



# Jesus, the Bread of Life - Part 2

## Lesson 11 John 6:43-71

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Today we will continue our study of this dialogue and understand the theological and practical implications of Jesus' teaching on the bread of life.
2. We will also study Peter's confession after Jesus asks a question aimed at testing their commitment to him.

### REVIEW

1. People were seeking Jesus after the miracle of feeding the 5,000.
2. Their desire was to do the works of God, but Jesus told them in verse 29 that His work of feeding the 5,000 was done so they might see and believe in Jesus as the Christ.
3. The specific will of God in John 6:39 was that all who the Father had given to the Son (His disciples) would not be lost and would be raised at the last day. The general will of God for mankind is that everyone who sees the Son (figuratively) and believes would be saved. We are going to see this pattern again in our study today.
4. The Jews rejected Jesus' teaching about the Bread of Life. This group of Jewish would-be followers of Christ have seen the works of the Son, but they have not seen Him as the Son of God and believed in Him. Thus, in verses 41-42, they are murmuring because Jesus had called Himself the Bread of Life.

### THE BREAD OF LIFE EXPLAINED AGAIN (6:43-51)

**6:43** "Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. **44** No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. **45** It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. **46** Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. **47** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. **48** I am that bread of life. **49** Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. **50** This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. **51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

#### A. The intended audience for this teaching

1. Jews who have followed Jesus because of the miracle. They use the term "Rabbi" for Jesus in verse 25. - 6:22-25
2. Jesus' disciples (Jews)
3. Possibly "other" Jews He's teaching in the synagogue - 6:41, 59
4. One of the first rules of Hermeneutics is, "In the study of Scripture, the task of the exegete is to determine as clearly as possible what God meant in a particular passage, rather than what it means to me."<sup>1</sup> The real meaning of the text is the author's intended meaning. We have to understand Jesus' dialogue as it relates to His audience and then make the application for our lives. This dialogue is for a specific group (His disciples and these would-be followers of Christ during His earthly ministry), though the teaching has an application in every age.

<sup>1</sup> Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), 24.

## B. The response of Jesus to the murmuring Jews

### 1. "Murmur not among yourselves" - 6:43

- a. "Murmur" means to "mutter, grumble, say anything against in a low tone" and is used "of those who discontentedly complain"<sup>2</sup>
- b. "Murmur not" is "present active imperative, 'Stop murmuring'"<sup>3</sup>

### 2. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" - 6:44

- a. This verse is a "stronghold" of Calvinists. They believe these verses speak of the salvation of only certain people in every age. They argue this verse supports a few of their major teachings.
  - i. Total depravity (inability). Man does not have the ability to believe the gospel (no man can come to Jesus) unless God first enables Him to believe (draws him, which Calvinists equate to regeneration). From John MacArthur, one of the leading voices of Calvinism today on this verse, "Scripture indicates that no 'free will' exists in man's nature, for man is enslaved to sin (total depravity) and unable to believe apart from God's empowerment."<sup>4</sup>
  - ii. Unconditional election. God, before the foundation of the world and for His own good pleasure and His Sovereign purposes, elects some to everlasting life and some to everlasting destruction (God will only draw those who are the elect). From MacArthur again, "The drawing here is selective and efficacious (producing the desired effect) upon those whom God has sovereignly chosen for salvation."<sup>5</sup>
  - iii. Irresistible grace. God irresistibly draws the elect to Jesus (those who are drawn by God will be saved).
- b. "No man can come to me"
  - i. The word "come" is used 142 times in the Gospel of John. Here are some of the connotations of this word<sup>6</sup>
    - a) To come from one place into another (the lame man at the pool of Bethesda) 5:7
    - b) To come, i.e. to appear, to make one's appearance in public (the woman at the well) - 4:25
    - c) "To go"<sup>7</sup> - 14:6
    - d) It's meaning in this verse, "To commit one's self to the instructions of Jesus and enter into fellowship with him."<sup>8</sup>
      - 1) This particular word is used in John 6:37, 44, 45, 65.
        - (i) John 6:37. Similar language to what we find in John 17:6-9, which is a passage about Jesus' true disciples who would receive Him fully.
        - (ii) John 6:65-67. Jesus makes a similar statement about His true disciples (6:65). The would-be followers leave and follow Him no longer (6:66) and the twelve remain (6:67).

<sup>2</sup> Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 120, ref. 1111.

<sup>3</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament*, Vol. 5 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932), 109.

<sup>4</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 1592.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Thayer, 250-251, ref. 2064.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Goodrick, John Kohlenberger III, *The Strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 1553, ref. 2262.

<sup>8</sup> Thayer, 252, ref. 2064

- 2) It is obvious that the use of this word speaks of entering into fellowship with Jesus as a true disciple
- ii. We conclude, therefore, that verse 44 is a specific statement about His disciples
- c. *“Except the Father which hath sent me draw him”*
  - i. The Father sent the Son
  - ii. Who does the Father draw?
    - a) Primary truth. The Father draws those who will come to Christ as disciples in His earthly ministry
      - 1) Jesus simply says no one can come to Him as a genuine disciple unless the Father draws him
      - 2) How does the Father draw them?
        - (i) *“They shall be all taught of God” - 6:45*  
 “Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 54:13: ‘And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.’ This passage from Isaiah speaks of the redeemed Jewish people in the Millennium who are drawn as the Lord teaches them.”<sup>9</sup>
        - (ii) The Jews had been taught of God by the Old Testament prophets. John the Baptist certainly understood his role as the forerunner of Christ due to the Old Testament prophets - 1:23
        - (iii) The Lord is also making a reference about a specific group of people (His true disciples) who would live in a specific time (His earthly ministry). These true disciples would come to Jesus during His earthly ministry.
        - (iv) According to verse 45, every man that hath learned and heard of the Father will come to him as a genuine disciple. This rules out a primary interpretation of a general audience for salvation because not every man who learned and heard of the Father came to Him in this way, but only those who God drew to Him as genuine disciples during His earthly ministry.
  - 3) *“I will raise him up at the last day.”*  
 Those who come to Christ in this way are saved and will be resurrected.
  - b) Secondary truth (application). No man of any age can come to the Father unless the Father draws Him.
    - 1) How will he draw them?
      - (i) By teaching them of Himself (His divinely-revealed word)
      - (ii) 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 teaches that we would not have been able to know God without the special revelation of His word which came through His apostles who *“have the mind of Christ”*.
      - (iii) These apostles (disciples) were selected for this purpose

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<sup>9</sup> Hutson Smelley, Notes on John 6 [email to Robby Pollard]. 3 December 2007.

- 2) John 6:44 does not mean that a select group (the elect) will be drawn to the Father. It does say that no one can come to the Father unless the Father draws him.
  - 3) Compare John 12:30-33 in which Jesus says, *"I ... will draw all men unto me."*
3. *"Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father."* - 6:46
- Jesus strengthens his argument for being the Bread of Life by claiming to have seen the Father
4. *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life"* - 6:47
    - a. "You" is this group of would be followers
    - b. This is a call to salvation
    - c. This shatters the Calvinist's interpretation of this passage. Let's assume that verses 44-45 were salvation verses regarding people in every age. Why, then, would Jesus say unto them that they could have everlasting life if He knew they couldn't (because He had not chosen them for salvation)? Why would He use the universal pronoun "He"?
  5. *"I am that bread of life"* - 6:48
    - a. *"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead."* - 6:49
 

Front "book end" coupled with John 6:58

      - i. "Your fathers" is this specific group (Jews)
      - ii. Physical bread, temporal salvation
    - b. Any man who eats of the bread of life shall not die - 6:50
      - i. "Any man" means "for everyone"
      - ii. Spiritual bread, everlasting satisfaction
      - iii. Jesus is the living bread which gives eternal life to all who eat it (figuratively)
      - iv. His body is the living bread which will be sacrificed for the sins of the world - 6:51

## THE JEWS' RESPONSE (6:52)

6:52 *"The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"*

### A. They *"strove among themselves"*

1. The word "strove" means "to fight in armed combat...then to wage a war of words...They were already murmuring (41), now they began bitter strife with one another over the last words of Jesus."<sup>10</sup>
2. *"How can?"* is the same idiom used by Nicodemus in John 3:4, 9. This teaching seems preposterous to them.

### B. They don't understand the spiritual truth behind the figurative speech of Jesus, *"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"*

<sup>10</sup> Robertson, 110-111.

## SALVATION THROUGH THE BREAD OF LIFE EXPLAINED (6:53-59)

**6:53** “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. **54** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. **55** For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. **56** He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. **57** As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. **58** This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. **59** These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.”

**A. 1<sup>st</sup> Truth: Life is only found in Christ - 6:53**

1. “*Verily, verily*” means “truly, truly or most assuredly”
2. You have no life in you unless you
  - a. Eat of my flesh
  - b. Drink of my blood
3. This is a reference to eternal life - **6:54**

**B. 2<sup>nd</sup> Truth: “Life in Christ guarantees their resurrection” <sup>11</sup> - 6:54b**

**C. 3<sup>rd</sup> Truth: Jesus is true food and true drink - 6:55**

1. “*Meat indeed*” means “true food” <sup>12</sup>
2. “*Drink indeed*” means “true drink” <sup>13</sup>

**D. 4<sup>th</sup> Truth: Jesus dwells in those who eat of his flesh and drink of his blood - 6:56**

1. The word “*dwelleth*” means “to continue to be present...In the mystic phraseology of John, God is said...to dwell, as it were in [Christ] (John 14:10)...one is said to [be present] in Christ, and conversely Christ is said in one.” <sup>14</sup>
2. This is a reference to the special relationship of Christ with His believers

**E. 5<sup>th</sup> Truth: The Father is the source of all life in the believer - 6:57**

1. The living Father sent the Son
2. The Son lives through the Father
3. So he who eats of Christ’s flesh will live through Him

**F. 6<sup>th</sup> Truth: The Bread of Life gives everlasting life - 6:58**

1. The physical bread of Moses only gave temporal life
2. Eating the bread of life gives everlasting life
3. Everyone exists forever
  - a. Some are in the lake of fire - **Revelation 20:14-15**
  - b. Some are in heaven - **John 14:1-6**
4. Everlasting life means we are in an eternal right relationship with God in Christ, who is the True Bread

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<sup>11</sup> Lester Hutson, Notes on John 11 [email to Robby Pollard]. 10 December 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Thayer, 399, ref. 3306.

## G. Misunderstandings of this text

1. Sacramental theology. God gives grace through taking the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper (Eucharist, communion).
2. Transubstantiation. The bread literally becomes the body of Christ and the wine becomes the literal blood of Christ.
  - a. This text is not about the Lord's Supper
  - b. Jesus explicitly states that He is speaking figuratively in verse 63. Jesus does not consider himself a literal piece of bread.

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## THE STRUGGLE OF THE DISCIPLES (6:60)

**6:60** "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?"

- A. "Hard" means "trying, exacting"<sup>15</sup>
- B. "Who can hear it?" means "hear with acceptance"<sup>16</sup>

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## JESUS COMES FULL CIRCLE (6:61-66)

**6:61** "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? **62** What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? **63** It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. **64** But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. **65** And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. **66** From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

### A. Jesus' questions - 6:61-62

1. "*Doth this offend you?*" means "to cause you to stumble" - 6:61
2. "*What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*" - 6:62
  - a. Argument for the pre-existence of Christ
  - b. He was in the presence of God?

### B. Jesus' teaching on spiritual life - 6:63

1. "*The spirit that quickeneth*" means "to make alive"
2. "*The flesh profiteth nothing*" means "to be useful or advantageous"<sup>17</sup>
3. The words that He teaches are spirit and life
  - a. The words of Christ as they relate to His person and His work as Savior would give them life if they would receive it
  - b. The offer that is made to them is another blow to Calvinistic thinking. Why would Jesus offer these words of life to them if they absolutely could not have believed them?

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<sup>15</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1968), 290.

<sup>16</sup> Robertson, 113.

<sup>17</sup> Thayer, 683, ref. 5623

**C. Jesus' omniscience - 6:64**

1. He knew the hearts of men
2. This verse seems to indicate a choice on their part, *"But there are some of you that believe not"*, even though you have heard the words of life
3. He knew from the beginning who would reject Him
4. He knew from the beginning who would betray Him

**D. Those who would come as true disciples must be drawn by the Father - 6:65**

**E. Many would-be followers left and walked with Him no more - 6:66**

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**PETER'S CONFESSION (6:67-69)**

**6:67** "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? **68** Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. **69** And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

**A. Jesus' question sheds light on entire discourse, "Will ye also go away?" - 6:67**

**B. Four convictions of Peter**

1. Peter was convinced that Jesus had the words of eternal life - 6:68
2. In light of the context (bread of life with the power to give life), we know that he believed Jesus was the Savior
3. Peter was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, *"We believe and are sure (know) that thou art that Christ"* - 6:69
4. Peter was convinced that Jesus was God, *"The Son of the living God"*

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**A PICTURE OF JUDAS (6:70-71)**

**6:70** "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? **71** He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."

**A. Jesus chose the twelve as genuine disciples**

**B. "One of you is a devil"**

1. The disciples would not have understood the significance of this statement at this time
2. This is seen in its fullest sense in the language of John 13:27

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**LIFE LESSONS**

1. Do not read into the text what is not there. Reading man's ideas and theories into a text will result in poor theology.
2. A relationship with Christ is only available by belief in the Bread of Life
3. Seek Jesus for the right reasons