

# *The Gospel of John*

## Believe and Live!

### Lesson 7

John 6:1–71

### Miracles and Responses

Two years of Jesus' public ministry had now passed; most of it spent traveling and preaching throughout the region of Galilee. A look at the other three synoptic gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—reveals a great many of the miracles and wonders Jesus did during that time. John selects only two of the miracles from that period to write about: the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on the water to His disciples.

#### *At a glance* ~ **Read John 6:1–21.**

Remember that when John wrote, he had the advantage of knowing what his fellow disciples had already written about. Understanding this piques the reader's interest as to the particular significance of the two miracles mentioned in chapter six. What stands out to you at first glance from your reading?

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The disciples had been with Jesus for two years, following Him devotedly and listening to Him intently. They had watched God's power on display through Him and had evidenced it personally when Jesus sent them out to minister.

1. To set the scene, during what time of year do the events of chapter six take place? vv. 1–4
  - a. Where do we find Jesus and the disciples?
  - b. Why were the crowds following Him at this point?

It's interesting that a crowd was following Jesus at the time of the Passover; most everyone was on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration required by law. Feeling the press of the people, on a quiet hillside Jesus sat down to withdraw with His disciples. Before long they were interrupted by a great multitude coming their way. For reasons known only to Him, Jesus would choose this occasion to test His disciples.

2. Who was the first disciple to be tested? What question does Jesus ask him?  
vv. 5–6

With no towns nearby and very little money among them, Jesus confronts Philip with a question he can't possibly answer. Verse 6 reveals that Jesus already knew what He would do.

a. Once Philip calculates the resources on hand, what assessment does he make?  
vv. 7–10

The equivalent of two hundred denarii is eight month's worth of wages which, Philip says, would not even be enough for each one to have a bite!

b. Who approaches with a suggestion? What does he propose?

Because it was spring and the time of the Passover, the hills were lush with green grass. Jesus instructs the disciples to make the people sit down. It is estimated that the men alone that were gathered numbered approximately five thousand, adding the women and children brought the number closer to ten thousand!

3. The little boy's lunch wasn't much but it was all that was offered to Jesus that day. What did the Lord do with it? vv. 11–13

a. We see in the details that God is a God of order. What happened once everyone had eaten?

*Selah ~*

John's account details what Jesus did in performing this miracle; Mark's account tells us how He did it. What details do you find in Mark's gospel that John does not mention? See Mark 6:30–44.

- b. From *your* perspective, was there any faith exhibited in Philip's answer? Was there any in Andrews? Why or why not? Please share your thoughts.
  
- c. Personal: Have *you* ever faced a predicament in which you had inadequate resources to meet the need and there seemed to be no possible solution? We can learn a lesson from Jesus: little is much when God is in the midst! What does He want your perspective to be today? See Matthew 19:26.

You will never know that Jesus is enough until you experience times when He is all you have!

*Take a closer look* ~ John 6:35

(Memorize and meditate on the memory verse each time you open your lesson.)

***“And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”***

What does this verse reveal to you about Jesus? How does this revelation of truth encourage you today?

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*In focus* ~ (Key words) **Believe** (6:29, 36, 40, 47, 64, 69)

John uses one of his most preferred words six times in this chapter to emphasize that it is the act of believing that produces our faith. Look up the word using the resources you have on hand (Bible translations, dictionary, concordance) and write a definition.

Believe: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal: Briefly share a time when you believed and God added to your faith.

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Once the people witnessed the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and were filled, they rightly concluded that a prophet was in their midst but they responded improperly. They were right in thinking that this must be the One of whom Moses prophesied (Deuteronomy 18:15) but their intention was to come and make him a king by force.

4. What does this reveal about the peoples' true motives?
  - a. What did their response prompt Jesus to do? v. 15

Mark's account of this next event explains that Jesus made the disciples get into a boat while He sent the multitude away. Read the account in Mark 6:45–52 along with John 6:15–21 to help formulate your answers to the following.

Sometime between three and six o'clock in the morning, Jesus saw the trouble the disciples were experiencing and came to them walking on the water.

5. What, according to both accounts, was their initial response? Why?
  - a. How did Jesus calm their fears?
  - b. What happened once they received Him into the boat?

After following Jesus for two years, the disciples still did not understand who He was. They could not yet appropriate for themselves all that His miracles meant, but in time they would.

6. Personal: What about you? During the time you have walked with the Lord, have you been able to trust Him? As you witness Him walking on the stormy chaos of your life, is your heart ready to receive the faith He longs for you to have? Please explain.

When Jesus uttered the words, "*It is I,*" He was saying literally that "I AM is here with you." He promises not only to be with you in your storms of life but also to get you safely over to the other side. He offers you peace in the midst of all your storms! Will you take a moment and praise Him for that today?

## Bread from Heaven

### *Outlook* ~ Read John 6:22–71.

The previous day had been an eventful one: Jesus fed the five thousand on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. That same evening, He made His disciples board a boat for Capernaum without Him. When He did appear to them it was to calm their fears and quiet the raging storm. Together they arrived safely in Capernaum shortly before dawn.

The next morning when the people discovered that Jesus was gone, some went in search of Him. When they found Him on the other side of the lake, they asked Him, “*Rabbi, when did You come here?*” (v.25). He will use this moment to deepen the truth about Himself that will bring about divided results.

1. For what reason does Jesus say the people were seeking Him? vv. 26–29

Jesus acknowledges the importance of food—that it is necessary for life—but that it should not be the focus of our attention.

- a. Where should our focus be fixed?
- b. What is the “work of God” according to Jesus?

Imagine, after receiving a miraculous free meal from Jesus, the people also demanded a further sign from Him (vv.30–31). They based their argument on the fact their ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness which was provided for them every day for forty years (Exodus 16:4).

2. What is Jesus’ reply, indicating who gives the true bread from heaven? vv. 32–35

- a. What declaration does He make about Himself?
- b. If people want this bread, they must come to Him in belief. What kind of satisfaction does He promise to everyone who comes?
- c. Most of those who had seen Jesus did not believe in Him, they came because their stomachs were full. What promise is there for those who come because they are spiritually hungry? (v. 37)

3. Why did Jesus come down from heaven? vv. 38–40

a. What does He declare to be the will of the Father?

4. As Jesus announces Himself to be the “living bread” come down from heaven, what do the Jews begin to do? vv. 41–51

The Jews knew that Jesus had a typical boyhood upbringing in Nazareth, they didn’t believe there was anything extraordinary about Him. Their perspective was clouded by what they knew, instead of perceiving Him based on what He said and did in their midst.

a. Who are those that do come to Jesus? vv. 44–45

b. What truth does He reiterate about Himself in verses 47–51?

From complaining, the Jews turn to quarrelling among themselves, unable to understand the meaning of Jesus’ words. He explains that man’s desire for intimacy with God is answered in the Son: “*Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day*” (v. 54). The flesh and blood Jesus speaks about refers to the sacrifice He must make on our behalf. It would require His ultimate death and they were greatly agitated by this.

Jesus sums up His discourse by stating that “*he who feeds on this bread will live forever*” (v. 58). Not only did the Jews have a hard time understanding His words, but so did some of His disciples.

5. What does He declare to them? vv. 60–66

Those who turn away from Jesus are initially offended at what He says in His Word. Some will summarily dismiss His teaching as too difficult to understand. Ultimately, they turn their backs on Him and walk away.

The salvation He offers is for those who are seeking the truth, no matter where it leads them or how uncomfortable it is or how difficult to understand. The believer’s role is to feed on the whole Word of God—not merely those passages that we want to hear or find easy to swallow!

Those followers who could not accept the truth—and there were many—from that time turned away and walked with Him no more (v. 66). At that moment, He turned to the twelve.

6. What did He ask those closest to Him, who had walked with Him for two years?  
vv. 67–69

- a. Who spoke up and what did he passionately declare? v. 68
  
- b. On behalf of the twelve, what did Peter state that they had come to believe? v. 69
  
- c. There was one exception to those who came to believe—who was it? How does Jesus describe him? What is his legacy? vv. 70–71

In every church body, there are believers who start out well; but when things get tough, they turn around and walk away. These are those who want Christianity on their own terms. Those who hear and truly believe are those who have been drawn by the love of the Father. Their hearts belong to the Son and their faith has convinced them that only Jesus has the words of eternal life!

- d. Personal: Name a specific way in which you can appropriate the *Bread of Life* to feed yourself spiritually.

### *More like Jesus ~*

Are *you* becoming more like Jesus? Absolutely! Every time you open the Word and spend time getting to know Him more intimately, you partake in the life-long process of drawing near—going deeper—bearing fruit—becoming more like Him. As you close your lesson today, determine to put into practice what you’ve learned by noting it below.

- Recite your memory verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Reflect on a lesson you received \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Respond with prayer and praise to God \_\_\_\_\_  
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# *Notes*