

JOHN 6 BIBLE STUDY

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JOHN 6:1-4 ¹ After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ² Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. ³ And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.

How much time had elapsed since the beginning of Jesus' ministry?

About one year, as this is the second "Passover" (John 6:4) mentioned, so Jesus is one-third into His three-year ministry. This [Passover](#) is also six months after the previous "feast of the Jews" mentioned in John 5, which shows that the Gospel of John, like the other three Gospels, is not a diary. Each of the four Gospel writers described the highlights of Jesus' ministry as led by the Holy Spirit, so there are overlaps, & elements unique to each.

Why did "a great multitude" (John 6:2) follow Jesus?

Was Jesus' question, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5) to Philip intended to start a private chat?

Since at least one other disciple, Andrew, also replied to the question, it was heard by more than just Philip, and probably all of the twelve disciples.

Then why might Jesus have addressed the question to Philip?

John 1:44 says, "**Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.**" Since Bethsaida was only about 15 miles northeast of where they were, Philip would have known the area well.

Since Andrew and Peter were also from Bethsaida, why was the question addressed to Philip?

Philip just may have been standing nearer to Jesus at that moment.

Did the crowd number "about five thousand" (John 6:10)?

The "**men**" (John 6:10) numbered about that, which means including women and children, it probably numbered about ten to fifteen thousand, if not more.

What was Andrew describing when he said, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish" (John 6:9)?

The "**barley loaves**" would be comparable to today's dinner rolls and the two fish were "**small**". This was a kid's lunch or dinner. Was Andrew being smart?

John 6:11-13 [I Am the Bread of Life](#)

Honestly, do you believe the details of this account?

How can anyone feed thousands with a kid's lunch, and then end up with more food after than before?

Do you believe a baby can run a marathon?

Might there be a significance to the bread that filled the twelve baskets?

What might the twelve baskets of bread in the Jewish region represent?

Food for the twelve tribes of Israel.

What did Jesus refer to Himself as?

"I am the bread of life," (John 6:35 below) as well as the "**Word**" of God ([John 1:1](#))

Reference Mark 8 (different event-Decapolis). Is there any difference in the types of baskets in which the left over fragments were collected?

As a matter of fact, there is. The Greek word translated "**baskets**" in John 6:13 is *kophinos*, meaning little wicker baskets, while the word translated, "**large baskets**" in Mark 8:8 is *spuris*, meaning the much bigger, duffel bag-sized baskets.

So putting it all together, what could the baskets of bread represent?

The "**bread of life**" - "**Word**" of God - satisfying the initial hearers, and then being carried to all nations - Jews and Gentiles - by those who were fed, and the bigger baskets for the gentiles alluding to their greater numbers.

By the way, how would you compare Philip and Andrew's answers to Jesus' question in John 6:5?

Philip looked at the task and gave up ([John 6:7](#)). Andrew was a bit better ([John 6:8](#)).

But who is the unsung hero in the first feeding miracle and why?

The b_____. He s_____ all he had.

What lesson is there for us?

If you want to serve God, hand everything you have over to Him - your time, body, skills, etc., and ask Him to do with them as He pleases - and then watch Him to do things beyond your imagination.

JOHN 6:14 ¹⁴ Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

What did the crowd call Jesus after being fed?

"Prophet" (John 6:14).

Why "the" Prophet?

They were referring to a specific prophet - the one Moses had said would be like him: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear..." (Deuteronomy 18:15)

Why would they consider Jesus to be a "Prophet like" Moses?

The last time a multitude of Jews were fed miraculously was during Moses' time: (Exodus 16:1-15)

What did the crowd around Jesus want to do after the feeding miracle?

"Take Him by force and make him King." (John 6:15). They wanted Jesus to f_____ them from Roman bondage, but he came to free us from s_____.

Where did the disciples go the evening of the feeding miracle?

They "got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum." (John 6:17)

Did Jesus go with them? If not, where did he go?

Why might He have wanted to pray upon perceiving that they wanted to make Him king?

If He were to become king and free Israel from Roman bondage, He would be able to avoid crucifixion, so He may have felt tempted.

How does prayer help against temptation?

"the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (2 Peter 2:9).

JOHN 6:18-21 ¹⁸ Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. ¹⁹ So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. ²⁰ But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹ Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

Is this the full account or the abbreviated account?

The abbreviated. A fuller account is in Mark 6:47-51: "

When did Peter began to sink?

When he took his eyes off Jesus and instead focused on the adversity around him. (Matthew 14:30)

What three lessons can we draw from this?

1. When all hell breaks lose around you, keep your focus locked onto Jesus.
2. Instead of praying for the waves and the winds to die down, ask Jesus to enable you to keep walking.
3. "**Straining at rowing**" (Mark 6:48) without Jesus onboard is futile.

Why did the "other boats" come "from Tiberias" (John 6:23)?

The word about the miraculous feeding had spread to the city.

What did the people do then?

They put two and two together, took those boats and **"came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus,"** (John 6:24) asking Him upon finding Him, **"Rabbi, when did You come here?"** (John 6:25)

What is Jesus saying in John 6:26?

You appreciated the feeding miracle (see "[Twelve Baskets](#)") but not what it pointed to. You're here for the wrong reason.

What about in John 6:27?

Don't work for physical goods that don't last. Work for me (see John 5:27 notes for "[Son of Man](#)"), and I will give you **"everlasting life."**

What does it mean to work for God?

"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (John 6:29)

Believe what about Him?

That He is God who so loved us that He paid the death penalty for our sins, and then rose from the dead to prove His deity, and that we have access to heaven because of what He did for us.

But to go to heaven, don't we still have to do something in addition to believing that?

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."(Ephesians 2:8-9) **"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law."** (Romans 3:27-28)

Does that mean that we shouldn't get involved in any works? Don't they matter?

They do, but please read 1 Corinthians 3:9-15 carefully:

JOHN 6:30-34 ³⁰ Therefore 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.'" 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." ³⁴ Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

Do they understand whom Jesus meant by, "Him whom He sent" when He said, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" in John 6:29?

Yes, the "**You**" in their response (John 6:30) indicates that they understood it to be Jesus.

Why do they bring up manna again in John 6:31?

They've either completely forgotten the fact that Jesus had fed thousands just the day before, which makes no sense since they chased Jesus to Capernaum because of it, or they are telling Him that if He wants them to believe in Him as [the Prophet](#), He will have to do the other thing that Moses did for the Israelites.

Which is what?

Free them from the bondage of pagans, from Rome this time. This was their agenda from the beginning when they plotted to take Jesus by force and crown Him king, and they are dropping strong hints that they want Him to be "[the Prophet](#)" Moses had prophesied about.

What does Jesus do in John 6:32?

He starts by clarifying that Moses hadn't given them "**the bread from heaven.**" But then, instead of saying that Father had given it, Jesus swings the conversation onto His agenda - "**the true bread from heaven... who gives life to the world**" and John 6:34 indicates that the crowd has finally shifted onto Jesus' agenda.

What was the setting for this teaching by Christ?

"**These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.**"(John 6:59)

Who were in the audience?

Those who had come by boat, "**the twelve**" apostles (John 6:67), other "**disciples**" (John 6:60), including some who abandoned Jesus at the end of this teaching (John 6:66), and the Pharisees and other "**Jews**" (John 6:41), including some from Nazareth, the town where Jesus grew up (John 6:42).

Is Jesus promoting cannibalism in John 6:35, John 6:48 and John 6:51?

Of course not.

Then what is He saying? What entities is He equating in this discourse?

Let's start with John 6:35 and John 6:48. What does He equate in these two verses?

Jesus = "**bread of life.**"

What is said about this "bread of life" in John 6:51?

It is "**living,**" "**from heaven,**" and is His "**flesh.**"

So how is the above equation elaborated?

Jesus = living bread of life from heaven = His flesh

What did John 1:14 say about His flesh?

"The Word became flesh."

So how does this extend the equation?

Jesus = living bread of life from heaven = His flesh = Word

What about blood? Is Jesus saying in John 6:53-56 that people should become vampires?

Of course not.

Where was His blood shed?

On the cross.

So what does He mean by His "blood"?

His sacrificial death on the cross for our sins.

Let's pull it together. What is Jesus saying that we have to do to have "eternal life"?

Believe in Him as per the Bible, and believe that His sacrificial death on the cross paid in full for our sins.

Who ultimately enables us to "believe" in Jesus?

God the Father: "**Father gives**" (John 6:37); **He [Father] has given** (John 6:39); "**Father... draws**" (John 6:44); **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me**" (John 6:45); "**No one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father**" (John 6:65).

Could Jesus have used a softer analogy above? Why did He use such a repelling analogy?

To disperse a mob that had come to crown Him king and lead a rebellion against the Romans.

In fact, in what verses are the "Jews" and His so-called "disciples" (not the twelve) on their edge?

John 6:52 and John 6:60.

What does Jesus do to them?

Pushes them over the edge in the subsequent verses - John 6:53-58 and John 6:61-65, respectively.

Who stayed with Jesus?

"**The twelve**" (John 6:67), although one of them, "**Judas Iscariot**" (John 6:71) would later betray Him.

There are man-made religions whose message has been carefully crafted to maximize ease of understanding and appeal to those they hope to attract. The message of the Bible is different. Not all teachings of the Bible are easy for us to understand or accept. But if you think about it, it can only be so, since it was written by God to reveal Himself to us. If God is the Creator of the universe, there is no way we will be able to completely comprehend Him. Some people decide that since they don't understand or like everything in the Bible, it isn't for them, and like the mob above, turn away from Jesus. Others thank God for however much of the Bible He lets them understand, and cling to Christ, not because everything He says always appeals to them, but because He is the truth and has "**the words of eternal life.**" (John 6:68)

What will you do?