



The Bread of Life (John 6)

Notes: Week Six

John 6 (HCSB)

The Fourth Sign: Feeding 5,000

6 After this, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). ² And a huge crowd was following Him because they saw the signs that He was performing by healing the sick. ³ So Jesus went up a mountain and sat down there with His disciples.

⁴ Now the Passover, a Jewish festival, was near. ⁵ Therefore, when Jesus looked up and noticed a huge crowd coming toward Him, He asked Philip, “Where will we buy bread so these people can eat?” ⁶ He asked this to test him, for He Himself knew what He was going to do.

⁷ Philip answered, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread wouldn’t be enough for each of them to have a little.”

⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, ⁹ “There’s a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish—but what are they for so many?”

¹⁰ Then Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.”

There was plenty of grass in that place, so they sat down. The men numbered about 5,000. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and after giving thanks He distributed them to those who were seated—so also with the fish, as much as they wanted.

¹² When they were full, He told His disciples, “Collect the leftovers so that nothing is wasted.” ¹³ So they collected them and filled 12 baskets with the pieces from the five barley loaves that were left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴ When the people saw the sign ^[a] He had done, they said, “This really is the Prophet who was to come into the world!” ¹⁵ Therefore, when Jesus knew that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He withdrew again ^[b] to the mountain by Himself.

The Fifth Sign: Walking on Water

¹⁶ When evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. Darkness had already set in, but Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸ Then a high wind arose, and the sea began to churn. ¹⁹ After they had rowed about three or four miles, ^[c] they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He was coming near the boat, and they were afraid.

²⁰ But He said to them, “It is I.”^[d] Don’t be afraid!” ²¹ Then they were willing to take Him on board, and at once the boat was at the shore where they were heading.

The Bread of Life

²² The next day, the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea knew there had been only one boat.^[e] They also knew that Jesus had not boarded the boat with His disciples, but that His disciples had gone off alone. ²³ Some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord gave thanks. ²⁴ When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

²⁵ When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You get here?”

²⁶ Jesus answered, “I assure you: You are looking for Me, not because you saw^[f] the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled.”²⁷ Don’t work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal of approval on Him.”

²⁸ “What can we do to perform the works of God?” they asked.

²⁹ Jesus replied, “This is the work of God—that you believe in the One He has sent.”

³⁰ “What sign then are You going to do so we may see and believe You?” they asked. “What are You going to perform?” ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”^{[g][h]}

³² Jesus said to them, “I assure you: Moses didn’t give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the real bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ Then they said, “Sir, give us this bread always!”

³⁵ “I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty again. ³⁶ But as I told you, you’ve seen Me,^[i] and yet you do not believe. ³⁷ Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of Him who sent Me: that I should lose none of those He has given Me but should raise them up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of My Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

⁴¹ Therefore the Jews started complaining about Him because He said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴² They were saying, “Isn’t this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can He now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

⁴³ Jesus answered them, “Stop complaining among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws^[j] him, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: And they will all be taught by God.^[k] Everyone who has listened to 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.

⁴⁷ “I assure you: Anyone who believes^[l] has eternal life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

⁵² At that, the Jews argued among themselves, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?”

⁵³ So Jesus said to them, “I assure you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life in yourselves. ⁵⁴ Anyone who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day, ⁵⁵ because My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. ⁵⁶ The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood lives in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on Me will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the manna^[m] your fathers ate—and they died. The one who eats this bread will live forever.”

⁵⁹ He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Desert Jesus

⁶⁰ Therefore, when many of His disciples heard this, they said, “This teaching is hard! Who can accept^[n] it?”

⁶¹ Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples were complaining about this, asked them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? ⁶³ The Spirit is the One who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. ⁶⁴ But there are some among you who don’t believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who would not^[o] believe and the one who would betray Him.) ⁶⁵ He said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted to him by the Father.”

⁶⁶ From that moment many of His disciples turned back and no longer accompanied Him. ⁶⁷ Therefore Jesus said to the Twelve, “You don’t want to go away too, do you?”

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered, “Lord, who will we go to? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that You are the Holy One of God!”^[p]

⁷⁰ Jesus replied to them, “Didn’t I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is the Devil!” ⁷¹ He was referring to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son,^{[q][r]} one of the Twelve, because he was going to betray Him.

Footnotes:

- a. [John 6:14](#) Other mss read *signs*
- b. [John 6:15](#) A previous withdrawal is mentioned in [Mk 6:31-32](#), an event that occurred just before the feeding of the 5,000.
- c. [John 6:19](#) Lit 25 or 30 stadia; 1 stadion = 600 feet
- d. [John 6:20](#) Lit *I am*
- e. [John 6:22](#) Other mss add *into which His disciples had entered*
- f. [John 6:26](#) Or *perceived*
- g. [John 6:31](#) Bread miraculously provided by God for the Israelites
- h. [John 6:31](#) [Ex 16:4](#); [Ps 78:24](#)
- i. [John 6:36](#) Other mss omit *Me*
- j. [John 6:44](#) Or *brings*, or *leads*; see the use of this Gk verb in [Jn 12:32](#); [21:6](#); [Ac 16:19](#); [Jms 2:6](#).
- k. [John 6:45](#) [Is 54:13](#)
- l. [John 6:47](#) Other mss add *in Me*
- m. [John 6:58](#) Other mss omit *the manna*
- n. [John 6:60](#) Lit *hear*
- o. [John 6:64](#) Other mss omit *not*
- p. [John 6:69](#) Other mss read *You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God*
- q. [John 6:71](#) Other mss read *Judas Iscariot, Simon's son*
- r. [John 6:71](#) Lit *Judas, of Simon Iscariot*

Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible¹

John 6

6:1-71 The feeding of the crowds (cp. [Mt 14:13-23](#); [Mk 6:30-44](#); [Lk 9:10-17](#)) is yet another of Jesus' messianic "signs" (see note at [Jn 2:11](#)), aligning Jesus with God's provision of manna to wilderness Israel through Moses ([6:30-31](#)). In response to the people's demand that He perform a sign greater than Moses' signs at the exodus, Jesus claimed to be the "bread of life" that provides spiritual nourishment for all who believe in Him (eat and drink of Him). This controversial statement proved to be a watershed moment in Jesus' ministry, because many of His followers abandoned Him at this point ([vv. 60-66](#)). But the Twelve, through Peter their spokesman, reaffirmed their allegiance ([vv. 68-69](#)).

6:1 **After this** again indicates the passing of an indefinite period of time ([5:1](#)). Half a year may have passed since the previous event. Sea of **Tiberias** (cp. [21:1](#)) was an alternate name for the Sea of Galilee. Herod Antipas founded Tiberias, the largest city on the Sea of Galilee, in honor of his patron, the Roman emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14-37). The name gained currency toward the end of the first century.

6:3 **Mountain** may not refer to a specific mountain. It could designate the hill country east of the lake, known today as the Golan Heights ([Mt 14:23](#); [Mk 6:46](#)). Like other rabbis, Jesus **sat down** to teach ([Mt 5:1](#); [Mk 4:1](#); [9:35](#); [Lk 4:20](#)), although teaching is not mentioned here.

6:4 This is the second of three Passovers mentioned by John, and the only one Jesus spent in Galilee (see note at [2:13](#)).

6:5 The **huge crowd** apparently walked several miles around the north side of the lake and caught up with Jesus and the disciples. **Philip** would be the natural choice for Jesus' question since he, like Andrew ([v. 8](#)) and Peter, was a native of nearby Bethsaida (see note at [1:44](#)). Jesus' question echoes Moses' query in the wilderness: "Where can I get meat to give all these people?" ([Num 11:13](#)). Other parallels between [Jn 6](#) and [Num 11](#) are the people's grumbling ([Num 11:1](#); [Jn 6:41,43](#)); the description of the manna ([Num 11:7-9](#); [Jn 6:31](#)); the reference to the eating of meat/Jesus' "flesh" ([Num 11:13](#); [Jn 6:51](#)); and the overabundance of the provision ([Num 11:22](#); [Jn 6:7-9](#)).

6:7 **Two hundred denarii** was roughly eight months' wages, since one denarius was about one day's pay for a common laborer ([12:5](#); [Mt 20:2](#)).

6:9 **Boy** may refer to a kid, a teenager, or even someone in his early twenties. The same word is used to refer to young Joseph in [Gen 37:30](#) and Daniel and his friends in [Dan 1](#). **Barley** was common food for the poor (the well-to-do preferred wheat bread); the **fish** were probably dried or preserved, perhaps pickled. In a similar account, Elisha fed 100 men with 20 barley loaves ([2Ki 4:42-44](#)).

6:10 The men numbered **about 5,000**, plus women and children ([Mt 14:21](#)), totaling perhaps as many as 15,000 people. **Plenty of grass** may allude to the messianic age ([10:9-10](#); [Ps 23:2](#)). Mark ([Mk 6:39-40](#)) mentioned that the grass was green, which points to springtime.

6:11 A common Jewish thanksgiving prayer was, "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth."

¹ Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "John 6".

6:12 Jesus' words echo [Ruth 2:14](#): "She ate and was satisfied and had some left over." Jesus took the same care in providing for those whom the Father gave Him ([Jn 10:28-29](#); [17:11-12,15](#)).

6:13 The number of **baskets** may allude to Jesus' symbolic restoration of the 12 tribes of Israel.

6:14 The reference to **the Prophet who was to come into the world** alludes to [Dt 18:15,18](#) (see notes at [Jn 1:19-21](#) and [7:40-41](#)).

6:15 On Jesus' withdrawal to the **mountain**, see note at [v. 3](#).

6:16-24 Jesus' walking across the Sea of Galilee may echo [Job 9:8](#) (LXX) where God is said to walk on the waters.

6:16-17 The disciples were on the eastern side of the lake, and they ventured to row the six or seven miles back **across the sea to Capernaum** on the western side.

6:19 They had rowed about **three or four miles**. If the feeding of the crowd occurred on the eastern shore, the shortest distance to Capernaum would have been five to six miles.

6:20 **It is I** may have overtones of epiphany (cp. [Ex 3:14](#); see note at [Jn 6:35,48](#)). The statement may allude to [Ps 77:16,19](#), describing God's manifestation to Israel during the exodus.

6:21 The reference to the boat reaching the shore **at once** may allude to [Ps 107:23-32](#) (esp. [6:29-30](#)).

6:23-24 **Tiberias** was and is the chief city on the western side of the lake (see note at [v. 1](#)). Whereas **Capernaum** was located on the northwestern edge of the lake, Tiberias is several miles to the south.

6:25 **On the other side of the sea** refers to the area in or around Capernaum (see note at [vv. 23-24](#); cp. [v. 59](#)).

6:27-29 People misunderstood Jesus' statement and asked about the works God required. Jesus said the only "work" required by God is faith in Messiah. On **seal of approval**, see note at [3:33](#).

6:30 Again, the people misunderstood. They demanded a **sign** as evidence of Jesus' claims (cp. [1Co 1:22](#)). Jesus pointed to the significance of the "sign" He had just performed—the feeding of the crowd (cp. [2:18](#)). This revealed people's stubbornness, which led many of Jesus' disciples to leave ([6:60-66](#)) and prompted John to indict the Jews for unbelief at the close of Jesus' public ministry ([12:37-40](#)).

6:31 This verse links exodus and Passover motifs with Jesus as the Prophet like Moses and the expectation that God would again provide manna in the messianic age. The OT reference seems to involve several passages, with [Ps 78:23-24](#) being most prominent ([Ex 16:4,15](#); [Neh 9:15](#); [Ps 105:40](#)).

6:35, 48 **I am the bread of life** is the first of Jesus' seven "I am" sayings in John. Subsequently He said He is "the light of the world" ([8:12](#); [9:5](#)); "the door" of the sheep ([10:7,9](#)); the "good shepherd" ([10:11,14](#)); "the resurrection and the life" ([11:25](#)); "the way, the truth, and the life" ([14:6](#)); and "the true vine" ([15:1](#)). Apart from these sayings, there are statements where Jesus referred to Himself as "I am" ([6:20](#); [8:24,28,58](#); [18:5](#)), a clear allusion to God's identification as "I am" ([Ex 3:14](#)).

[6:37](#), [44](#) Jesus affirmed the twin themes of election and perseverance of the saints, prominent topics in John's Gospel. Those predestined by God will come to Jesus, and Jesus will preserve His own. No one can come to Jesus apart from the Father's drawing him. These themes continue in the Good Shepherd discourse ([10:28-29](#)) and Jesus' final prayer ([17:6,9,11-12](#)).

[6:40](#) On Jesus' promise of **eternal life**, see note at [3:16-18](#).

pisteuo

Greek Pronunciation [pihss TYEW oh]

HCSB Translation believe

Uses in John's Gospel 98

Uses in the NT 241

Focus Passage [John 6:29-47](#)

The Greek word *pisteuo* means *to believe, trust, rely upon*, and its related noun is *pistis (faith)*. In his Gospel, John never used the words *repent, repentance, or faith* to describe the way people are saved. Instead, he used *believe* since this term included all these ideas. John preferred the verb form to emphasize the act that is necessary for someone to be saved—total dependence on the work of Another. John did indicate, however, that *believing* can be superficial; that is, it can be merely intellectual without resulting in true salvation ([Jn 2:23-24](#); [12:42-43](#); see [Jms 2:19](#)). But John's main point is that complete *reliance* upon Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God ([20:31](#)), for salvation gives eternal life to the person who *believes* ([3:16](#); [6:47](#)). Jesus used a wordplay when He said that people must do "the work of God" for salvation, for His point was that we must not try to work for it at all. We must simply "*believe in the One He has sent*" ([6:29](#)).

[6:41](#), [43](#) The references to the **complaining** of the **Jews** highlights the parallel between Jews of Jesus' day and wilderness Israel (cp. [Ex 16:2,8-9](#); [Num 11:4-23](#); see note at [Jn 6:5](#)). The Israelites complained about the first giver of bread, Moses. Now they griped against the second giver, Jesus.

[6:42](#) People showed no awareness of Jesus' virginal conception ([Mt 1:18-25](#)). They objected to Jesus' claim of descent from **heaven** since He was clearly human and was, they believed, conceived in the standard way ([4:44](#)).

[6:44](#) On the "raising up" ministry of Jesus, see note at [12:32](#).

[6:45](#) Citing [Isa 54:13](#), Jesus affirmed that, while His ministry fulfilled the prophetic vision that one day all people would be taught by God, this applied only to those who were drawn by the Father and who came to believe in Jesus as Messiah.

[6:53](#) The Hebrew idiom "flesh and blood" refers to the total person.

[6:63](#) Unaided by the **Spirit**, human reason cannot discern spiritual truth. The Jews wrongly believed study of Scripture (see note at [5:39](#)) and doing "works of the law" (see note at [6:27-29](#)) were sufficient for spiritual understanding.

[6:68](#) **Who will we go to** may refer to transferring allegiance to another rabbi (cp. [1:35-37](#)).

6:69 Peter's confession of Jesus as **the Holy One of God** anticipates later references to Jesus being set apart for God ([10:36](#); [17:19](#)). In the OT, God was called "the Holy One of Israel" ([Ps 71:22](#); [Isa 43:3](#); [54:5](#)). See similar confessions of Jesus in [Mt 16:16](#); [Mk 8:29](#); [Lk 9:20](#).

6:70 This is the first reference to **the Twelve** in John's Gospel. Their existence and appointment are assumed from the testimony in the Synoptic Gospels. See notes at [1:43](#) and [15:16](#).

6:71 **Judas, Simon Iscariot's son**, likely was the only non-Galilean among the Twelve.

The Apologetics Study Bible²

John 6

6:14-15 In addition to specifying that it was Passover ([v. 4](#)), the attempt to make Jesus king was one of the distinctive features of John's account of the feeding of the 5,000. But even though these details do not appear in the other Gospels, many scholars (including some who are generally skeptical of John) accept them as accurate, because they fit so well the common Jewish misconception of the role of the Messiah and because no later Christian would likely have invented the unflattering picture of Jesus "running away" from would-be subjects of an earthly kingdom.

Article: Are Jesus' Claims Unique Among the Religions of the World?

by Gary R. Habermas

Have all major religious teachers proclaimed approximately the same message? For example, have many of the religious teachers taught that they were God, as Jesus did?

It may surprise many to learn that we have no reliable historical data that *any* of the founders of the world's major religions—apart from Jesus—ever claimed to be God. No early writings attest such a claim on behalf of these persons. For example, Chinese teachers Confucius and Lao-tzu exerted moral, social, and cultural influences on their students but were not theologians. Many of their wise sayings are reminiscent of the Hebrew book of Proverbs. Strangely, Buddha may have been an atheist who did not believe in any kind of divinity!

The Muslim holy book, the Qur'an, definitely does not elevate Muhammad to the place of Allah (God). While we are told that Muhammad is Allah's chief prophet, there is no attempt to make Muhammad deity. To the contrary, Allah has no partners (Surahs 4:171; 5:72, 116).

The OT places no leader or prophet on God's level. Rather, we are told that God will not share His glory with anyone else ([Isa 48:11](#)). So Abraham, David, and Isaiah are not candidates for godhood.

Perhaps the Hindu figure Krishna comes closest to being understood as God. While he is referred to in the lofty terms of deity in the Hindu sacred writings, the Bhagavad-Gita (e.g., [4:13](#); [9:18-20](#), [23](#)), scholars are not sure whether Krishna ever really lived or, if he did, what century he lived in. Moreover, these writings do not claim to be historical treatises of any actual teachings and are thought to have been written hundreds of years after Krishna may have lived. Thus tracking any possibility of original claims is fruitless.

² Ted Cabal, ed., *The Apologetics Study Bible: Understanding Why You Believe*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1580-1585.

Further, being God in the usual Hindu sense would be quite distinct from the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the latter, God is by nature totally apart from His creation; humans do not reach godhood. In the Bhagavad-Gita, however, the process of enlightenment can be attained by those who return to the Godhead and achieve their own divinity (see 18:46-68). In a certain sense, all persons have divine natures.

On the contrary, Jesus claimed dual titles of divinity. Particularly, He said He was both the Son of God ([Mt 11:27](#)) and the Son of Man ([Mk 2:10-11](#)). He spoke of His Father in familiar ways ([Mk 13:36](#)) and even claimed to forgive sins, for which He was charged with blasphemy ([Mk 2:5-7](#)).

In perhaps the clearest indication of His claims about Himself, when the high priest asked Jesus if He was the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus plainly declared that He was. Then He further asserted that He was also the Son of Man who would co-reign on God's throne and come on the clouds in judgment. The high priest pronounced these claims blasphemy ([Mk 14:61-64](#)).

These sayings of Jesus were recorded in documents that were written just decades after the events, and there are strong reasons to hold that all were composed by authors who were close to the occurrences. Moreover, many of the individual passages exhibit earmarks of historicity. Last, very early creedal texts (e.g., [Ac 2:36](#); [Rm 1:3-4](#); [10:9](#)) also apply titles of deity to Jesus Christ.

Many religious teachers have claimed to present God's way. But Jesus declared not only that He was initiating God's path of salvation ([Mk 1:15-20](#)) but also that what His hearers did specifically with *Him* determined their eternal destiny ([Mt 10:37-40](#); [19:23-30](#)). Further, of these religious founders, only Jesus taught that His death would serve as a payment for human sin, achieving what we could not ([Mk 10:45](#); [14:22-25](#)).

Additionally, only Jesus has miracles reported of Him by early sources. Most importantly, according to the Gospels, Jesus taught that His resurrection from the dead would be the sign that evidenced the truth of His message ([Mt 12:38-42](#); [16:1-4](#); [Mk 14:28](#)). For NT writers, Jesus' resurrection proved His claims were true ([Rm 1:3-4](#); [1 Pt 1:3-6](#)). After all, dead men do not do much! So if Jesus was raised, God must have performed the event in order to approve Jesus' message ([Ac 2:22-24](#); [17:30-31](#)).

6:17 [Mark 6:45](#) had the disciples set out for Bethsaida; John here said it was Capernaum. Yet if they were far enough to the northeast corner of the Sea of Galilee, then given the undulating northern coastline, both cities would have lain in a basically west-southwesterly direction of travel.

6:30 How could the crowds ask for anything more beyond the feeding of the 5,000? In part, this was a different gathering, but more importantly, they were looking for someone to replicate the ongoing miracle of manna from heaven that had sustained the Israelites in the wilderness in the years after the exodus from Egypt ([v. 31](#)).

6:52-59 Based on these verses, critics of the early church thought Christians condoned a form of cannibalism. This is not the case. The reference here is twofold, both foreshadowing the Lord's Supper and emphasizing complete submission to Jesus as Lord. To many insiders, it has seemed as if the Lord's Supper was a requirement for salvation. But [verse 63](#) makes plain that only the Spirit gives life; Jesus' flesh does not do so. These are simply striking metaphors for identifying with Christ in His atoning death for the sins of humanity.

6:68-69 It is not clear whether this is a drastically abbreviated version of the same conversation that the other Gospels narrate—Peter's confession on the road to Caesarea Philippi ([Mt 16:16-20](#)). More probably it is a forerunner of that later, more extensive conversation.

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

John 6

6:5 If anyone knew where to get food, it would have been Philip because he was from Bethsaida, a town about nine miles away ([1:44](#)). Jesus was testing Philip to strengthen his faith. By asking for a human solution (knowing that there was none), Jesus highlighted the powerful and miraculous act that he was about to perform.

6:5-7 When Jesus asked Philip where they could buy a great amount of bread, Philip started assessing the probable cost. Jesus wanted to teach him that financial resources are not the most important ones. We can limit what God does in us by assuming what is and is not possible. Is there some impossible task that you believe God wants you to do? Don't let your estimate of what can't be done keep you from taking on the task. God can do the miraculous; trust him to provide the resources.

6:8, 9 The disciples are contrasted with the youngster who brought what he had. They certainly had more resources than the boy, but they knew they didn't have enough, so they didn't give anything at all. The boy gave what little he had, and it made all the difference. If we offer nothing to God, he will have nothing to use. But he can take what little we have and turn it into something great.

6:8, 9 In performing his miracles, Jesus usually preferred to work through people. Here he took what a young child offered and used it to accomplish one of the most spectacular miracles recorded in the Gospels. Age is no barrier to Christ. Never think you are too young or old to be of service to him.

6:13 There is a lesson in the leftovers. God gives in abundance. He takes whatever we can offer him in time, ability, or resources and multiplies its effectiveness beyond our wildest expectations. If you take the first step in making yourself available to God, he will show you how greatly you can be used to advance the work of his Kingdom.

6:14 "The Prophet" is the one prophesied by Moses ([Deut 18:15](#)).

Jesus fed the 5,000 on a hill near the Sea of Galilee at Bethsaida. The disciples set out across the sea toward Capernaum. But they encountered a storm—and Jesus came walking to them on the water! The boat landed at Gennesaret ([Mark 6:53](#)); from there they went back to Capernaum.

6:18 The Sea of Galilee is 650 feet below sea level, 150 feet deep, and surrounded by hills. These physical features make it subject to sudden windstorms that would cause extremely high waves. Such storms were expected on this lake, but they were nevertheless frightening. When Jesus came to the disciples during a storm, walking on the water (three and a half miles from shore), he told them not to be afraid. We often face spiritual and emotional storms and feel tossed about like a small boat on a big lake. In spite of terrifying circumstances, if we trust our lives to Christ for his safekeeping, he will give us peace in any storm.



Jesus Walks On the Water

³ , *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1763-1766.

6:18, 19 The disciples, terrified, probably thought they were seeing a ghost ([Mark 6:49](#)). But if they had thought about all they had already seen Jesus do, they could have accepted this miracle. They were frightened—they didn't expect Jesus to come, and they weren't prepared for his help. Faith is a mind-set that expects God to act. When we act on this expectation, we can overcome our fears.

6:26 Jesus criticized the people who followed him only for the physical and temporal benefits and not for the satisfying of their spiritual hunger. Many people use religion to gain prestige, comfort, or even political votes. But those are self-centered motives. True believers follow Jesus simply because they know he has the truth and his way is the way to live.

6:28, 29 Many sincere seekers for God are puzzled about what he wants them to do. The religions of the world are people's attempts to answer this question. But Jesus' reply is brief and simple: We must believe on him whom God has sent. Satisfying God does not come from the work we *do*, but from whom we *believe*. The first step involves accepting that Jesus is who he claims to be. All spiritual development is built on this affirmation. Declare to Jesus, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" ([Matthew 16:16](#)), and embark on a life of belief that is satisfying to your Creator.

6:35 People eat bread to satisfy physical hunger and to sustain physical life. We can satisfy spiritual hunger and sustain spiritual life only by a right relationship with Jesus Christ. No wonder he called himself the bread of life. But bread must be eaten to sustain life, and Christ must be invited into our daily walk to sustain spiritual life.

6:37, 38 Jesus did not work independently of God the Father, but in union with him. This should give us even more assurance of being welcomed into God's presence and being protected by him. Jesus' purpose was to do the will of God, not to satisfy Jesus' human desires. When we follow Jesus, we should have the same purpose.

6:39 Jesus said he would not lose even one person whom the Father had given him. Thus, anyone who makes a sincere commitment to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior is secure in God's promise of eternal life. Christ will not let his people be overcome by Satan and lose their salvation (see also [17:12](#); [Philippians 1:6](#)).

6:40 Those who put their faith in Christ will be resurrected from physical death to eternal life with God when Christ comes again (see [1 Corinthians 15:52](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#)).

6:41 Some of the people grumbled in disagreement because they could not accept Jesus' claim of divinity. They saw him only as a carpenter from Nazareth. They refused to believe that Jesus was God's divine Son, and they could not tolerate his message. Many people reject Christ because they say they cannot believe he is the Son of God. In reality, the demands that Christ makes for their loyalty and obedience are what they can't accept. So to protect themselves from the message, they reject the messenger.

6:44 God, not people, plays the most active role in salvation. When someone chooses to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, he or she does so only in response to the urging of God's Holy Spirit. God does the urging; then we decide whether or not to believe. Thus, no one can believe in Jesus without God's help.

6:45 Jesus was alluding to an Old Testament view of the messianic Kingdom in which all people are taught directly by God ([Isaiah 54:13](#); [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)). He was stressing the importance of not merely hearing, but learning. We are taught by God through the Bible, our experiences, the thoughts the Holy Spirit brings, and relationships with other Christians. Are you open to God's teaching?

6:47 As used here, *believes* means "continues to believe." We do not believe merely once; we keep on believing in and trusting Jesus.

6:47ff The religious leaders frequently asked Jesus to prove to them why he was better than the prophets they already had. Jesus here referred to the manna that Moses had given their ancestors in the wilderness (see [Exodus 16](#)). This bread was physical and temporal. The people ate it, and it sustained them for a day. But they had to get more bread every day, and this bread could not keep them from dying. Jesus, who is much greater than Moses, offers himself as the spiritual bread from heaven that satisfies completely and leads to eternal life.

6:51 How can Jesus give us his flesh as bread to eat? To eat living bread means to accept Christ into our lives and become united with him. We are united with Christ in two ways: (1) by believing in his death (the sacrifice of his flesh) and resurrection and (2) by devoting ourselves to living as he requires, depending on his teaching for guidance and trusting in the Holy Spirit for power.

6:56 This was a shocking message—to eat flesh and drink blood sounded cannibalistic. The idea of drinking any blood, let alone human blood, was repugnant to the religious leaders because the law forbade it ([Leviticus 17:10, 11](#)). Jesus was not talking about literal blood, of course. He was saying that his life had to become their own, but they could not accept this concept. The Gospel writers as well as the apostle Paul used the body and blood imagery in talking about Communion (see [1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#)).

6:63, 65 The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life; without the work of the Holy Spirit, we cannot even see our need for new life ([14:17](#)). All spiritual renewal begins and ends with God. He reveals truth to us, lives within us, and then enables us to respond to that truth.

6:66 Why did Jesus' words cause many of his followers to desert him? (1) They may have realized that he wasn't going to be the conquering Messiah-King they expected. (2) He refused to give in to their self-centered requests. (3) He emphasized faith, not deeds. (4) His teachings were difficult to understand, and some of his words were offensive. As we grow in our faith, we may be tempted to turn away because Jesus' lessons are difficult. Will your response be to give up, ignore certain teachings, or reject Christ? Instead, ask God to show you what the teachings mean and how they apply to your life. Then have the courage to act on God's truth.

6:67 There is no middle ground with Jesus. When he asked the disciples if they would also leave, he was showing that they could either accept or reject him. Jesus was not trying to repel people with his teachings. He was simply telling the truth. The more the people heard Jesus' real message, the more they divided into two camps—the honest seekers who wanted to understand more, and those who rejected Jesus because they didn't like what they had heard.

6:67, 68 After many of Jesus' followers had deserted him, he asked the 12 disciples if they were also going to leave. Peter replied, "To whom would we go?" In his straightforward way, Peter answered for all of us—there is no other way. Though there are many philosophies and self-styled authorities, Jesus alone has the words of eternal life. People look everywhere for eternal life and miss Christ, the only source. Stay with him, especially when you are confused or feel alone.

6:70 In response to Jesus' message, some people left; others stayed and truly believed; and some, like Judas, stayed but tried to use Jesus for personal gain. Many people today turn away from Christ. Others pretend to follow, going to church for status, approval of family and friends, or business contacts. But there are only two real responses to Jesus—you either accept him or reject him. How have you responded to Christ?

6:71 For more information on Judas, see his Profile in [Mark 14](#), [p. 1655](#).