus begins this section again with the words “most assuredly,” or “verily, verily.” He is underscoring the importance of what He is about to say. And His first statement is critical: ***“...he who believes in Me has everlasting life.”*** This is the bottom line of all Jesus’ teaching. He is the only way to eternal life. Our belief is the “work” we do in order to be saved. He will go on to equate Himself with the bread again.
- ***“I am the bread of life.”*** **Jesus is the sustenance (food, nourishment) of life.** The manna was physical food for physical life. Jesus is spiritual food for spiritual life. Without Him, there is only spiritual death (eternal separation from God). The manna lasted one day, then it began to mold. It would eventually decay altogether. It was “dead” bread. Those who ate it in the wilderness were sustained temporarily, but now they are dead. Jesus is the bread that leads to eternal life, not eternal death.
- ***“...and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”*** Like Nicodemus, like the woman at the well, like the Pharisees, the people are thinking only in terms of the physical, and this teaching is repulsive to them. They are well aware of God’s Laws that forbid this, as well as the drinking of blood (more in a moment on this). This is not at all what Jesus is speaking of. This statement of His looks ahead to his death on a cross, where He will sacrifice His flesh, and shed His blood, the price required to atone for our sins. That atonement is available to all who come to Him.

- This is indeed a **“hard” teaching**, especially for those who had not yet been “taught by God.” The clues were all around them, however. John pointed to God and called Him the “lamb” (the sacrifice) of God. Jesus is prophesying that He will sacrifice His flesh and spill His blood for the world, and the world must accept Him as their spiritual nourishment, or they will die in their sins. Those whose hearts were open would begin to understand and God would draw them further to follow Jesus.

⁵²*The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?”*

- **And here is the natural reaction.** The “Jews” (*John’s reference to the Pharisees and other ruling religious Jews – this is not a reference to the local people in the countryside, though many of them probably also had difficulty with this teaching*) were all about the physical. They were concerned with their own pride, position and power. They were drawn by God, as God draws everyone, but they pushed Him away choosing their own self knowledge instead of His truth. They were not taught by God, so they could not come to Jesus. They are cynical, angry and probably stirring up the crowds at this point. Jesus is a threat to them and they do anything they can to turn the people away from Him.
- This is one of the **“hard teachings of Jesus.”** In many ways we can understand the response to this teaching. It is difficult if not impossible to understand without spiritual eyes and heart. It was especially difficult for the Jews who knew God's Law which forbids eating human flesh or drinking blood. Often God teaches us in “hard” ways, or speaks to us in His Word in ways that may be difficult to understand on the surface. He may do this to get us to keep at it, keep asking our Teacher for the meaning, keep looking and digging for the understanding. If we seek Him, we will find Him, and we will find the meanings that may be initially elusive. This is the mark of a dedicated and devoted pupil.

⁵³*Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.”* ⁵⁴*“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”* ⁵⁵*“For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.”* ⁵⁶*“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.”*

- Again, Jesus begins this next “unbelievable” statement with the underscore of “most assuredly.” What He is about to say is important, but it is also shocking to some.
- He has been calling Himself the “bread from heaven” and implying that the people need to “eat” of it for salvation. **Now Jesus complicates the situation further by adding that they must “drink His blood”** or they have no life in them. God forbid the Jews from drinking blood in the Levitical Law brought by Moses (Leviticus 7:26–27). Now, this additional statement has just sent them over the edge. To those who had not been “taught by God,” this was blasphemy and heresy. However, the Jews misunderstood. Leviticus 17:11 clearly states that life **is in the blood**. This passage from the Old Testament law was prophetic and pointed to accepting the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lamb of God, the basis for eternal life.
- God had taught the Israelites that truth from the very beginning. At Mount Sinai Moses, with the Word of God, taught them “the life of the flesh is in the blood,” which is also medically true, by the way. The life of the flesh *is* in the blood. And Jesus gave His life, His flesh and blood.

- This statement about “eating His flesh” and “drinking His blood” has caused a great deal of **differing speculation in the Church as well**. Obviously, all those who study the words of Jesus understand that He is NOT meaning this in the literal physical way that the people who heard it were offended by it. The differing consensus is in whether or not these words are referencing the “Lord’s Supper.” Some believe that this passage is a direct reference to the sacraments of bread and wine, shared at the last Passover meal with His disciples, during which Jesus took the bread and said it was His body, and the wine His blood. While this is most likely a foreshadow of that day, yet a year away from this time, others think He is not referencing this moment, for a number of reasons.
- Jesus **does not teach that receiving that sacrament is a requirement for eternal life**, as would seem likely by His words here if these are referencing the “Lord’s Supper.” The tradition of “communion” is only a symbol of our belief in Him, and our union with Him. Flesh and blood here point to Jesus as the crucified one and the source of life. He speaks of our faith’s appropriation of Himself as God’s appointed sacrifice. This, obviously, is something that is not to be taken literally. He is not saying for them to begin to eat Him and to drink His blood! What He is saying is that He is going to give His life.
- There is **disagreement among believers** in the churches down through the ages over the interpretation of the “Lord’s Supper.” When He gave them the bread (the hidden Afikomen) at the Passover meal in the upper room, He said, “... **This is my body ...**” (Luke 22:19). He also took the third cup of the Passover meal, the Cup of Redemption, and referenced it as His blood, shed for them, and for us. Various denominations have put different emphases on these words.
- It is extremely helpful for us to remember that the **bread and wine were elements traditionally used during the Passover Seder**. Jesus did not just take a glass of wine and some ordinary bread at a meal in the upper room. This was the last Passover He would celebrate with His disciples, and He was always teaching them. He used the traditions and scriptural foundations of the Passover to teach some amazing lessons. This was not just any meal. He was the Passover Lamb, and the next day He would hang from a cross and give His flesh and His blood for our salvation.



- **COMMENTARY (LORD’S SUPPER)** ...[some] say that transubstantiation takes place, that the bread becomes the flesh of Christ. Well, I don’t think our Lord taught cannibalism in any form, shape, or fashion....Then there are those who have taken [another] position ..., which is consubstantiation. This means that by, with, in, through, and under the bread you get the body of Christ. Again, may I say, I think that falls short of what our Lord really means. Then there are those who take ... a spiritual interpretation. [It is] just a symbol, just a religious ritual, and that is all. I think that is probably the interpretation that most of Protestantism gives to it today. Frankly, I feel that falls as far short of the interpretation of the Lord’s Supper as the other two do. ... bread is bread, and it always will be bread. It cannot be changed. The wine is always just what it is, and there is no miracle that takes place there. You don’t get the body of Christ by going through the ritual. And yet, it is more than a ritual. I had a seminary professor who taught us that in the Lord’s Supper it is bread in your mouth, but it is Christ in your heart. Friend, I believe that there is a spiritual blessing that comes in observing the Lord’s Supper. I think that He ministers to you spiritually through your obedience in observing the Lord’s Supper. There is no such thing as a hocus-pocus there. Nor is it just an idle ritual that we go through. It is meaningful, and it has a spiritual blessing for the heart. (McGee)

- **COMMENTARY:** Some interpreters tell us that Jesus was speaking about the Lord's Supper, and that we eat His flesh and drink His blood when we partake of the elements at the table, the bread and the cup. I do not believe that Jesus had the Communion (or eucharist) in mind when He spoke these words. For one thing, why would He discuss the Lord's Supper with a group of disagreeable unbelievers? He had not even shared that truth with His own disciples! Why would He cast this precious pearl before the swine? Second, He made it clear that He was not speaking in literal terms [see 6:53]. He was using a human analogy to convey a spiritual truth, just as He did with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. Third, Jesus made it plain that this eating and drinking were *absolutely essential* for eternal life. He made no exceptions. If, then, He was speaking about a church ordinance (or sacrament), then everybody who has never shared in that experience is spiritually dead and is going to hell. This would include all the Old Testament saints, the thief on the cross, and a host of people who have trusted Christ in emergency situations (hospitals, accidents, foxholes, etc.). I personally cannot believe that our gracious God has excluded from salvation all who cannot participate in a church ceremony. (Warren W. Wiersbe)

- **Our comment:** note the words "church ceremony." This is what the "Lord's Supper" or what we call "communion" is. Jesus did not institute this, or at least what the modern church has made it. He told them to remember Him and the work He did on the cross as the "Lamb of God" every time they celebrated the Passover. Unfortunately, the "Church" ultimately stopped celebrating Passover because they wanted to distance themselves from the Jews, so they instituted what has been called "communion." That is very sad. We have lost the real meaning of what Jesus was saying with the wine and the bread at the Passover meal.
- **"... abides in Me, and I in him."** This is the first mention of the "abiding" power of Jesus in the gospels. This is "mutual indwelling" of the Holy Spirit in us, and us in Him. When we receive Jesus, He takes up residence in us through the Holy Spirit. Those who have eaten this spiritual food, have accepted the sacrifice He gave of body and blood for our sins, have this abiding presence. This is not just a nice saying, it is truth! How often do we forget that??

⁵⁷*"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me."* ⁵⁸*"This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."* ⁵⁹*These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.*

- These **verses serve as a quick summary**, underscoring the important facts they must remember, of all that Jesus has said here. The Father, the living God, sent Jesus, Jesus lives because of the Father, He is the bread from heaven that provides eternal life, and all who feast on Him (make Him their spiritual food and accept His sacrifice for them) will live forever. Jesus will frequently give such a summary in order to make His lessons clear so people can understand what He is saying.
- Here Jesus states for the 10th time that He has come down from heaven, and He is the bread of life, necessary for eternal salvation. The message is clear. Do you want to live forever? By faith, accept His spiritual food.
- John mentions that Jesus taught these things **in the synagogue in Capernaum**. This teaching was in the presence of the "Jews" and in an official setting. He was not teaching in secret, but in the open for all to hear. The synagogue would be the most acceptable place for teaching at that time. It is repeatedly mentioned that Jesus taught in the synagogue, in the open. He was not attempting to make zealots and mount a revolt against Rome (some wished He did!).



⁶⁰*Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, “This is a hard saying; who can understand it?”*

- *“This is a hard saying...”* The word for “hard” here literally means “tough, fierce, or harsh.” The KJV translates “understand” into “hear.” This means that what Jesus said was not only difficult to understand, it was hard to accept. The discussion of eating His flesh and drinking His blood would have been shocking to Jewish listeners. It is shocking to anyone who does not understand the meaning of those words. This could only be discerned through spiritual meaning and understanding. This crowd, at least most of them, were not likely to seek the truth in this, but to dismiss it outright, which is exactly what they did.
- If these people had not pre-judged what Jesus said immediately and had held their hearts open to question Jesus about this to further understand, **He would have explained, and they probably would have had understanding.** But their minds were closed. This is the problem today, as well. Our misconceptions, preconceptions and faulty thinking, as well as our outright lack of knowledge of the word of God, will often preclude us from accepting some so-called “hard teachings.” Pride also is a huge stumbling block for understanding the ways of God. They are often quite contrary to what we want, what we think we know, and what our reality dictates. We need to keep in mind the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:12 – *“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”* We do not understand everything now, but we can believe these things based on faith in the God who spoke them.

⁶¹*When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, “Does this offend you?”* ⁶²*“What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?”*

- *“Jesus knew in Himself ...”* Another indication of our all-knowing, omniscient Savior. He knew, without hearing, that His own close disciples were also questioning this teaching, even “complaining” (literally “grumbling”). They also could have asked Him to explain further, but apparently did not. These disciples have a lot to learn about their Master.
- *“Does this offend you?”* The word **OFFEND** is the Greek word *skandalizo* which means to “ensnare, to trap, to cause to stumble.” This word is used to mean a falling away from Jesus and the truth because of lack of comprehension. Those who weren’t ready to receive Jesus wholeheartedly often stumbled over the things He said. They were “ensnared” in their own lack of understanding, and lack of desire to understand. The same is true today. **Matthew 11:6** *“Blessed is the man who does not fall away (stumble) on account of me.”*
- *“What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?”* Jesus asks them if they would accept the fact that He came from heaven when they see Him return to heaven. This is almost like an accusation. Just wait until you see me ascend to the place I say I came from. Then maybe you will believe! These disciples will indeed see this soon.
- *“...where He was before.”* is a reference to His heavenly dwelling, where He came from. He has repeatedly mentioned in this teaching He has come down from heaven. He will also return there. This is also prophetic. These disciples will indeed watch Him ascend into heaven, back to where He came from. Perhaps then these things will become clearer to them.

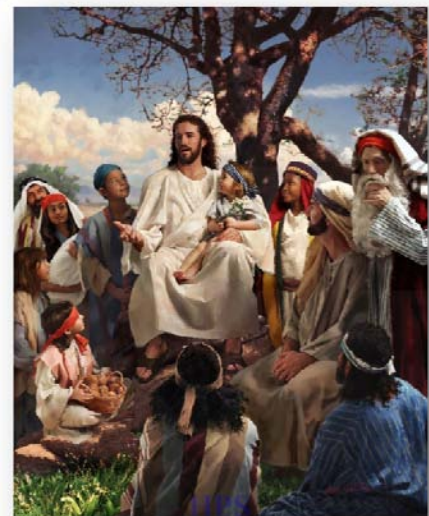
⁶³*“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”* ⁶⁴*“But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.*

- *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.”* Jesus will now explain more by first indicating that the flesh is nothing. It is not what lasts. It is all about the spirit, and everything He teaches is about the spirit and eternal life, not temporal life.
- *“The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life....”* Jesus explains that He was speaking of spiritual things, not physical things. He did not intend for them to eat physically of His flesh. They must understand these things in the spirit, they speak of spiritual things and understanding is found in the Spirit. This understanding will bring us life. These are not “harsh” things, they are life-giving.

▪ **COMMENTARY:** The reason why men dislike Christ’s sayings is because they mistake them. The literal sense of a parable does us no good, we are never the wiser for it, but the spiritual meaning is instructive.

- Jesus spoke often in parables, and even the disciples struggled to find understanding in some of them. But they ASKED him for the meaning when they couldn’t understand. Most of them truly wanted to be taught by him and understand Him. Matthew gives us another look at the disciples trying to understand: *“And the disciples came and said to Him, ‘Why do You speak to them in parables?’ He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’ But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”* (Matthew 13:10-17)

- **Jesus used parables for a number of reasons.** First, often He spoke in stories and terms well-understood by the common people. This made things easier for them to understand. Secondly, the deeper meanings can only be discerned by those who are truly interested in knowing the truth. In this way, these parables separated those who earnestly were seeking God, or merely curious onlookers willing to dismiss anything they couldn’t understand on a physical level. It should be a reminder to us to constantly ask the Holy Spirit to teach us what we cannot understand.
- Those who do truly seek God, who have the right heart, will most definitely find Him. *“But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”* (Deuteronomy 4:29) Those who do not seek with all their heart, or the right heart, will never understand, and will not enter the Kingdom of God.



- **“For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.”** This is a good reminder to us that nothing was, or is, a surprise to Jesus. He knows the beginning from the end. He knows every heart, every acceptance, and every betrayal.

⁶⁵**And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”**

- Another reference to God’s call on our lives. The Father draws us to Him. Again, it does not mean that only a special group of people could come to Jesus. God calls everyone to come, but only a few hear and respond to this call. The choice is ours. **We would never seek God on our own. Instead, God seeks us first.**
- Jesus knew what the people were saying and thinking. **He knew they had closed their hearts and minds.** He knew that were refusing the call of the Father. They could not understand spiritual matters. And worse than not being able to understand, is not WANTING to understand. When we seek God, we will also find the answers that previously eluded us. He will help us understand anything that troubles us about his Word. That is one purpose of the Holy Spirit.
- **It was not enough for the people to witness the miracles.** As eyewitnesses, they could certainly acknowledge what He had done. But entrance into the Kingdom of God requires more than this. It requires that we believe in the person behind the miracles, acknowledging HIM as the all-powerful One. It is our response, our attitude, toward the calling of God that is key to our understanding, and key to our salvation.

⁶⁶**From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.** ⁶⁷**Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”** ⁶⁸**But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.** ⁶⁹**“Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**

- **“...many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”** Many people followed Jesus around the countryside listening to his remarkable words, and witnessed His awesome miracles. But because what He said was too hard to accept, they stopped following Jesus after this. **Their hearts were not right, and their minds were closed to further understanding.** They could not accept what Jesus said. They could not accept Jesus. The same thing is happening today.
- This does not refer to the 12 disciples. They may have grumbled and complained about this teaching, but they had seen enough and knew enough at this point to continue to follow Him.

- This is an incredibly sad statement. **COMMENTARY: Within sight of the kingdom of heaven, privileged with a taste of the Bread of Life, and watching the living water flow, they nevertheless walked away. In a short sentence, John captured one of the saddest moments in the ministry of Jesus.**



WHY SOME JEWS DID NOT BELIEVE:

- Jesus was not going to be the conquering Messiah they thought He should be (to deliver them from Roman oppression).
 - He didn't cater to their self-centered and physical requests for more miracles.
 - He talked about faith, true belief in His work and His person, and did not emphasize "doing deeds" to get into the Kingdom of God.
 - They revered Moses and the Law. Jesus seemed to stand in very stark contrast to the Law, and even to Moses. Their hearts refused to accept anything other than the Law and Moses.
 - The people found it hard to accept His "difficult" teaching. They seemed "offensive" to their Jewish thinking. They could not discern them on a spiritual level.
- ***"Do you also want to go away?"*** Jesus now **tests the "inner circle" of disciples**. Others turned away and would not follow Him. What about these twelve? Would they also go? This was not a test for Jesus, who already knew their hearts. It was a test for each disciple.
 - ***"But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go?'"*** Some people say that Peter understood His Master's teachings. We don't know that. It is rather likely that he also did not understand, but knew enough to know that no one else, no other system of belief, no other god could offer what Jesus could. The disciples, including Peter, did not fully understand what Jesus said here, and probably many of His other teachings. But they had seen enough to know that this was their Messiah, the Savior of the world. They didn't quite know yet how He would do it, or what it would all look like, but they still believed in Him. This is a lesson for us as well. We might not have it all figured out. We don't have all the answers. But we know enough to continue trusting and following Him.
 - Peter's initial response is profound. **"To whom shall we go?"** In other words, who else can provide what Jesus can? Who else can give life eternal? What other set of teachings can save us? NONE! Peter proclaims Jesus as the **Anointed**, the holy and chosen One of God. There is no one else, no other way to eternal life.
 - ***Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*** Peter proclaims their belief that Jesus is the Messiah. Even though they don't understand everything, they believe. They have witnessed enough to convince them. These men walked with Jesus for three years and saw much. We would certainly hope that they believed. It is a comfort to recall the words of Jesus after previously doubting Thomas saw the risen Messiah. Jesus answered that he has seen with his eyes and believes, and then pronounced a blessing on all those who would believe in the future, even though we have not seen him as the disciples did. ***"...blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."*** (John 20:29). That blessing applies to all of us who have not yet seen Him, but believe.
- **COMMENTARY:** This is a marvelous statement on the part of Simon Peter. And the question he asks is pertinent to us today. If you say that the Lord Jesus is not a Savior to you and that He doesn't meet your needs at all, then may I ask you where you are going? ...What disillusionment is coming to so many today! There are those who are turning in every direction for light. Let me ask you the question of Simon Peter: "To whom shall we go?" The Lord Jesus is the One, and the only One, who has the Words of eternal life.
 - **COMMENTARY:** "Whither shall we go? Shall we make our court to the world? It will certainly deceive us. Shall we return to sin? It will certainly destroy us. Shall we leave the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns?" ..."Shall we go to the heathen philosophers, and become their disciples? They are become vain in their imaginations, and, professing themselves to be wise in other things, are become fools in religion. Shall we go to the scribes and Pharisees, and sit at their feet? What good can they do us who have made void the commandments of God by their traditions? Shall we go to Moses? He will send us back again to you. Therefore, if ever we find the way to happiness, it must be in following you."

⁷⁰ *Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?”* ⁷¹ *He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.*

- Simon Peter often spoke for the other disciples, and often without thinking first. Perhaps he just spoke faster than the others. Here Jesus corrects Peter, because Jesus knows better than anyone who believes and who does not.
- Jesus knew that one of His inner circle of disciples would betray Him. He indicates that one of these “is a devil.” The Greek word here for “devil” means “slanderer, or accuser.” Jesus knew all about Judas well before Judas knew what he would be doing.
- **The chapter ends much differently than it begins.** It begins with the crowds wanting to make Him king and closes with questioning and bickering disciples, perhaps considering leaving Jesus. These twelve disciples allow Peter to speak for them to affirm their confidence in Jesus, even though one of them will accuse and betray Jesus, the Bread of Life.

RECAP OF CHAPTER 6

- Feeding the 5,000 (more like 20,000) with little loaves of bread and small fish
- Jesus walks on water and calms the storm
- The people flock after him to make him king, and receive more of his miracles
- Jesus rebukes the people for desiring physical food, not spiritual
- Jesus reveals what the spiritual food is, and how to obtain it (He is the Bread of life)
- The people’s discontent and rejection of him and his message
- Peter’s classic statement of faith
- Identification of one lost even among the 12 (Judas Iscariot)

