

WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

The Glory of the Bread of Life – Part 3

Introduction

The next 3 messages in John 6 arise from an interesting order that John uses. For example, today's passage starts with the phrase:

"So the Jews grumbled about him . . . (John 6:41a, ESV).

In the next two messages we note that in:

- a. Verse 52, we read: "The Jews then disputed among themselves . . .;"¹ and in
- b. Verse 60, we read: "When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?'"²

What is it that has caused all this difficulty? Well we recall that Jesus was appearing to the Jews to look a lot like Moses. So much so that they were about to "take him by force to make him king."³ They thought correctly that Jesus was better than Moses. They even wondered if this Jesus was not in fact the prophet promised to arrive in the Messianic kingdom (v14)?

Jesus not only turned upside down their interpretation of the Old Testament, but He made Himself out to be God who came to give eternal life. He said, "*Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst'*" (John 6:35, ESV); and "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me*" (John 6:38, ESV).

When they rejected Him and refused to believe on Him, Jesus ramped up the theology by teaching the clearest truth about the sovereignty of God in salvation and the secure hope of those who are actually given to Christ by the Father. That provocative statement didn't seem to bother the Jews. Why not? The Jewish Bible, our Old Testament, is absolutely clear about the election of God's people and the preservation of His covenant nation. That isn't what bothered them. What bothered them was Jesus' claim to be God. "It is not so much his claim to be bread that offends them, as his claim to be bread *from heaven*, his claim that he *came down from heaven*."⁴ So they grumbled!

Text: John 6:41–51 (ESV)

The Gong Show

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Jn 6:52). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Jn 6:60). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Jn 6:15). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁴ Carson, D. A. (1991). [*The Gospel according to John*](#) (p. 292). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

The Jews are grumbling. The word implies “conferring together”. They were murmuring among themselves in low tones. The Greek word is **γογγύζω** [pronounced gong·**good**-zo].⁵ It doesn’t mean this, but you know what it sounds like? It sounds like it was a “gong show”. In the 70s the Gong Show was a talent show on TV that was mostly for humor and dubious talent than true skill.

Why did Jesus not enter into their debate? Why did he still keep pushing the message that he had started in John 6:37? I believe the answer is this:

YOU DON’T KNOW TRUTH BY HUMAN CONSENSUS AND DISCUSSION

Truth is not the sum total of what people believe. The worst hermeneutic – the worst interpretative principle to ever use in biblical studies is this: “What do YOU think it means!” To decide on Truth through human consensus is a “gong show”. Jesus counters their reaction with 2 affirmations:

Affirmation #1. No one can come to Jesus apart from the drawing of the Father; and

Affirmation #2. The drawing of the Father is the teaching of the Father.

The Drawing of the Father

We cannot water-down or dilute the intention of the Savior. The decisive, determinative inertia to move a person to come to Christ originates solely with the Father. The English translation, “no one can” is a good translation. The Greek word means that. They are not able. “This implies that no human being in the world, on his own, has the moral and spiritual ability to come to Christ unless God the Father provides the initiative, the desire, the inclination and the ability to come.

Jesus calls it drawing. It’s a Greek word **ἐλκύω** [pronounced hel·**koo**-o/] meaning to give inward power, to compel.”⁶ There are any number of false notions about this activity of the Father. The word could mean “to drag”, but that absolutely not the case here. Nor is it the wooing of a lonely lover seeking the affection of another. No, the context clarifies for us what this “drawing” is. John writes in parallel themes:

*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him
Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me*

The “drawing” occurs when the teaching and the illumination of the Father’s Word is implanted in the individual. This confirms what the New Testament teaches. For example:

⁵ Strong, J. (1995). [*Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*](#). Woodside Bible Fellowship.

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- a. *“since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;”* (1 Peter 1:23, ESV)
- b. *“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”* (Romans 10:17, ESV)
- c. *“Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?”* (Galatians 3:2, ESV)
- d. Etc.

When the promises of the Father are effectually planted in the hearts of “those whom the Father has given to the Son”, saving faith emerges. You cannot believe apart from Divine initiative. We cannot exercise faith apart from the New Birth. John made all this clear in the first chapter:

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12–13, ESV)

Stated differently, coming to Christ and trusting Him is wrapped up in the promises of the New Covenant. For example: *“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”* (Ezekiel 36:26–27, ESV)

Everyone who wishes to come, may come; and they wish to come because they have been transformed by the regenerating Spirit.

I Say Again

“Verse 47 is the eleventh solemn double *amēn* saying so far and repeats a primary theme found in 3:15, 16, 36; 5:24; 6:35, 40, inviting Jesus’ listeners (and John’s readers) to believe.”⁷

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”” (John 6:47–51, ESV)

Dr. D.A. Carson makes this fantastic conclusion: He writes, “This is an implicit invitation to believe, an implicit warning against unbelief. In this context, however, it strips the would-be disciple of all pretensions, of all self-congratulation, of all agendas save those laid down by Jesus himself.”⁸

⁷ Osborne, G. R. (2018). [John: Verse by Verse](#). (J. Reimer, E. Ritzema, D. Thevenaz, & R. Brant, Eds.) (p. 167). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁸ Carson, D. A. (1991). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 294). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

There are no alternative plans to salvation. There is but one path to life eternal. That is through the “bread that comes down from Heaven” – Jesus Christ. This is the only bread you can eat and not die. The context is clear, the eating of this bread means “coming to Christ and believing in Him”. That thought will continue into the next section. We must not miss it. Jesus is talking about “belief”.

Application

There are a number of points of application.

- #1. Human reasoning and opinion can never know Truth, nor will it bring a person to salvation.
- #2. When presenting the Gospel, follow the pattern of Christ and just keep emphasizing the Gospel. The passage teaches us that Jesus was a “one-track-kind-a-guy”. Don’t be waylaid by other debates. Why should you stick to the main theme of the Gospel? Answer it’s because it’s the Gospel that the Father uses to draw His elect.
- #3. This leads to the third point of application. Some people wrongly will apply this verse and say, “Because a person can only come to Christ if the Father draws them” then I don’t have to share the Gospel. This is fallacious, unbiblical and even pagan in thought. The Father draws His elect through the preaching of the Gospel. He determines the end and He also determines the means. He establishes the outcome and He also establishes how the outcome will be realized. In this case it is through the proclamation of the Gospel.
- #4. Lastly, if you are not a Christian, let me remind you that as long as you are content to rest in your own reasoning and abilities, to place your confidence in your own merits, you cannot be saved. But if you will abandon your self-sufficiency and see that salvation is only from the Lord, on His terms – if you will call on the Lord in repentance and desperation – you will live.