

¹ After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ² And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. ³ Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ⁵ Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. ⁷ Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹ "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." ¹³ So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left [over] by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"

¹⁵ Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸ The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on

This is the only miracle recorded in all four gospel accounts.

Context:

John the Baptist has recently been executed, so Jesus withdraws for a time. However, the crowds have come looking for Him.

Mark records that Jesus regards them as "sheep without a shepherd." (Mk. 6:34)

Consider the parallels of this account to the Exodus story:

- "Signs and wonders" performed
- The Lord rests on a mountain to commune with His disciples
- Around the time of the Passover
- The Lord has compassion and provides bread for the people

The obvious answer to this question: "We can't."

Denarii = one day's wages for a common worker

"five barley loaves"

This detail has significance. Barley is the cheapest grain and is the first to be harvested (the first-fruits).

In the OT, Elijah multiplied the flour of the widow of Zaraheth (1 Kg 17) and Elisha multiplied 20 barley cakes for 100 men with food left over (2 Kg 4).

The simplicity of carrying out this miracle says something about Jesus. There is no fanfare, no pomp and circumstance, yet its execution and effectiveness are obvious to all. Many of Jesus' miracles are accomplished in this way.

"fill" "filled" "left [over]" - (cf Jn 1:16)

More emphasis on the over-abundant providence of Jesus (2:7; 4:13-14).

"twelve baskets" - Most likely large baskets (cf Acts 9:25)

"Prophet" - (Deut 8:15; may also have called to mind the previously mentioned miracles of Elijah and Elisha.)

This sentiment by the people marks the height of Jesus' earthly popularity.

However, this is not the way that Jesus wants to be revealed. His kingdom isn't of this earth, so He isn't concerned with man's politics.

Also, they want to make Him king because of the physical things He could give them.

The miracles, however, were meant to point to their greater need: a Savior.

the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. ²⁰ But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."²¹ Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

²² On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. ²³ Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴ So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" ²⁶ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves." ²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." ²⁸ Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ³⁰ So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?" ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

The fourth sign: Walking on the Water

Matthew and Mark provide more detail about this encounter, including Peter walking out to Jesus (Mt. 14; Mk 6). These accounts attribute the disciples' fear to their initial belief that Jesus is a ghost/apparition.

Jesus confirms His physical presence using familiar words: "*Ego eimi*" ("I AM").

- Title not only alludes to God
- Meant to express familiarity, closeness and ease their fears. Their reaction is gladness (cf 4:40, 45). (Contrast to Israel's reaction to God revealing Himself)

Main point of these details:

Jesus' journey to Capernaum must be miraculous. How else could He arrive before them?

Jesus knew their motives. They aren't even responding to the miraculous nature of the signs; they're just hungry again (cf 4:13)

4:10, 14 – "...He would give you living water..."; "...the water I will give him..."

"**Seal**" – A mark of authority. The bearer of the seal has the authority of the master. The sign He has just performed points to this fact (cf 1:32-34; 5:36).

They are looking for some magic formula (A+B=C) or checklist so that they can become self-sufficient, similar to the rich young ruler (Lk 18).

Jesus tells them they need to focus on faith before they focus on a formula.

They have disregarded the miracle that they have just witnessed. They are trying to get Jesus to "perform" for them, as if He is a vending machine. Their argument is that Moses provided bread [every day].

Jesus' response is two-fold:

- Moses didn't provide the manna; God did.
- The manna wasn't the true bread of God; it was only a symbol. Jesus is the true bread who provides real spiritual nourishment.

Their reaction is very similar to the Samaritan woman's initial reaction (4:15).

³⁵ 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." ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

⁴¹ So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" ⁴³ Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws 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.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— ⁴⁶ not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes 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 one 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. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

⁵² The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵³ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to

This is the first of the seven major "I AM" analogies in John.

"hunger" "thirst" - Mat. 5:6

Jesus knows their hearts. They haven't come to Him out of a desire to know Him and have a relationship with Him. They have seen His works, but they haven't "bought in."

2 Pet 3:9

The Father's will and the Son's mission are the same: redemption.

Jesus' mission to "lose nothing" applies to the current life and the future one.

Notice the Father's activity in the redemptive process:

- He gives the believers
- He sent the Son to give eternal life.
- He draws believers to Him.

A bit of irony here? They don't know His true Father...

Here again, earthly perspective prevents Jesus' opponents from perceiving the spiritual reality in front of them.

Isa 54:13 (context vs 5-8, 13-14)

Israel is "called" by God as a wife to her husband. He beckons her, but she must heed His voice: she must hear Him and come to know Him.

Same idea He expressed to Nicodemus in 3:12-13:

The Son is the only One who has come to know the Father by observing the Son and hearing His words (cf 1:18).

The discussion comes back to the previous example of the manna in the wilderness, which was temporal and temporary.

The manna didn't grant them any supernatural life span or spiritual gifts. It was a means to an end.

The superiority of the heavenly bread over the manna is seen in its effects: one leads to life, the other fails to prevent death.

Whereas God was the One who gave the bread in the wilderness (v 31-32), God and Jesus are now the givers of the living bread (3:16).

The Jews have taken the last statement literally.

In a sense, they are probably confused by Jesus' words. But they aren't really interested in digging further to discover more.

you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” ⁶¹But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this?⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

⁶⁶After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” ⁷⁰Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” ⁷¹He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

This passage may seem confusing even to us, so let’s step back and consider the imagery:

First, let’s not immediately jump to the Lord’s Supper. These concepts are important to that institution, but it isn’t specifically what Jesus is pointing to here.

Second, notice that Jesus doesn’t directly answer their question, and the answer He does give is increasingly offensive to the Jews with the inclusion of the drinking of blood.

Third, Jesus obviously doesn’t mean that they should literally eat Him and drink His blood. To abide with Him, they need to internalize Him:

“What does that mean? Think of it this way. Here in a bookcase is a book which a man has never read. It may be the glory and the wonder of the tragedies of Shakespeare; but so long as it remains unread upon his bookshelves it is external to him. One day he takes it down and reads it. He is thrilled and fascinated and moved. The story sticks to him; the great lines remain in his memory; now when he wants to, he can take that wonder out from inside himself and remember it and think about it and feed his mind and his heart upon it. Once the book was outside him. Now it is inside him and he can feed upon it. It is that way with any great experience in life. It remains external until we take it within ourselves.

It is so with Jesus. So long as he remains a figure in a book he is external to us; but when he enters into our hearts we can feed upon the life and the strength and the dynamic vitality that he gives to us. Jesus said that we must drink his blood. He is saying: “You must stop thinking of me as a subject for theological debate; you must take me into you, and you must come into me; and then you will have real life.” That is what Jesus meant when he spoke about us abiding in him and himself abiding in us.

When he told us to eat his flesh and drink his blood, he was telling us to feed our hearts and souls and minds on his humanity, and to revitalize our lives with his life until we are filled with the life of God.”

- Warren Barkley

Two reactions:

This is the point where the reader can see those who have been “drawn” to God and those who are repulsed. Ironically, they are exemplifying the point that Jesus just made.

- The reaction of the crowd is similar to a child with a difficult math problem: they don’t immediately understand, so they give up hope of ever understanding. Jesus’ answer was meant to test them so that the true believers would stand out. Those that were only seeking physical food have now been exposed.
- On the other hand, we have Peter’s statement:
 - There is one source of life. None others exist.
 - The way to internalize the Savior is through His word.
 - They have chosen to believe Jesus’ words
 - They have come to a greater recognition that He is the Messiah.