

The Gospel of John

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Chapter Six

John 6:1-2

*After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias).
(2) A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.*

The Sea is now about 8 miles wide and 13 miles long. It is Israel's largest freshwater reservoir. It is 700 feet below sea level. At the healing of the nobleman's son Jesus was on the west side of the lake (at Bethsaida) and he could then have easily traveled to the other side of the lake, which is known as Kinnereth in the OT such as in Num 34:11. The name means lyre and the shape is like such an instrument:



It was later named by Herod as Lake Tiberias in honor of Emperor Tiberius but it was not known as such at the time of the ministry of Jesus. A large crowd followed Him because they were impressed with the signs He was doing although they certainly did not appreciate the meaning behind the signs.

John 6:3

*Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. (4)
[Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near].*

Verse four is not in the oldest manuscripts but seems to have been added by a copier in an attempt to give some time to this event. The high ground (remember the lake is 700 feet below sea level) is now known as the Golan heights and from that place one has a great view of the level plain east of the river and the lake. This is a place where Jesus often went for solitude (Mark 3:13; 6:46; 9:2). Three Passovers are mentioned in this gospel. The first was mentioned in John 2:13 and the third in John 11:55 when He went up to Jerusalem. However for this Passover He remained in Galilee.

John 6:5-6

*Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, *said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?" (6) [This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.]*

This is the only sign that is common between this gospel and the Synoptic Gospels in the period before the passion so we can utilize material from the other sources to augment this event. John does not record, as does Mark 6:34 that the crowd had been listening to the teaching of Jesus all day and that would explain His concern over feeding them. Only John elaborates upon the names of Philip and Andrew in this event. Philip came from the neighboring town of Bethsaida so he would be the natural one for Jesus to ask about where to obtain food for the crowd. Of course Jesus did not really need the help of Philip to feed them but He asked the question to test Philip regarding the feeding. Jesus knew what He was going to do.

John 6:7-9

*Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little." (8) One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, *said to Him, (9) "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?"*

The normal wage for a common laborer was about a denarius (Matt 20:2) and that would normally buy a day's supply of bread for an average family. But Philip reasoned that even if the wages from about 200 days was available that still would not be enough to feed the crowd. We are told in Mark 6:37 that it was the disciples who brought up the money rather than Philip in particular. The NIV translates the amount of the money to be about eight month's wages. John is the only writer who mentions the comments of Andrew. The other writers use the Greek word *ichthys* for "fish" whereas John uses *opsaria* that were small, perhaps salted, fish to be eaten with a relish and the barley cakes. Probably Andrew brought this supply to indicate the ridiculously small amount that they had to feed such a large crowd. However this was exactly why Jesus arranged this event to elaborate the size of the miracle.

John 6:10-11

Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. (11) Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.

Jesus used the Greek word *anthropoi* that includes women and children but, in his explanation, John uses the Greek word *andres* that means only men and that word is used in all four Gospels. Matthew is quoted as adding “apart from women and children” to make it clear that the seating was of the men only. Mark adds that Jesus had the crowd arranged in groups of 50 and 100 indicating that Jesus was in no panic about feeding such a large crowd but that He carefully arranged the groups so that all would receive their share of the meal. According to the Synoptic records Jesus gave the supplies to the disciples who then gave them to the people. There is no discrepancy with John’s account of the feeding but only an added detail of how Jesus gave the food. Phillip had tried to determine how to serve each person a little but Jesus arranged the feeding so that all received all that they could eat!

John 6:12-13

*When they were filled, He *said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost." (13) So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.*

God supplies what is needed without any waste. God can never out-give His resources. From the very small original food supply Jesus provided enough bread and fish so that all would be filled and the remaining food filled twelve baskets. The Greek word for “basket” is *kophinos* that indicates a large basket so there was a considerable amount of food left after all had been fed. Some interpreters have seen this result to mean that God fills the needs of all people but with an amount left to take care of the twelve tribes of Israel. We are not told what Jesus did with the remainder but in verse 17 we are told that they went to Capernaum so perhaps the food was for the use of the group during that travel and after arriving there.

John 6:14

*Therefore when the people saw **the sign** which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."*

I mentioned earlier that the people were expecting a Second Prophet like Moses as was prophesied:

Deut 18:15-19 NASB “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. (16) "This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.' (17) "The LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. (18) 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. (19) 'It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.”

Their forefathers had been miraculously fed with manna (Exod 16:11-36; 17:1-6; Num 11:1-33; 20:2-11) and now this One miraculously fed them so they inferred that this was the Second Prophet promised by God for the end-times. Notice that John called this miracle a sign meaning that behind the miracle was a vision of the reality that not everyone could see. We will see later

that when the true meaning of this miracle was explained the people would be very offended. This reaction shows the popular expectation of a leader who would bring them back into prominence as a nation.

John 6:15

So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Jesus could see that the people were looking for a political leader and someone to feed their every need. Jesus had already shown His ability to heal physical illnesses and had been given the power to judge as well as to give life. Now He had shown His ability to provide relief from hunger and so they reasoned that He must be the Promised One to lead them back to prosperity. However His kingdom could not be obtained by a political revolt against Herod Antipas who was a puppet of Rome or by promising a dole for people to join in such a revolt. This was not the purpose of Jesus and He was not ready to reveal His purpose fully so He went to the Golan heights alone. It is interesting to augment John's account with that of Mark who wrote that the twelve had just returned from a mission in Galilee that had exciting results but that had brought a hostile reaction from Herod Antipas. Herod had just recently deposed John the Baptist and now he had an even greater opponent with whom to deal. Such excitement had been aroused among the Galileans that they overtook them so when Jesus and the twelve reached their retreat they were among a great crowd (Mark 6:7-45). Jesus then fed them with words of life and with physical food. This background from Mark clarifies the situation considerably as to why Jesus withdrew from the crowd.

John 6:16-18

Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, (17) and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. (18) The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing.

Matthew and Mark give us a bit more background information:

- Mark 6:45-46 NASB Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. (46) After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray.”
- Matt 14:22-23 NASB Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. (23) After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.

The evening could be anytime in the afternoon before sunset. Matthew and Mark tell us that Jesus compelled His disciples to leave and go across the lake to Capernaum and Matthew tell us that Jesus sent the crowds away. They also inform us that Jesus then went to the mountain to pray. The disciples were then heading toward the west side of the lake. The lake was below sea level and the area around it was hilly so they did literally go down to the sea. John seems to be saying that they expected Jesus to join them before they arrived across the lake. They probably had wished to get home before dark since the lake was shallow and even minor winds could make for dangerous conditions.

John 6:19-21

*Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they *saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. (20) But He *said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." (21) So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.*

Matthew and Mark elaborate on this event:

- Matt 14:25-32 NASB And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. (26) When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. (27) But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." (28) Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." (29) And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. (30) But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" (31) Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and *said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (32) When they got into the boat, the wind stopped.
- Mark 6:48-50 NASB Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He *came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them. (49) But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; (50) for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and *said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid."

They would have been rowing against the wind so it is not surprising that they made little progress. Mark states that Jesus had intended to walk on the sea past them and that the time was not long before dawn. According to Roman timing, the night was divided into four watches: 6-9 PM, 9-12 PM, 12-3 AM, and 3-6 AM. Perhaps this intent of Jesus was to test their faith as that of Peter was particularly tested. Matthew 14:30 states that when Peter focused on the wind rather than on His Lord he began to sink into the water. I have heard sermons based upon this to emphasize that we should always focus on Jesus rather than our problems. This advice is similar to:

Heb 12:1-2 NASB Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

If they had understood the significance of the feeling of the people with only a small amount of food they would certainly have not been afraid since He sent them on their way. They did have some understanding of Him for when He said "it is I" they calmed. This is not a statement of a theophany but just a way of identifying Himself to His disciples.

John 6:22-24

The next day the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone. (23) There came other small boats

from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks. (24) So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus.

The crowd was confused because they had noticed that Jesus had not gone with His disciples, there was still one small boat at shore, and Jesus was nowhere to be seen. So where was Jesus? Meanwhile some other boats had come into their area. The crowd then got into the boats in hopes of finding Jesus on the west side of the lake.

John 6:25-26

When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here?" (26) Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.

They did find Jesus on the other side of the lake but they were still puzzled as to how He got there. Jesus did not answer their physical question but questioned them because all they were interested in was how they were fed the meal He provided. The fact that they did not see the signs means that they did not have faith. When in verse 14 we are told that they saw the sign we should understand that to mean that they saw the physical and not the spiritual. The Synoptic Gospels tell us that not even the disciples understood the spiritual because their hearts were hardened (Mark 6:52; 8:14-21). John now elaborates on the real meaning behind the signs. This discussion is in three parts: 6:27-34 (the true manna); 6:35-51 (Jesus is the food of eternal life); 6:52-59 (partaking of the Son of Man).

John 6:27

"Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

John contrasts the physical food from the spiritual food in the same way as was done with water in the interaction with the woman at the well (John 4:10). He stays away from any designation of Jesus that might feed a desire for a political leader such as Messiah. Instead John quotes Jesus as using the title Son of Man that was not an integral part of the vocabulary of people around Him but would have been known by scholars familiar with the prophecies of Daniel. He quotes Jesus as saying that God the Father has set His seal upon Him as this food leading to eternal life. Setting the seal is symbolic of the person being authorized to represent the sender, in this case God the Father.

John 6:28-29

Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" (29) Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

Jesus tells them to work for this food so it is a logical question to ask Him how they are to work for this food. They were used to working to provide physical food so they assumed some type of work of God would be required for this spiritual food. This implies a sense of self-sufficiency as they thought they could do this required work. Jesus told them that the work required was that

they have the faith required to believe in Him whom the Father sent. Thus this work was not what they were capable of doing but required the intervention of God to give them this faith although they did not understand the implication of this statement from Jesus.

John 6:30-31

So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? (31) "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.'"

Their reply was a typical reply for someone without the required faith. They wanted to know what work Jesus performed that would be a sign allowing them to see and believe. They did not account what He had already done as sufficient works to be regarded as a sign of acceptance from God the Father. They seemed to correlate His feeding of the multitudes with the feeding of their relatives through Moses when God provided the manna (Exodus 16:11-36). In verse 27 Jesus is quoted as referring to the food as that which endures to eternal life but the manna was perishable (Exodus 16:20). It does seem that the rabbis taught that the new age would be signified by the restoration of this gift of manna as referenced in: "He rained down manna upon them to eat And gave them food from heaven." (Psa 78:24). This might also have been referenced in the new Christian era as in: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it." (Rev 2:17). The bread and fish were not explicitly from heaven although they had to have been provided miraculously from the small physical food available. They may have then drawn a corollary with the manna from heaven and thought this might be the prophet like Moses.

John 6:32-33

Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. (33) "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."

Jesus then reminded them that it was actually not Moses who gave them the manna from heaven but God the Father (actually His Father) was the source of the manna. He also stated that Moses did not give them spiritual food but only physical food. The food needed for eternal life was only from the Father. We are reminded of: "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD." (Deut 8:3)

John 6:34

Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread."

This request parallels that of the woman at the well (John 4:15) and both reveal a materialistic frame of mind rather than any spiritual understanding. We are reminded of a statement by Paul: "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (1 Cor 2:14)

John will then quote Jesus as He changes His approach to make His meaning clearer.

John 6:35

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

Previously Jesus was quoted as saying that He gave the bread and now He states very clearly that He is the bread of life. Thus He gives of Himself so that those who believe might have eternal life. Those who believe on Him in total self-commitment will never hunger nor thirst for eternal life. This is the first of the "I am" statements of Jesus that are recorded in this gospel.

John 6:36-38

"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 certainly not cast out. (38) "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Jesus now really puts the truth out for them to hear. Verse 36 is similar to 5:36-38 as He told the people at Jerusalem and now He tells them the Galileans the same thing. Jesus would not get frustrated at witnessing the unbelief of people for He knew that many would be given to Him by the Father so that He could give them the bread of life. He then states that He will take upon Himself their complete salvation from beginning to the final state. He tells them that He came down from heaven to do the Father's will and He is dedicated to doing it for that is the sustenance of His life: "Jesus *said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work." (John 4:34)

John 6:39-40

"This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. (40) "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

Jesus then reveals to them a portion of the charge He received from the Father. This statement should give each Christian a sense of great peace and comfort. The "all" in verse 39 is neuter singular indicating the total of all believers and explains why John uses "it" in the last part of the sentence as he informs us that the entire group of all believers of all time will be raised up on the last day by Jesus. In verse 40 John uses the singular "everyone" and "him" to emphasize that not only will Jesus take care of the entire group of all believers but also each one of the group is precious to Him and will be raised up on the last day.

John 6:41-42

Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." (42) They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"

It is not hard to understand why these unbelieving Jews were so angry and grumbled about Him for He was saying that He was the source and the object of eternal life and that He had come down from heaven to make this offer. He was from Galilee so these questioners knew of His family and they knew His father and mother. Of course they did not know the Father but they knew the person they assumed was His biological father. This statement should not infer that Joseph was still a part of the living family for John 2:12 does not include him.

John 6:43-44

Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. (44)"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

Jesus then tells them to stop their grumbling for such can accomplish nothing. The only people who will come to Him in belief are those that the Father draws to Him. The word “draw” indicates a strong pulling such as is used in describing the drawing of water from a well. I can attest to that effort as I was dragged to Jesus also. Jesus then promises again to raise up the ones on the last day who are drawn to Him by the Father so their salvation is permanent. Again this should give the Christian great peace as he knows that even though he will one day physically die Jesus will give him a resurrected body on that last day when Jesus comes again.

John 6:45-46

"It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. (46)"Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.

The “prophets” is the second division of the Hebrew Bible. The Jewish “Bible” consists of the following:

1. The Torah: the first five books of our Bible. Also the same as the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
 2. The Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
 3. Writings: Chronicles, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra / Nehemiah
- You will note that they call ‘Song of Solomon’ “Song of Songs”. They also put together 1/2 Samuel and 1/2 Kings, 1/2 Chronicles, and Ezra/Nehemiah.

The quotation is from Isa 54:13. The new age prophesied by Isaiah arrived with the advent of Jesus Christ. The new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah was also fulfilled:

Jer 31:31-33 NASB "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, (32) not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. (33) "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

The NT verifies this fulfillment in: 2 Cor 3:4-4:6; Heb 8:6-10:18. Some interpreters believe that Isa 54 was in the synagogue lessons for this period and so they would have had these verses clear in their minds. They would have then been taught by the Father as stated by Jesus so that it would have been possible for them to understand that Jesus was sent by the Father. However, faith is required for anyone to understand the words of God (1 Cor 2:14). Only the Son has seen the Father but all that have seen the Son can see the Father in the Son (John 12:45; 14:9). But faith is required to see this reality.

John 6:47

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

Jesus now repeats and thus emphasizes that anyone who believes in Him has eternal life at that moment, without the requirement of waiting until the last day. Realized eschatology is again stated by Jesus. This is the peace that Jesus came to give to those who believe: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." (John 14:27)

John 6:48-50

"I am the bread of life. (49) "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. (50) "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.

What a contrast Jesus makes with the manna and this bread! Most of those who ate of the manna not only physically died but also died spiritually: "Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe." (Jude 1:5) Those who appropriate Him by faith will never face spiritual death. Even though all who heard these words died physically, those who were in Christ will never face spiritual death. He states that He came down out of heaven for the purpose of giving eternal life to those who believe in Him.

John 6:51

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

Now Jesus reveals a truth that will be greatly misunderstood by people even until this day. The manna came from heaven but it was not living bread and it only provided food to allow a person to physically live a short time. Jesus states that He is the living bread that came down out of heaven and this bread provides life forever for anyone who eats of it. He clarifies this statement with the last part of the verse as he states that He will give His flesh for the life of the world. This is a fulfillment of Isa 52:13-53:12. His death is to bring blessings to many (Isa 53:11) including Gentiles (Isa 49:6).

John 6:52-55

Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (53) So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. (54) "He who

eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. (55) "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

The Jews clearly show that they have no understanding of what Jesus is telling them. Christians throughout the ages have been criticized as being cannibals because of misunderstandings of this important principle of Christianity. The Jews have a heated argument. They knew that Jesus did not mean a literal eating of flesh and drinking of blood. The Law of Moses specifically forbids the drinking of blood (Lev 17:10-14). Even though He was speaking figuratively, they reasoned that it was an offensive way to talk. They would have argued about what was the figurative meaning of His words as one would have one interpretation and another would have another interpretation. Rather than clarifying the statement, the reply of Jesus in verses 53-54 seems to be sanctioning the misunderstanding and even more offensive than the original statement. Any Sadducees present would have been especially infuriated for their theology denied a resurrection. What Jesus is speaking of is as real to Him as were the interpretations of those listening to Him.

John 6:56

"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

The oneness that Jesus promises to those who believe in Him is as real as the oneness that He has with the Father. This intimate interaction results in a bond that will never be broken as the disciple abides in Jesus and Jesus abides in him. Paul refers to this interaction as being "in Christ" (Rom 8:1; 12:5; 1 Cor 1:30; 15:22; Eph 2:8; 2:10; 4:32; etc.). Paul also clearly states this principle in "*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*" (Gal 2:20) It is also helpful to read ahead to John 6:3b: *the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.* Jesus elaborates to them that what He has been saying are in a spiritual context rather than a physical context and that they are life. Eating the flesh of Jesus and drinking His blood is spiritual (John 6:3b) and means totally becoming Him as stated by Paul in Gal 2:20. This oneness is not totally achieved while a person lives but should be the goal of every person claiming to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Some people have interpreted these comments of Jesus to refer to the Lord's Supper but that cannot be the application for several reasons. The first reason is that at the time of the speaking of these events, the Lord's Supper had not been instituted. The second reason is that here Jesus is discussing unbelievers but the Lord's Supper is for believers. The third reason is that many people in the visible churches participate in the Lord's Supper but do not possess eternal life that Jesus says results from a true feeding upon Him.

John 6:57

"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.

Jesus again brings into focus the fact that only God inherently possesses life and He has given the authority to give life to the Son. Jesus lives as the Son of Man because He was sent by the Father. Now anyone who participates in Christ will also be granted life because of the total commitment of Jesus.

John 6:58

"This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."

Jesus again contrasts the bread He represents with the manna their fathers ate. They ate of the manna but still died because it had no spiritual power of granting life forever. Jesus offers Himself so that those who devour Him will obtain life forever. The verb translated as "eat" in verses 54 and following is *trogein* rather than *phagein* that is a rather coarse word meaning "to chew" or "to munch" descriptive of animals eating in classical Greek. It implies a ravenous consumption and probably is purposefully used to convey the attitude of one starving for lack of nourishment who then suddenly is given the food needed to provide life. It is indeed this approach to consuming all that is available regarding the teachings of Jesus that the new convert begins. When I was born again, I certainly exhibited this approach to learning all that I could about my Lord as I bought books and studied His life and dedicated myself to being His disciple.

John 6:59

These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

It is ironic that this teaching of Jesus regarding eternal life was taught in the synagogue where people gathered to seek eternal life by adhering to their religion. The location of this synagogue was found in the twentieth century and has been partially restored by the Franciscans.

John 6:60

Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"

It is doubtful that they thought that Jesus was speaking of literally eating His flesh and drinking His blood. They objected to the language He used for they judged it offensive since He was saying that He was greater than Moses and that He was uniquely associated with God the Father. It seems that these people had been following Him as His disciple but now they could no longer remain in that role. He stated that He had been given the authority and ability to bestow life on others and that by abiding with Him they could obtain this life eternal and all of this was too much for them to remain identified as His disciples. The same information applies in 2013 also so how many of the people attending visible churches will claim to be disciples of this Jesus Christ now?

John 6:61-64

But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? (62) "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? (63) "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and 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 it was that would betray Him.

Jesus had already revealed that He can discern the thoughts of people (John 2:14), which is good for us to acknowledge today. He also already knew that what He had been telling them caused

them to stumble so He asked a rhetorical question. He had already told them that He had descended from heaven (verse 38) so He now asked how they would react if they saw Him ascend to heaven. Actually some of them will see this event after His resurrection: *“And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (10) And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.”* (Acts 1:9-10) At that time the number of disciples would have shrunk considerably.

Eating His flesh and drinking His blood must be understood in the spiritual sense for such an activity cannot impart eternal life as understood from the Israelites eating the manna and dying. The distinction between the physical and the spiritual is as sharp as that involved in the discussion with Nicodemus regarding being born again. Jeremiah had found the nourishment of the Word of God: *“Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.”* (Jer 15:16) So Jesus is just claiming the same nourishment for His words as Jeremiah claimed. However His words must be met with faith to be understood and to bring eternal life:

- Heb 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.
- 1Cor 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Jesus then refers to the actions of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual life is not imparted by the physical process of eating. He then makes it clear to those who can hear that His words have a spiritual interpretation that yields life forever. He knew that there were some who did not believe and, of course, He had known from the beginning of His ministry that Judas would actually not only not believe but would betray Him (John 6:70).

John 6:65-66

And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." (66) As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

In verse 65 John reveals the statement by Jesus that the Father enables His people to come to Jesus. This enabling power is what is referred to as faith. A person without this enabling power cannot believe Jesus and come to Him to serve Him as His disciple forever. None of those who come to Jesus in faith will be rejected but will always be kept in the power of Jesus. These unbelievers could not accept what He offered and He could not offer them the physical kingdom they desired. Many of His Jerusalem followers departed Him (John 2:23-25) and now many of the Galilean followers also departed. Many would be attracted and follow Him when He was doing miracles but only those who could accept the reality behind the signs could be counted as His true disciples. By not walking with Him anymore they reveal that they were never of Him as also noted in a church situation: *“They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”* (1 John 2:19)

John 6:67

So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?"

It may be that the twelve were the only ones remaining with Him or He may have waited to ask this rhetorical question when He was alone with them. The Greek words make it claim that He knew they would answer in the negative.

John 6:68

Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. (69) "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

John regularly uses the double name for Peter unlike the Synoptic Gospels. Peter was very impulsive and unsophisticated. This will get him into trouble and cause him to make mistakes but here he says what must have been on the minds of at least eleven of them. His words make it plain that he did understand the reality behind the words of Jesus, at least part of the reality. None of them would totally understand until after the resurrection and Pentecost. It is interesting that the "Holy One of God" came also from the lips of a demon-possessed person in Mark 1:24. Others admitted Him to be a prophet like Moses but Peter accepted what Jesus said about Himself as verified by the miraculous signs he had seen. Andrew had been correct beyond what he said when he told his brother Simon: "Philip *found Nathanael and *said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (John 1:45)

John 6:70

Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"

John does not record the assignment of the twelve as do the Synoptic Gospels and he never calls them apostles. However, here John clearly designates the inner circle of disciples whom Jesus personally chose. John also states that Jesus clearly knew the minds of the twelve and He still chose each of them even though one of them was a *diabolos*, that is the Greek word meaning a "slanderer" or "false accuser". It also generally refers to Satan. Judas was given a prominent place in the group as the treasurer (John 12:6) and he proved himself to be selfishly ambitious as he tried to use Jesus as a means of attaining his ambition.

John 6:71

Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

John makes it clear that Jesus was speaking of Judas. Each of the Synoptic Gospels also mention Judas the traitor when they all mention him for the first time (Matt 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16). The word Iscariot is probably from a Hebrew name meaning "the man of Keriath", which is a place in southern Judah place mentioned in Josh 15:25. There have been attempts to associate the name to a Greek word meaning assassin but that has not met with any acceptance.