



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. John

Chapter 6

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Introduction

- Chapter 5 ended very somberly and sadly with Jesus telling the crowd in verse 40 *"...you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life "* and in verse 47 *"but if you do not believe his [Moses] writings, how will you believe My words?"*
- Jesus sees that the Jews have reached the point of deliberate refusal to believe
- His comments about the prophet Moses will be the link between chapter 5 and chapter 6 where Jesus, the *"new Moses"* will bring the promise of the *"new manna"*



Introduction

Chapter Outline:

- Feeding the Five Thousand 6:1-15
- Jesus Walks on the Sea 6:16-21
- The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40
- Rejected by His Own 6:41:59
- Many Disciples Turn Away 6:60-71

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- In the Gospels several names are used for the large northern lake through which the Jordan River flows
- Here John calls it *the Sea of Galilee* as well as referring to it by its Roman name, *the Sea of Tiberias*
- Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of the Galilee, built the city of Tiberias as the administrative capital of the region
- He named the city and re-named the lake in honor of the Roman Emperor Tiberius Caesar [reigned AD14-37]

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- This lake was also known as Lake Gennesaret a name that also designated the land on the western shore
- We are told in verse 16 that this event takes place across the Sea of Galilee on the opposite shore from Capernaum
- St. Cyril the Great observes that the Lord Christ departed from Jerusalem and went over to the opposite shore of the lake of Tiberias to avoid the hatred of the unbelievers
- He did that willingly and not against His will

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- Word is spreading about Jesus' miracles
- It is now almost impossible for Him to avoid crowds of people following Him in their desire to witness *His signs*
- John chose these 7 public signs as representative of Jesus' many miracles and because they illustrate certain aspects of the mystery of Jesus the Messiah
- The one private "sign" of His divinity that John relates was revealed only to His Apostles is the miracle of Jesus walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee in verses 16-21

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- St. John Chrysostom comments on this verse pointing out that what is said here does not reveal people who have great wisdom, for they were attracted more by the miracles than by the teaching although the signs are for the unbelievers and not for those who believe
- *Jesus went up on the mountain,* This mountain must have been in the desert of Bethsaida, in the territories of Philip, tetrarch of Galilee
- Matthew 14:13 says He went to an uninhabited place, and adds that He did so because He heard that John had been beheaded

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- Mark's account (6:31) shows another reason He did this was so they could rest
- The apostles had just returned from a preaching trip (Luke 9:10) and He thought they could all benefit from a rest
- However, they were unable to rest, because the people, having seen the signs or miracles He had accomplished, were determined to follow them
- Mark adds that Jesus viewed them as sheep without a shepherd, so He taught them

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- St. John does not usually relate what is mentioned by the other evangelists
- The miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the feeding of the multitude is the only miracle besides the Resurrection that is recorded in all four Gospels
- But, in John's account it is not only a miracle, it is a "sign" that serves as a preface to Jesus' teaching on the true Bread of Life and points to the greater miracle of the gift of Himself in the Eucharist

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- There are only two food miracles in John's Gospel: the miracle that involves bread in chapter 6 and the miracle involving wine in chapter 2
- Together they anticipate the Eucharistic liturgy where Jesus who is both the "new Moses" and the "new manna" gives Himself as food for the multitudes under the visible signs of bread and wine
- This happened before the third Passover that the Lord celebrated during His service
- It was about ten or twelve days before the feast

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- This miracle explained at large in Matthew 14:15; in Mark 6:36; and in Luke 9:12
- In speaking of the Passovers, and various other matters, it does not appear that John follows any strict chronological order
- From John 6:15, it appears that our Lord had come down from the mountain, and fed the multitudes in a plain at the foot of it
- *said to Philip*, This, with what follows, to the end of the seventh verse, is not mentioned by any of the other evangelists
- Philip was probably the provider for the disciples, as Judas was the treasurer

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- *to test him*, To try his faith, and to see whether he and the other apostles had paid proper attention to the miracles which they had already seen Him work; and to draw their attention more particularly to that which He was now about to perform
- In 1:45 Philip identified Jesus as “*Him of whom Moses in the law, also the prophets, wrote*,” the Prophet/Messiah, but Jesus' question perhaps was to test Philip to help him to fully understand the dimensions of Philip's first revelation of Jesus' true identity

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- Jesus often asked questions, not for the purpose of obtaining information, but to make a point
- Philip's answer proves that he has not really learned the lessons of the earlier teaching
- The *denarii* was the ordinary wage for a day's work, Matthew 20:2; Luke 10:35
- *Two hundred denarii* St. Philip does not solve the difficulty; he merely states it in a practical way; a much larger amount than they can command would still be insufficient

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- Andrew said, *There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish*, (apparently enough for his own lunch)
- But he was convinced this was nothing considering the size of the crowd
- Once again, John makes sure that we have sufficient details about the miracle to be sure that it could not possibly have occurred by any natural means
- Wheat bread was more desirable than barley bread, and since barley bread was cheaper it was the food of the poor

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- *much grass in the place*, This is an addition in this account
- St. Mark, who also represents the impression of an eye-witness, tells us that the grass was green, Mark 6:39
- We know from John 6:4 that it was at the time of the Passover i.e., about our April
- *about five thousand*, The text in St. Matthew adds, *besides women and children*, who might possibly amount to an equal number

Feeding the Five Thousand 6:1-15



- *gave thanks* in this passage is the Greek word *eucharistein* from the verb *eucharisteo*
- It is from this word that the English word "Eucharist" is derived
- There is a relationship here to the most holy Eucharist, which is an act of thanksgiving
- His words foreshadow the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist first received at the Last Supper

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- *given thanks*, Prayer and thankfulness should be a regular part of our lives, and before meals is an especially good time to be thankful
- *He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down*; What Jesus here did with physical food is what He also did with spiritual food
- He is the source of the truth, but it is distributed to the people through His servants, the Clergy
- *as much as they wanted*, Their need was met to the point of complete satisfaction

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- To make the miracle still more evident to the multitude, Jesus Christ showed, that not only their present wants were supplied, but the leftovers were many times greater than the original amount
- John makes sure we have sufficient details that we cannot possibly wonder about what happened
- John then described the effect of the miracle on the people
- They concluded Jesus was *the Prophet*

Feeding the Five Thousand 6:1-15



- *truly the Prophet*, They mean that He is the one promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-20; the "new Moses", the One who is to be the Messiah and the Davidic king of Israel promised in 2 Samuel 7:11-17
- The people were looking for the Messiah who would overthrow the Roman oppressors and reestablish their national independence
- Jesus had here miraculously provided the multitudes with food, much like Moses had (by the power of God) fed the people with manna in the wilderness

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- Verse 31 shows without a doubt that the people made this specific comparison
- Once again, we see here the purpose of miracles, and John's purpose is recording the miracles
- Miracles demonstrate Jesus' great power and confirm the truthfulness of His claims that God and Him are One

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- St. John has told us of the effect of the sign on the multitude
- He knows also the reason of Christ's retirement, while St. Matthew and St. Mark only state the fact that He retired to pray
- St. Luke does not contain this section, but record a question in Luke 9:18 which indicate similar meaning, *"And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, 'Who do the crowds say that I am?'"*
- Throughout their history, the Jews had fought to obtain or keep their independence from foreign powers

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- Moses had led them to take the promised land by defeating their enemies in military battle
- If Jesus was the Messiah, He could likewise lead them to conquer their enemies
- This movement was not an unnatural one
- They were on the way to Jerusalem, and they were thirsting to throw off the yoke of Rome and of Herod, and probably they were resentful to the extreme with the "deep condemnation" of John the Baptist's death

Feeding the Five Thousand

6:1-15



- Therefore were determined immediately to proclaim Him king, and liberate themselves at once of Herod and the Romans
- Our Lord perceiving this, either by some words which they had said, or by His penetration of their hearts, retired before the project had been fully formed, or could be put into execution
- It was not till a considerable time afterwards that even the disciples fully understood that His kingdom was not of this world
- Jesus did not come to be an earthly king and rule His enemies by physical domination



Jesus Walks on the Sea 6:16-21

- It may be through the direction of the Lord Christ that the disciples took a boat to go toward Capernaum so that they may not be preoccupied with the useless dialogue about making Jesus king
- At this point Mark says Jesus sent the disciples to Bethsaida, John says toward Capernaum, and both Mark and Matthew note that they landed at Gennesaret, Mark 6:45,53; John 6:17; Matthew 14:34
- Several possible explanations show there is no contradiction
- Gennesaret is a region or area including both Capernaum and Bethsaida (the Sea is sometimes called the Sea of Gennesaret)



Jesus Walks on the Sea 6:16-21

- It may be that the ship belonged at or was going to Bethsaida, so the 12 landed there and then planned to go by foot to Capernaum (or vice-versa)
- Perhaps they had business first at Bethsaida and then went on to Capernaum, etc.
- The disciples launched out, evidently in the evening or night sometime, but Jesus remained behind
- “If you ask, why did He leave them and did not appear to them? I shall answer: to make them have a greater effect.” St. John Chrysostom



Jesus Walks on the Sea 6:16-21

- The sea became quite contrary and the disciples were having a difficult time crossing
- A great wind was blowing
- Such storms are quite common on the Sea of Galilee and can arise quite suddenly Many of these men had made their living by fishing in this sea, so they knew as well as anyone how to deal with such a problem



Jesus Walks on the Sea 6:16-21

- According to Josephus the historian the lake was about 5 miles wide
- As for its length, it was about 18 miles
- But Pliny says it was 6 miles wide and 16 miles long
- Other accounts say this happened in the fourth watch (3 AM to 6 AM)
- Jesus came walking on the water
- Mark adds Jesus would have passed them by



Jesus Walks on the Sea 6:16-21

- The disciples knew this sea well and were well aware that no one could possibly stand there
- And yet Jesus was able, not only to stand without sinking, but even to walk and move faster than the boat did!
- The disciples saw Him and could think of no explanation other than it was a ghost (Matthew's account)
- So, they were frightened and cried out
- This is a revelation of Jesus' divinity
- This miracle is Jesus' private "sign" to His Apostles



Jesus Walks on the Sea 6:16-21

- Jesus reassures the disciples by calling out *"It is I"*, but these words are also a self-revelation
- It recalls the holy name that Yahweh revealed to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:14
- Jesus will use the words *"I am"* many times in John's Gospel
- 7 times in metaphors [i.e., "I am the Bread of Life"]
- And five times in the claim of the divine name for Himself, 6:20, 8:24, 8:58, 13:19, 18:6



Jesus Walks on the Sea 6:16-21

- In St. Matthew 14:26 and St. Mark 6:51, we find that Jesus entered into the boat
- St. John does not deny it; but he remarks a circumstance not noticed by the others, *and immediately the boat was at the land*
- The evangelist seems to speak of their sudden arrival there as extraordinary and miraculous
- The words appear to contrast the ease and rapidity with which the second half of the voyage was accomplished in His presence



Jesus Walks on the Sea 6:16-21

- We do not hear that the Lord Christ rebuked the waves of the sea, or the winds, to be still
- However, as soon as they received Him into the boat, they found the boat safe on the shore
- The winds and waves were silenced into a calm
- Their fears and doubts passed into courage and hope



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- The next day the multitudes realized that Jesus was gone
- They had seen the disciples leave, but Jesus had not entered the boat
- Since there was no other boat, they apparently assumed He was still there, so they did not leave
- However, other boats had come near the place, so they apparently concluded that He had left



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- So, when they finally realized He was really gone, they also took boats and came to Capernaum looking for Him (perhaps the point is that they left in the boats from Tiberias)
- This confirms that the leaving of Jesus was miraculous or at least unexplainable to the people



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- The multitude found Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum, verse 59
- There they asked Him when He had come there
- This was a natural question
- However, Jesus ignored it and went on to the question that was of greater importance; their motive for seeking Him
- These people had seen His miracle of feeding thousands
- As we will see, they wanted more such food



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- Knowing their hearts, 2:24,25, Jesus knew their motives
- The subsequent discussion demonstrated that He was correct about their motives
- The fundamental point of the miraculous feeding – as with all of Jesus' miracles – was that it proved Jesus to be the Son of God in whom they should place their trust that He could save them from their sins
- But the people were not interested in the spiritual significance of this sign



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- They sought a means of material gain, prosperity, and advancement of their goals for an earthly kingdom
- Their view was that, if Jesus could so provide food, He could surely provide everything needed for a powerful kingdom of great material prosperity
- But this was not why Jesus had come, so He had refused to let them make Him king and had left, verses 15
- Now they found Him and immediately wanted physical provisions again
- “Rarely is Jesus sought for His own sake only.” St. Augustine



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- This is just one of numerous passages showing us that spiritual concerns ought to be far greater to us than material, earthly interests
- This issue of priorities – what is really important in life – is an issue repeatedly discussed in Scripture, Romans 8:5-8, 12:1,2; 2 Corinthians 8:5, 10:3-4, 4:16-18; John 6:63; Luke 12:15-21; Colossians 3:1,2; Matthew 6:19-33, 10:34-39, 16:24-27; 1 Timothy 4:8; 6:6-19



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- When material interests become so important that we fail to recognize or fulfill spiritual concerns, then our priorities are wrong and the principle of this verse rebukes us, just as it did these Jews
- Note that Jesus here makes clear that we must “labor” to obtain the food that is essential to eternal life
- Most people realize that we must work to obtain physical necessities
- But many believe that eternal life can be obtained by “faith only” without obeying Divine commands



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- Jesus here makes clear that receiving eternal life does indeed require doing work
- *God the Father has set His seal on Him*, By this expression, our Lord points out the commission which, as the Messiah, He received from the Father
- Christ having worked so many miracles in His Father's name, the Father Himself has thereby given testimony in His favor, and witnessed, as it were, under His seal, that Jesus is His true Son, whom He sent into the world

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40



- “He says: ‘Do not despise Me because I am the Son of Man. Rather ask of Me not food that perishes but the food which endures to everlasting life. For I am the Son of Man in a way by which I am not one of you. I am the Son of Man in a way by which the Father has set His seal on Me... He gave me something peculiar to Me so that no confusion may occur between Me and human beings, rather human beings are saved through Me.’” St. Augustine

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40



- The Jews had not really understood Jesus' teaching
- But He had told them to work for the food that abides to eternal life, so they asked Him, in effect, how to do that; what should they do to work for God?
- We will see that they were still hoping that the answer they received would result in a way for them to obtain material gain
- In effect, they were asking what they could do to get Jesus to continue to give them physical blessings



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- It seems that they were asking, What is required of them more than to obey the Law?
- Is the Law incomplete, is there what is better than the Law?
- Their question was not of good intent
- We can suppose it did not originate in their wish for learning, but was rather the result of excessive pride, as though they refrained from more knowledge than that they already had



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- What new thing will You give us in addition to those determined at that time?
- And what strange thing will You teach us that has not been revealed to us through divine words?
- “They did not say that because they wanted to learn and work (as is shown in what followed that), but so that He may give them food once more.” St. John Chrysostom
- Instead of telling them how to obtain physical benefits, Jesus gave a spiritual answer

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40



- There is nothing you can be employed in more acceptable to God than in yielding to the evidence set before you, and acknowledging Me as your Messiah and the Savior of a lost world
- Jesus is telling them that faith in itself is a "work" of God
- The "work" of God is to believe in Him
- The work God wanted them to do was to believe in Jesus, whom God sent
- This called their attention back to the issue

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40



- What God wanted, and what He had sought to accomplish by the miracle, was to get the people to believe in Jesus
- That is what they needed to do to receive eternal life, 27; 3:16
- They had ignored the real purpose of the miracle and had sought material advantage
- The word 'believe' here has the meaning of practical living faith
- The believer obey Him and follows Him in the path of the Cross

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40



- Jesus had said the people should believe in Him, but they were not willing to give up their idea of seeking material benefits
- So, they asked Him to do a sign so they could believe in Him
- They reminded Jesus that Moses gave them manna
- The crowd already sees Jesus as the "new Moses"
- His multiplication of the loaves and fishes links Him to Moses' greatest miracle, the feeding of the multitude with the heavenly manna, the bread from heaven

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40



- Therefore, they think that He is referring to manna and so they ask Him to provide the manna as Moses did as a "sign"
- Their challenge to Jesus is "What Moses gave us was bread from heaven, if you are the "new Moses" can you do the same?"
- They were right back where they had been at the beginning of the discussion
- They wanted food to eat!
- This is exactly where Jesus had said they were, and this is exactly what He had rebuked them for

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40



- They wanted miracles to provide physical food!
- They had already seen the miracle of the five loaves, and did not believe; and it was impossible for them to see any thing more descriptive of unlimited power and goodness
- Even miracles themselves are lost on persons whose hearts are fixed on the perishing things of the world, and whose minds are filled with prejudice against the truth
- St. John Chrysostom observes, that the Jews here acknowledge Christ to be God, since they entreat Christ not merely to ask His Father to give it to them



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- Our Lord invalidates the argument of the Jews, by proving:
 1. That it was not Moses, but God, who gave the manna
 2. That this bread was not the true bread, but was merely a type of it
 3. That God had given them now a bread infinitely more excellent, the Bread which can be described as particularly of God is that bread which not just give bodily nourishment but gives a greater gift, *gives life to the world*



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- “Now also the Savior tells them they do not understand and they are extremely ignorant concerning the writings of Moses. For, they should have known quite clearly that Moses was serving God’s works for the people... Moses himself did not perform the miracles, but was rather a servant and a worker in service of these deeds...Let us, then, learn with more discernment and prudence to respect our fathers the saints...However, when the speech is about our Savior, we must say: “For who in the heavens can be compared to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the LORD? ” (Psalm 89:6)” St. Cyril the Great



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- They were obviously still thinking in terms of physical or material gain
- And they were not satisfied with the one time Jesus fed them
- They wanted food all the time
- They, as the Samaritan woman, think of the satisfaction of physical need
- They do not realize that man does not live by bread alone
- Here they have asked for “this bread,” the bread which gives life, as distinct from that which perishes



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- It is now present with them
- He is that bread, whose characteristic is life
- He is the Word of God, revealing God to man, teaching the eternal truths which are the life of the spirit just as bread is of the body
- The crowd was quite prepared for the idea of uniquely heavenly bread, but they were not prepared for such a mystical statement as "I AM the Bread of Life" and the claim such a statement carried

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40



- "The Bread of Life" means primarily bread that gives life but with Jesus' next statement this becomes Bread that is life itself!
- The bread of life gives a principle of life, and he who hungers and thirsts for it shall also be filled, but with that which abides, so that he shall never hunger and shall never thirst, Matthew 5:6
- The Lord Christ used to present testimonies that He was declaring the truth

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40



- Sometimes, He announces that the Father testifies of Him
- At other times He quotes the prophecies of prophets, or He gives His signs, works and miracles
- However, here, as St. John Chrysostom comments, Christ does not mention witnesses as He declares about Himself that He is the bread from heaven, for they saw and felt how He fed them with a few loaves
- Christ declares His divinity, for whoever comes to Him will be filled and will never hunger



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- Jesus Christ leads them gradually to this great mystery, which He knows will prove a stumbling block to many
- “You demand this bread; behold it is before you, and yet you eat it not. I am the bread; to believe in me is to eat me. You see me, but you believe not in me.” St. Augustine
- St. John Chrysostom explains the role of God and the role of man
- Man cannot believe by Himself, but by God attracting him to Himself and by God’s free active grace in man
- But the human being does not enjoy this faith by force, but rather comes to the LORD, in all freedom, and He keeps and sanctifies him and does not cast him out



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- “They saw the LORD, God in essence, when He fed the great innumerable crowd. They had come to Him with five barley loaves and two small fish that He broke and distributed to them. They saw but did not believe because of the blindness that covered their understanding like fog because of the divine wrath... As they adhere to innumerable stumbling blocks and are bound by cords of their iniquities from which there is no escape (Prov 5:22) they did not accept Him when He came to them He who is able to untie their fetters and liberate them. For this reason, these people were hard-hearted.” St. Cyril the Great

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40



- The Father has not unconditionally chosen certain individuals, regardless of their character, conduct, or will, and compelled them to accept Jesus regardless of what they want
- He has simply declared what kind of person can and cannot come to Jesus
- Those who come to Jesus are those whom the Father draws to Him, and these are the ones to be raised up, verses 44-45
- But how does the Father draw them?



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- He draws them when they hear, learn, and are taught from the Father
- Then they must believe, verse 40
- So, it is by the message of the gospel that the Father draws people and gives them to Jesus
- God has determined that He wants to give to Jesus the kind of people who are willing to listen, understand, and have obedient faith
- Here Jesus implies that these Jews would not be included, because they did not believe in Him, verse 36



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- Many other passages say that God wants all men to be saved, so Jesus died for all and the gospel is to be preached to all, 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4,6; John 3:16; Hebrews 2:9; Mark 16:15,16; Matthew 28:19
- The point is that Jesus will not refuse to accept any who come to Him in obedient faith
- These unbelieving Jews would not come
- But those who are willing to come need not fear rejection
- All who will meet the conditions will be received and accepted



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- He came down from heaven, not to do what human beings wish, but to act in accordance to His divine unlimited wisdom, according to His goodness and mercy
- The Jewish tendency is to despise the tax collectors and sinners and shut the door of heaven in the face of gentiles; but God's mercies embrace them
- The Word, the Son, came to declare these divine mercies
- Christ says this to recommends to us His humility



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- *the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out* but shall be incorporated with Me
- Because he shall not do his own will, but that of My Father
- And therefore he shall not *be cast out*
- Because when man, (i.e., Adam and Eve) was proud, he did his own will, and was rejected
- None but the humble can come to me
- *I should lose nothing*, It is the will of God that every soul who believes should continue in the faith, and have a resurrection unto eternal life



The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

- *this is the will of Him who sent Me*, Lest they should take a wrong meaning out of His words, He tells them that it is the divine will that no one should be excluded from His mercy, it was the will of God that every one who saw Him might believe and be saved
- The power, without which they could not believe, He freely gave them; but the use of that power was their own
- God gives the grace of repentance and faith to every man; but He neither repents nor believes for any man
- Each must repent for his own sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus, through the grace given, or perish



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- These Jews, just as Jesus had said, began to show their unbelief
- They objected to the fact He said He was *bread came down from heaven*
- They wanted physical blessings when they asked for bread from heaven
- When Jesus did not give that but instead offered Himself, they began to lose interest
- He was offering something of infinitely greater value than what they sought, but they were not interested



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- In particular, they objected to His claim to have come down from heaven, verses 33,38
- This was a claim to Deity or at least to divine origin
- But the Jews claimed He could not have come from heaven, because they knew His family, His father and mother
- In this they assumed that His father was Joseph, so how could God be His Father and how could He have come from heaven?
- To them, He was just a physical man with a physical origin



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- Jesus responded telling them not to so murmur among themselves
- Then He simply returned to further discussion of how people come to Him
- They cannot come to Him and be raised up unless the Father draws them
- He draws them, as predicted in the prophets, Isaiah 54:13, by being taught by God, *All your children will be taught by the Lord and great shall be the peace of your children*



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- But how is a man drawn? St. Augustine answers “a man is attracted by that which he delights in. Show green herbage to a sheep, he is drawn by it: show nuts to a child, and he is drawn by them. They run wherever the person runs who shows these things: they run after him, but they are not forced to follow; they run, through the desire they feel to get the things they delight in. So God draws man: he shows him his wants - he shows the Savior whom he has provided for him: the man feels himself a lost sinner; and, through the desire which he finds to escape hell, and get to heaven, he comes unto Christ, that he may be justified by his blood. Unless God thus draw, no man will ever come to Christ; because none could, without this drawing, ever feel the need of a Savior.”



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- No one has seen God at any time
- The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him, John 1:18
- The Son with the Holy Spirit alone can see the Father as He really is because He *“searches all things, yes, the deep things of God”*, 1 Corinthians 2:10
- Thus the only begotten Son with the Holy Spirit comprehend the Father in His perfection, for it is said, *“Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him”*, Matthew 11:27



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- The Lord Christ declares that he who believes in Him:
 - 1- The Father draws him through His Son's attracting works of redemption
 - 2- Hears His teachings
 - 3- Accepts the salvation offered to him
 - 4- Is nourished by the Heavenly Bread
 - 5- Is preserved in the Faith
 - 6- Does not perish but is raised in the Last Day
 - 7- Enjoys everlasting life



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- *I am the bread of life*, I alone afford, by my doctrine and Spirit, that nourishment by which the soul is saved unto life eternal
- *the manna*, That bread neither preserved their bodies alive, nor entitled them to life eternal
- But those who receive My salvation, shall not only be raised again in the last day, but shall inherit eternal life
- It was an opinion of the Jews themselves that their fathers, who perished in the wilderness, should never have a resurrection



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- Our Lord takes them on their own ground:
- “You acknowledge that your fathers who fell in the wilderness shall never have a resurrection; and yet they ate of the manna; therefore that manna is not the bread that preserves to everlasting life, according even to your own concession”
- Here Jesus Christ proceeds to fully explain what that bread of life is, which He is about to bestow upon mankind in the mystery of the holy Eucharist



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- Once again, Jesus clearly states that He is the living bread, 35,41,48
- And once again He clearly states that He came down from heaven, 33,38
- Again, Jesus clarified that He was not talking about physical bread
- The bread He offered is His flesh that He would *give for the life of the world*



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- The giving of Christ's flesh in sacrifice for the life of the world connects the Incarnation, "the Word made flesh" John 1:14 and the Eucharist
- Christ here promised what He afterwards instituted, and gave at His last supper
- He promises to give His *body and blood to be eaten*; the same body (though the manner be different) which He would give on the cross for the redemption of the world



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- The Jews of Capharnaum were shocked
- *How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?*
- But in spite of their murmuring, and the offence which His words had given, even to *many* of His disciples, He was so far from revoking, or clarifying what He had said of any figurative or metaphorical sense that He confirmed the same truth in the clearest and strongest terms in verse 53
- St. Cyril says that *How, or, How can he do this?* Cannot be applied to God



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- But if these people of Capernaum, who did not know who Jesus was, were justly blamed for their disbelieving, foolish, blasphemous, Jewish saying, *how can he give us his flesh to eat?* much more blamable are those Christians, who, against the words of the Scripture, against the unanimous consent and authority of all Christian Churches in all parts of the world, refuse to believe His real presence, and have nothing to say, but with these stubborn people, *how can this be done?*
- Their answers are the same, or no better, when they tell us that the real presence contradicts their senses, their reason, that they know it to be false



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- *unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man*, Because the Jews said it was impossible to give them His flesh to eat, Christ answers them by telling them, that so far from being impossible, it is very necessary that they should eat it
- Jesus is speaking literally and He is using extremely strong language: His flesh that must be eaten, and it is His blood that we must drink



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- “If with a touch of His holy body only (in the raising of Jairus’s daughter, Luke 8:54 and the raising of the widow’s only son, Luke 7:12-14) He gives life to a decaying body, how may we not benefit with the greater wealth of blessing (the Eucharist) of which we partake! When we taste it we obtain Him who grants life. For it will surely be transformed for our personal good which is eternal life.” St. Cyril the Great



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- St. John Chrysostom and St. Cyril, in their commentaries on this verse, have left us on these words, “*How can this man do this?*” These words which call in question the almighty and incomprehensible power of God, which hinder them from believing all other mysteries and miracles; they might as well have said: *How* could he with five loaves feed five thousand men? This question, *How can he do this?* Is a question of infidels and unbelievers.”



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- The previous verse stated the condition without which they could not have life
- This verse declares that they who thus eat and drink possess that life now, and that it is eternal
- Only those who partake, could have eternal life and be raised up at the last day
- *For My flesh is food indeed*, This verse further explains that he who eats the flesh and drinks the blood has eternal life, for he has the true elements of life
- It is an answer, too, to the question, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- Jesus Christ, to confirm the notion His disciples had formed of a real eating of His body, and to remove all metaphorical interpretation of His words, immediately adds, "Unless you *eat* the flesh of the Son of man, and *drink* his blood, you shall not have life in you. ... For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;" which could not be so, if what He gives us in the blessed sacrament is nothing but a bit of bread; and if a figure, certainly not so striking as the manna



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- “The manna food satisfied the need of the body for a very short time. It eliminated the pain of hunger, but after that it had no power and did not grant those who ate it eternal life. So, this was not the true food and the bread that comes down from heaven. As for the holy Body that is Christ’s that nourish to immortality and to eternal life, this is indeed the true food. They drank water from the rock also...but what did those who drank benefit by that, for they died. That was not the true drink, but rather the true drink is in fact the precious Blood of Christ that removes corruption from its root and gets rid of death that dwells in the human body.” St. Cyril the Great



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- *abides*, Is one of St. John's very characteristic phrases to express the most intimate mutual fellowship and union
- When one receives Christ in holy Eucharist He "remains"/ abides/ lives, in that person
- The Greek verb "meno" is one of the most important theological terms in John's Gospel
- The Father "*menon*" (remains-lives-abides) in the Son, John 14:10, the Spirit "emeinen" on Jesus, 1:32, and believers "menei" in Jesus and He in them, 6:56 and 15:4



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- Believers who receive Christ in the Eucharist have life because Jesus remains/abides/lives in them
- He lives in them, and they in Him; for they are made partakers of the Divine nature: 2 Peter 1:4
- It is His promise to us along with His promise to remain with us always, until the end of time, Matthew 27:20
- “The smallest bit of the blessing (the Eucharist) mingles with our whole body and fills us with its powerful effect. Thus, Christ came to be in us and we also abide in Him.” St. Cyril the Great



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- In sin we are separated from God
- When Jesus has forgiven our sins (i.e., when we believe and obey Him and when we eat of His flesh and drink His blood), then we are united again with God, John 14:10,11,20, 10:37-38, 17:20-23, 15:1-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, 5:17; 1 John 1:3,6-7, 2:3-6, 4:14-16; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19,20; Romans 6:3-4, 8:9; Ephesians 3:17; Galatians 3:27
- *the living Father sent Me*, Jesus existed eternally, but the Father gave Him life on earth as a man so He could accomplish His purpose here



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- The statement, "*I live because of the Father*" as expressed in Greek carries the meaning that the cause of His life is the Father
- Thus, the Son does not live alone, but the life of the Father is the life of the Son without separation
- *he who feeds on Me will live because of Me*, The union between Christ and His followers shall be similar to that which exists and live between God and Christ



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- Here the Lord returns once more to the starting point of the discourse
- This is the bread that came down from heaven, verses 50, 51
- Already He had said, "I am the living Bread that came down from heaven," and He has expanded the statement to show how much was contained or involved in eating it
- He has, moreover, emphasized the two sides of His offer of Himself to the world, and shown how the twofold reception of both sides becomes a thorough acceptance of Himself, and a twofold identification of Himself with His people



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- “We live because we eat Him, for we cannot have eternal life of ourselves. He says, “not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever” [58]. Those fathers are dead, means they did not live forever (by means of the manna). As for those who partake of Christ, they certainly die temporarily, but will live forever because Christ is eternal life.”
St. Augustine



Rejected by His Own 6:41:59

- We are told again that this teaching was done in Capernaum, in the synagogue
- St. John Chrysostom observes that the LORD Christ delivered His speech at the synagogue for two reasons. The first was to get hold of the largest number possible of His enemies. The second reason was that He wanted to stress the point that He does not oppose the Father. Therefore, if they serve God in the temple, He does not avoid the temple, but rather considers it the house of His Father in which He teaches

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- Up to this point, it was the Jews who were confused by Jesus' teaching
- But at this point even some of those who were disciples thought this was a hard saying that they could not understand
- *many of His disciples*, Of the disciples in the wider sense
- Those who more or less fully were accepting His teaching, and were regarded as His followers

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- From John 6:64, the Apostles would seem to be included in the more general designation
- In John 6:67 they are addressed separately
- If Christ had wished to say nothing else than that His disciples should be filled with His doctrine, that being His flesh and blood, it would not have been a hard saying; neither would it have shocked the Jews
- He had already said as much in the former part of His discourse

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- But He goes on in still stronger terms, in spite of their complaints
- And, as they were ignorant how He would fulfill His promise, they left Him and followed the example of the other unbelieving Jews, saying: *how can this be done?*
- Some of them found His talk, concerning His heavenly being and His offering of His Body and Blood for everlasting life, difficult and they went away
- The tenses in the original describe the scene in the present: Jesus as knowing, the disciples as murmuring

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- The knowledge is in Himself, unaware by them, and His teaching is addressed to the thoughts of their hearts
- By giving them this proof that He knew their hearts He also proved that He was God
- That He could not be deceived Himself, and that it was impossible for Him to deceive any
- Consequently, that the doctrine He taught them must be the truth of God

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- The spiritual person cheers himself with our Savior's words and shouts in truth, "How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Ps 119:103). As for the worldly, he, in ignorance, considers the spiritual mystery, foolishness...It is appropriate for him who rushes toward true faith in Christ, to travel across a royal path." St. Cyril the Great

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- Here He hints at His ascension into heaven
- “Christ used this meaning when He spoke with Nathaniel. For He said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree’, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” (John 1:50). Also in His discussion with Nicodemus, He said, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” St. John Chrysostom

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- The sense of these words, according to some scholars, is:
“you murmur at My words, as hard and harsh, and you refuse now to believe them. When I shall ascend into heaven, from whence I came into the world, and when My ascension, and the doctrine that I have taught you, shall be confirmed by a multitude of miracles, then shall you and many others believe.”

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- “If you suppose that My body cannot grant you life, how can it ascend to heaven like a bird? For, if it cannot give life because it is not in its nature to give life, how can it fly into the air and ascend to heaven? For this is also impossible. However, He who has made this earthly body, heavenly, He will make it grant life also even if its nature disintegrates according to its particular being.” St. Cyril the Great

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- Verse 63 is the stumbling block to those who resist accepting the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist
- *It is the spirit that gives life, God is spirit, God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth, John 4:24*
- *the flesh profits nothing*, This is the crucial line that is often misinterpreted
- *the flesh profits nothing*, It cannot be His flesh or He would be contradicting what He has already taught in verses 50-53

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- Both St. Augustine and St. Cyril the Great agreed that the meaning here is that those who supposed they were to eat His flesh, separated from the spirit in the gross manner, would profit nothing
- Man's natural and carnal apprehension, (which refuses to be subject to the spirit, and words of Christ) profits nothing
- But it would be the height of blasphemy, to say the living flesh of Christ (which we receive in the blessed sacrament) profits nothing

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- For if Christ's flesh had profited us nothing, He would never have taken flesh for us, nor died in the flesh for us
- *Are spirit and they are life*, He is offering a heavenly sacrament, in which we shall receive, in a wonderful manner, spirit, grace and life
- These words sufficiently correct the gross and carnal imagination of these people of Capernaum, that He meant to give them His body and blood to eat in a visible and bloody manner, as *flesh*

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- The manner of Christ's presence is spiritual and under the outward appearances of bread and wine; but yet He is there truly and really present, by a change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of His body and blood, which truly and really become our spiritual food, and are truly and really received in the holy sacrament
- “He points out to those who always ask for the physical, when they should ask for the spiritual, that if they accept His words bodily, they will profit nothing.” St. John Chrysostom

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- When I promise you life if you eat my flesh, I do not wish you to understand this of that gross and carnal manner, of cutting my members in pieces: such ideas are far from My mind: the flesh profits nothing
- If you wish to enter into the spirit of My words, raise your hearts to a more elevated and spiritual way of understanding them
- “How then does He say, ‘the flesh profits nothing’? He does not speak about His flesh, God forbid! He speaks rather about those who accept His words in a physical way.” St. John Chrysostom

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- It is through Jesus' glorified flesh and His glorified blood made present by the power of the Holy Spirit that our souls will be nourished and will receive life
- *The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life*, Jesus' teaching about the promise of eternal life through the gift of His body and blood, when He said: *'the bread which comes down from heaven, so that a person may eat it and not die'*, in verses 50-53, reveals something divine which only God the Holy Spirit can supply

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- The statement here concerns Judas who betrayed Him and also concerns those who left Him
- There were those who followed Him just as they would follow any Rabbi and regarding Him as a merely human teacher
- They fell short of the faith which was the first qualification for true discipleship
- He knew the hearts of all men and knew what would eventually happen, John 2:24

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- He also shows that what happens is of His own complete free will
- All souls are known and visible before the LORD Christ
- He knows the honest and faithful in their belief, and also the false who behave hypocritically
- “Judas was present there...The LORD did not mention his name. He described him, but did not mention his name. Yet, He did not stop talking about him, in order that all may fear, though one only will perish.” St. Augustine

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- *no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father*, This does not mean that God distinguishes between one group and another
- It means that he who asks will receive
- He would like to have all men believe and be blessed
- He offers the opportunity to all men, but each person must decide for himself what choice he will make
- But Jesus knew some would disbelieve

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- And He knew what choices Judas would make, but He never compelled him to make those choices
- Unless the fields had been prepared it was in vain to sow the seed
- No effort on the sower's part could make them receptive
- The fact that they did not believe declares that their hearts were not prepared, but did not affect the goodness of the seed
- This defection did not surprise Him
- He had already used words which anticipated it, John 6:37,44

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- This is undoubtedly the crucial point of the text
- It is obvious that the crowd, including some of Jesus' disciples [meaning from the larger group of disciples not the Apostles] believed Jesus was speaking literally and not symbolically
- The crucial point is that when they walked away **Jesus did not stop them!**
- If He was only speaking symbolically and then let them leave, He would be perpetuating a lie which is a sin

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- Jesus is without sin
- They left and He let them leave because He was not speaking symbolically but literally
- “It is well that the evangelist does not say they “left”, but that they “went back” to the affairs they had left behind. He declares that they deprived themselves of any growth in virtue. By departing they lost the faith they had before. However, this did not happen to the twelve disciples.” St. John Chrysostom

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- “He did not rebuke those who left Him. Nor did He threaten them in a cruel manner. On the contrary, He turned to His disciples and said, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ Thus, He acknowledged the legal rights by which a man exercises his freedom and freely chooses his death or his salvation.” Cyprian the Martyr
- He shows them, says St. John Chrysostom, that He stood not in need of them, and so leaves them to their free choice

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- The twelve had heard all that passed
- They had seen the Jews strive amongst themselves, and the disciples murmur and leave their Master
- They understood what He said in the same literal sense
- It could, indeed, bear no other meaning
- But when Jesus posed His question, leaving them to their free choice, whether to follow Him, or to withdraw themselves, Simon Peter with his usual zeal and readiness, speaking in behalf of the whole says, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life*"

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- No matter how hard and difficult His words may appear to others
- We may here admire not only the Excellency of their faith, but the plain, yet noble motive of their faith
- They believe, because He is Christ, *the Son of the living God*, who is absolutely incapable of deceiving His creatures, and whose power is perfectly equal to perform the promises He here makes them

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- The LORD Christ corrected St. Peter by declaring that He was the one who chose them as His disciples and He knew that among them is a person who will be used by Satan
- “I ask Him why He chose Judas the traitor? Why did He give him the moneybox, though He knew that Judas was a thief? Shall I tell you why? God judges the present, not according to the future. He does not use His foreknowledge to condemn a person, though He knows that later that person will do something that will not please God.” St. Jerome

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- St. Jerome continues, “Nevertheless, in His inexpressible goodness and mercy, He chooses a person who, He knows, will be good for sometime, but will veer to evil. He gives that person a chance to change and repent. This is the meaning of the apostle’s words, *“not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance. But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds”* (Rom 2:4-6)

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- *He spoke of Judas Iscariot*, This remark is made by the writer to explain the strong words of the previous verse
- Scriptural evidence does not support the theory that Judas did not really betray Jesus but was just trying to bring His kingdom about more quickly
- All of the Gospel writers identify him as a traitor and betrayer of the Savior, Matthew 10:4, 26:16,25,48-49, 27:3; Mark 3:19, 14:10-11,44-45; Luke 6:16, 22:6,47-48; John 6:71, 12:4; 13:2,21-30; 18:2,5

Many Disciples Turn Away

6:60-71



- In Luke 22:47-48 Jesus calls Judas a betrayer
- His inability to confess his sin and repent will lead to his suicide, unlike Simon Peter who believes in Christ, confesses his betrayal and is redeemed



Discussion

- Why do you think Jesus separated Himself from the crowd and sat down with His disciples?
- Jesus was testing Phillip (and the other disciples). What exactly was the test? What would it take to "pass" this test?
- How do you usually respond to an "impossible" situation—a problem in your life that doesn't seem to have a solution?



Discussion

- Premillennialists teach that Jesus came to earth the first time intending to establish an earthly kingdom but failed because the people rejected Him. What application would v15 have to this view?
- What lessons can we learn from the event of Jesus walking on water (6:16-21)?
- In vv 24-26, why are the crowds seeking Jesus? How does He use this opportunity to teach them?



Discussion

- What blessing may we have if we eat and drink of Jesus (vv 54-55)? What problems might we face if we misunderstood this point?
- Explain what it means to abide in Jesus? In what sense are we in Him?
- What lessons and applications can we learn from the reaction of His followers who left Him 60-68?