

John Chapter 6

John 6:1 "After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias."

John is the only gospel writer to call this sea "Tiberias." Following the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Sea of Galilee was renamed Tiberias, after Tiberias Caesar who ruled in 14-37 A.D.

This happens after Jesus' encounter with the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. John leaves out things like how they came from Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee, because to him that is not important.

John 6:2 "And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased."

This period of time, Jesus is very popular with the masses of people because of the miracles they had seen and heard of Him doing. Great numbers followed Him in hopes of having a miracle done for them. Excitement over miracles always draws a crowd.

The crowds followed not out of belief but out of curiosity concerning the miracles that He performed (in verse 26). However, in spite of the crowd's crass motivations, Jesus, having compassion on them, healed their sick and fed them.

John 6:3 "And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples."

Jesus' favorite place to go to get away from the throngs of people was a mountain. There is a hill on the side of the Sea of Galilee and that is where Jesus went with His disciples.

Jesus is not going to be able to run this group off. They want to be near Jesus and will go to a lot of trouble just to be near Him. From His vantage point, He could look down and see this enormous group of followers.

John 6:4 "And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh."

This feast and the grass growing (verse 10), lets us know that this happens in early spring. This mountain by the Sea, here at Passover time, could certainly be symbolic of the Exodus out of Egypt where they crossed the Red Sea and ate manna. Perhaps, that is why Passover is mentioned here.

This is the third Passover during Jesus' ministry.

John 6:5 "When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

This question is for Philip's benefit. Jesus knows where the bread will come from as we see (in verse 6).

John 6:6 “And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.”

Let us look at the spiritual meanings for a moment in all of this. When Jesus looks up and sees these large numbers coming, I believe it is symbolic of those who are looking to Jesus to help them from all ages. We must see in this far more than the physical feeding of the multitude and see Jesus feeding all the peoples throughout the ages with His Word.

As we go on with this, notice how Jesus has them to make small groups (like a church). Jesus will then bless the food, and hand it to a disciple (preacher), who then passes this food (Word of God), to the people.

John 6:7 “Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.”

Since one denarius was a day's pay for a common laborer, 200 denarii would be approximately 8 months wages or 200 days of work. The crowd however, was so large that such a significant amount was still inadequate to feed them.

John 6:8-9 "One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him," "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"

Little is much, when God is in it. We need to look at the number five which means grace and the number two which means agreement. Jesus is the bread of life. This bread was furnished by the grace of God.

Matthew 18:19 “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”

John 6:10 “And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.”

The mention of much grass here probably indicates that it was early spring. Grass on the desert would have to be near water. This happens near the Sea of Galilee.

The number of men was 5,000, not including women and children, who probably brought the total up to 15,000 to 20,000.

John 6:11 “And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.”

We see in this the order that the message in the church should come. The message must come from our Lord, to the minister, and then the minister must deliver this bread (Word of God), to the people. The preacher should give this Word (bread) until the whole congregation is full.

John 6:12-13 "When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." "Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten."

These fragments are showing us that there is always enough of the Word of God left over to feed the hungry of all ages. The twelve disciples are a representative number of all Christendom. The disciples are the ministers. It is so strange, when you believe you have preached every word God would have you to, there is still plenty of the Word that has not been consumed.

Notice there was much more left after they ate than when they started. Jesus is the Bread of life; we must feed on Him daily. This Bread like the manna which fell from heaven never runs out.

John 6:14 "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world."

This miracle Jesus had performed was of such magnitude that the people witnessing it believed Jesus to be the great Prophet which had been promised in the Old Testament.

The enemies of these Israelites were the Romans. They wanted Jesus to lead them in the overthrow of the Romans.

The crowd referred to "the Prophet" of (Deut. 18:15). Sadly, these comments coming right after Jesus healed and fed them, indicate that the people desired a Messiah who met their physical rather than spiritual needs. Apparently, no recognition existed for the need of spiritual repentance and preparation for the kingdom.

They wanted an earthly, political Messiah to meet all their needs and to deliver them from Roman oppression. Their reaction typifies many who want a "Christ" that makes no demands of them, but of whom they can make their selfish personal requests.

John 6:15 "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."

John supplemented the information (in Matthew and Mark), by indicating that the reason Jesus dismissed the disciples and withdrew from the crowd into a mountain alone was because of His supernatural knowledge of their intention to make Him king in light of His healing and feeding of them.

The crowd incited by mob enthusiasm, was ready to proceed with crassly political intentions that would have jeopardized God's will.

Not only was Jesus sought by the rulers of the temple, but now was sought by the people to force Him into rulership before He was ready. He felt His only safety at this point was isolation, so He went to the mountain.

Hunger was common and a Messiah who could multiply food was the one most people were ready to follow.

Verses 16-21: The story of Jesus' walking on the water constituted the fifth sign in John's gospel designed to demonstrate the writer's purpose that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God. The miracle demonstrates Jesus' deity by His sovereignty over the laws of nature.

John 6:16-17 And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea," "And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them."

Both Matthew and Mark indicate that as soon as Jesus had fed the multitudes, He immediately dismissed His disciples to travel West toward Capernaum.

The disciples were taking a ship across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum where Peter's home was and where they worked out of. The Sea of Galilee is known for its rough water, and especially at night.

John 6:18-19 "And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew." "So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid."

The Sea of Galilee is almost 700 feet below sea level. Cooler air from the northern mountains and southeastern tablelands rushes down into the lake and displaces the warm moist air, causing a violent churning of the water.

This was a stormy night, and they had not progressed very far because of the wind. They look up and see Jesus walking on the Sea. In the Matthew account of this miracle, it goes into a little more detail. They thought Him to be a ghost or a spirit.

The Son of God, who made the world, was in control of its forces and, in this case, He suspended the law of gravity. The act was not frivolous in Jesus' part, for it constituted a dramatic object lesson to the disciples of Jesus' true identity as the sovereign Lord of all creation.

It also tells in Matthew of Peter walking on the sea to meet Jesus. Peter doubts and begins to sink, and Jesus reaches out and saves Peter. In this account, here in John, it just mentions their fear.

John 6:20 "But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid."

Jesus encourages them not to fear. Having Jesus with you should calm every fear, then or now.

If Jesus be for you, who can be against you?

John 6:21 "Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."

This wording indicates that another miracle occurred besides walking on the water, i.e., the boat miraculously and instantly arrived at its precise destination as soon as Jesus stepped into the boat.

In (Matthew 14:22-27 and Mark 6:45-52), we do not see the last miracle that John shows here that the ship was automatically at their destination. In (Matthew and Mark), it speaks of Gennesaret on the way to Capernaum. There is no discrepancy. They are very near each other.

Verses 22-58 contain Jesus' famous discourse on the bread of life. The key theme is (verse 35), "I am the bread of life," which is the first of 7 emphatic "I AM" statements of Jesus in this gospel. This analogy of Jesus as "the bread" of life reinforces John's theme of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. Although John records Jesus' miracles to establish His deity, he moves quickly to Jesus' discourse on the spiritual realities of His person in order to define correctly who Jesus Christ was; i.e. not merely a wonder-worker, but the Son of God who came to save mankind from sin. This discourse took place in the synagogue at Capernaum (verse 59).

John 6:22-23 "The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one wherinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;" "(Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)"

These verses indicate that the crowds who witnessed Jesus' healings and His feeding of the multitudes were still at the original site of these miracles (East of the Lake). And, out of heightened curiosity, desired to find Jesus once again. Other boats loaded with people from Tiberias (on the northwest shore of the lake), also heard of the miracles and sought Him out.

John 6:24 "When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus."

When daylight came, these people started searching for Jesus. They knew the disciples went across the sea by ship, but they also knew that Jesus had not left with them. They searched the mountain and He was not there either.

Some of these people knew that Jesus stayed in Capernaum when He wasn't out ministering, so many of them took a boat across the sea, but probably some of them walked to Capernaum to seek Him.

John 6 Questions

1. What is another name for the Sea of Galilee?
2. Why did the multitude follow Jesus?
3. Who was the city of Tiberias named for?
4. Why was Jesus popular with the people?
5. In verse 3, who went up the mountain with Jesus?
6. Which feast of the Jews was nigh?
7. What two things indicate it is early spring?
8. Which disciple did Jesus speak to about where they would buy bread to feed the multitude?
9. Why did Jesus ask him this question?
10. What symbolically can we see in this feeding of the multitude?
11. What can we see in the groupings of the multitude?
12. What does it symbolize when Jesus hands the food to a disciple for a specific group?
13. What large amount of money did Philip say was not enough to buy food with?
14. Which disciple told Jesus about the lad with the five loaves and two fishes?
15. What does the number five symbolize?
16. What Scripture in Matthew tells us that two indicates agreement?
17. How many men were fed?
18. Who did Jesus give the bread to?
19. Where should a minister's sermon originate?
20. How many fragments were left?
21. What message can the Christian get from these leftovers?

22. When the people saw this miracle, who did they declare Jesus to be?
23. Who was the Israelites' enemy?
24. The people were going to come and force Jesus to do what?
25. Where did Jesus go to get away from the people?
26. Where did Jesus' disciples go?
27. The sea arose by what?
28. Where did they see Jesus?
29. What did they think He was?
30. What did Jesus say to them?
31. What part of the miracle is not in the other gospels?
32. What did the people do when they discovered Jesus was gone?