

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JOHN 6

The Bermuda Triangle is a mysterious area of the Atlantic Ocean. It lies between **Miami**, **Bermuda**, and **Puerto Rico**. In its spacious waters aircraft and watercraft have inexplicably vanished. In some cases *piracy, in-climate weather, human error, equipment failure* - have been ruled out as possible explanations.

Some folks attribute these strange phenomena to paranormal activity. They suggest the Triangle is a flashpoint for Satan and his devils. *To explain the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle we can only speculate* - but there's another Triangular set of coordinates that for a few years saw more paranormal activity than any place on the planet has ever seen.

And we can trace their cause to a definitive source.

During the first half of the first century, on the northern shore of Israel's Sea of Galilee paranormal and supernatural phenomena occurred with great regularity... *storms mysteriously ceased - a sack lunch of fish and chips was multiplied to feed 15,000 hungry people - a surfer was seen on top of the water's surface without a surfboard - lame legs began to walk and leap - even a little girl was raised from the dead...*

Call it "**The Gospel Triangle**"... the area between three cities - a mere three miles apart - **Capernaum**, **Korazin**, and **Bethsaida**. Here Jesus did the lion's share of His miracles. The Nelson's Bible Dictionary estimates that 18 of Jesus' 33

recorded miracles (that's a whopping 55%) were performed in this small triangle.

Tonight we're headed into this *Gospel Triangle*, where Jesus worked mysterious miracles to prove clearly and conclusively that He was God!

Chapter 6 begins, "After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias."

This Sea is actually the largest freshwater lake in northern Israel. It's in the northeast corner of the country. The lake is 13 miles long, by 8 miles wide.

In the early first century, a flourishing and popular city grew up on the western shore of the lake. The Romans named it after their emperor, *Tiberias*.

They referred to the lake as the "Sea of Tiberias."

Since the Romans built Tiberias over a Jewish graveyard few Jews lived in the city in Jesus' day.

There's no mention in the Gospels of Jesus or His men visiting Tiberias. He spent most of His time on the north shore - the Jewish area - *the Gospel Triangle*.

Verse 2, "Then a great multitude followed (Jesus), because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples."

Apparently, Jesus retreated to escape the crowd and have some alone-time with His men. Luke 9:10 says the miracle that follows occurred in a "deserted place" that belonged to

the city of “Bethsaida” - which means “house of fishing.” Bethsaida was a fishing village.

The problem in locating the town is there may’ve been two Bethsaidas. Today, the ruins of Bethsaida have been found on a hill (or Tel) east of where the Jordan feeds into the lake - 3 miles from Capernaum.

But the traditional site of the feeding of the 5000 is south of Capernaum. It’s a location called by an Arabic name, “Tabgha,” which means “seven springs.”

This village was built over seven warm water springs that fed into the lake and made a good fishing bed.

Here the mountain slopes down to the sea.

Some scholars think Tabgha was a second Bethsaida - Bethsaida of the Galilee. We’re unsure of the exact location of Bethsaida, but we’re certain it was located near the Gospel Triangle on the north shore.

“Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.”

This made it early spring. “Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him (so much for escaping the crowd), He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”

John 1:44 tells us Philip was from Bethsaida. He knew the area... *Is there a grocery store around?*

“But this (Jesus) said to test (Philip), for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

Philip was the pragmatic disciple. He whips out his pocket calculator and creates a formula. To feed the crowd - verse 10 numbers it at 5000 men with women and kids - Philip figures it'll cost at least 200 denarii.

This was a large sum of money - around 8 month's wages - *for a modern equivalency figure \$40,000.*

But there was one key factor Philip left out of his equation - *Jesus!* The disciples are about to learn *no matter how little you have or how much you lack when you've got Jesus you've got more than enough!*

“One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, There is a lad here who has 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish, but what are they among so many?” Three times in the Gospels we see Andrew.

And on each occasion he's bringing somebody to Jesus. *That's why we all need to be an Andrew!*

Other than Jesus' own resurrection *the miracle of multiplication* is the only miracle that's recorded in all four Gospels. This was an amazing miracle! The disciples saw it *as unique even among the miraculous.*

Later in the chapter the *wind and waves* obey Jesus, but here, so do the *electrons and protons*. Jesus manipulates the atomic structure of the loaves and fish; then multiplies the portions. *It was a molecular miracle.*

John does give us a couple of insights we don't get from the other Gospels. The Greek word he uses for fish, *"opsarion"*

means "little fish." The lake is full of these bite-size minnows swimming near the shore.

John also tells us the boy's loaves were made of "*barley*" not wheat. Barley was the poor man's bread.

In other words, this little boy's lunch was skimpy. It was more a snack - cheap bread and two sardines.

Verse 10 "Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand."

Jesus is creating some organization. Soon He'll need it to serve a massive meal. "And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted." A miracle had taken place! Five thousand men, plus families, were fed from one Kid's Meal.

And notice, Jesus didn't just provide all that was "needed" - but "*as much as they wanted.*" The crowd was allowed to go back for second helpings.

I get tired of folks who cast a cloud of doubt over God's benevolence. They'll make comments like, "God promises to give us what we need - not necessarily what we want." Technically, that's true, but it's half-true.

For God is a Father who does love to bless His kids. He delights in giving us the desires of our heart.

Sometimes we limit Him. We desire stuff that might hurt us. *But God loves to please us when He can.*

“So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” And I love the lesson here. **Jesus never wastes a miracle - and neither should we.**

John’s Gospel reveals that Jesus’ miracles taught spiritual truths. They always carried a message...

And it’s just as true today, whenever God works a miracle He’s teaching us something about Himself.

Verse 13, “Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.” Perhaps the twelve baskets of leftovers were for each of the twelve tribes of Israel - or for each of Jesus’ twelve faithless disciples. Either way, here’s the point - **there's more than enough when God is at work.**

Like the little boy we should bring *our skimpiness* to Jesus and let Him transform it with *His lavishness*.

“Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.” The **Dodgers** play baseball in Los Angeles, but they started out in Brooklyn, New York. Originally they were called **The Trolley Dodgers**.

They got their unusual name from the nimble pedestrians who navigated the busy city streets without colliding into a downtown trolley. Well, here Jesus becomes a Dodger. The

crowd following Him is the trolley. They want to drag Jesus onboard, but He's not comfortable with their intentions. They want to make Him an earthly king. Thus, He *dodges* the crowd.

Realize the Jews understood the Kingdom of God as an *earthly kingdom with a political king*. And when they saw Jesus' supernatural power they thought it could be harnessed to accomplish their own political goals.

They wanted a coronation, but Jesus knew the only crown He would wear was a crown of thorns.

Jesus refuses to be manipulated by the whims of the crowd. He was determined to do only the will of His Father. Jesus climbs a mountain to dodge the crowd.

Verse 16 **“Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum.”** This would have been a very short trip. From Tabgha to Capernaum, or even from Bethsaida to Capernaum, it was just a few miles.

“And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing.” Topographically, the Sea of Galilee sits in the bottom of a bowl. The Lebanese mountains are north. The Golan Heights are north and east. The hills of the Upper and Lower Galilee are to the west. The lake is at the bottom of the funnel - 680 feet below sea level.

And here's what can sometimes happens... the cold winds from the north swoop down on top of the warm surface of the lake. Violent storms suddenly erupt.

This is what victimized the disciples. Their skip across the lake became a fight for their lives. Verse 19 “**So when they had rowed about three or four miles...**”

At most it's two miles from Tabgha to Capernaum.

What should've been a few minutes of *smooth sailing* turned into hours of *storm-fighting*. The other Gospels say they fought the storm for close to 8 hours.

And in the midst of their tug-of-war with the violent weather the disciples looked up, and “**saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat...**”

Mark 6:47 says by now the boat has been knocked miles off course. It's in the middle of the lake.

John ends verse 19 with an understatement - the disciples “**were afraid.**” The *sudden storm* - and now the *surprise surfer* - scared them. They're rubbing their eyes, “*We can't believe what we're seeing.*”

Previously they had been *thrilled by a miracle*, now they were being *tested by a storm*. And God does both... frequently... He *thrills us* and then He *tests us*

“But (Jesus) said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.”

Notice, Jesus doesn't add anything about the storm. He doesn't reveal *how* - or *when* - or even *if* He plans to quell it... He simply says, “***It is I; do not be afraid.***”

Jesus expects His presence in the midst of the storm to be enough to vanquish their fears. **He cares more about calming the storm in His disciples than the storm on the**

sea. Always remember, it's true even for us, *peace in the boat precedes peace on the water!*

“Then they willingly received Him into the boat...” I mean, what are they going to do... make Him walk?

Here's another miracle, “And immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.” Jesus gets in some rapture practice... One moment they're stuck in the middle of the lake, the next they've reached the other shore. They cover four miles in a split second.

Verse 22, “On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone - however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks - when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.” Several boats had sailed into Bethsaida, but only one had sailed out - the disciples' boat - and everyone had seen that Jesus was not onboard. Now the word is out, *Jesus is in Capernaum... how in the world did He get there?*

Verse 25 “And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You come here?” They come to Jesus asking about **His** movements, but what concerns Him are **their** motives.

Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled." Notice, Jesus refers to His miracles as "*signs.*"

This is true of all God's wonders. When God works a miracle of healing His goal is not just the removal of human suffering. *If that were the case, why doesn't He heal all sick people - even abolish death and dying?*

The truth is, when God works a miracle He's doing something out of the ordinary. He's interrupting the natural order to get our attention and teach a lesson.

His feeding of the masses didn't mean they now had a perpetual meal ticket. He was teaching them He could take their *meagerness* and multiply it into *much*.

At the time, the Roman formula for controlling the masses was "*bread and circuses.*" Keep the public fed and entertained, and they'll be content. Rome had set aside 93 days annually as public holidays. Games, food, and entertainment were government-sponsored.

Rome realized it was cheaper to pay for bread and circuses than to put down revolts and keep up prisons.

And the masses who followed Jesus had this same *bread and circus mentality*. They viewed Jesus as a means to an ends, rather than an end in Himself.

They should've probed deeper. *What did His miracles say about the Man? What did the signs say?*

Years ago I led a Fellowship of Christian Athletes group at Parkview High School. Every year we planned a snow skiing

trip in the month of February. Before the trip our meetings were crowded, as much as sixty kids.

But after the trip, the size of the group dropped to a maybe a dozen. Most of the students weren't hungry for the Lord, they were using the FCA to go skiing.

And this often happens. People serve God for what they can get out of Him. They're interested as long as God helps them advance their own personal agenda.

As long as they get what they want they'll follow, but the moment they're challenged with a higher agenda they bolt. This was the crowd that followed Jesus.

And Jesus addresses them, **"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."**

Bread was never the point... The miracle of the loaves and fish was a sign to taught a spiritual lesson.

Jesus *filled their stomachs* to show them He could *fill their soul...* **but the masses missed the message.**

They were hungry for perishables - for food and fun and force of a military kind. They tried to use the power of Jesus to secure earthly gains, while Jesus used His power to point them to a deeper, spiritual life.

Sadly, I meet people all the time who are disappointed with God. They feel like He let them down. Usually, they have a **bread and circus mentality.**

They long for the food (or fun) that perishes.

People are so fickle. They serve *God* as long as *it* serves *them*. They follow Him for selfish reasons.

People still treat Jesus like a *meal ticket*, rather than the Lord of glory. And Jesus' word today is the same as it was then, "*Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life...*"

"Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Every cult and false religion has its own answer to this question...

Islam says, "Fast the month of Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca..." Hinduism says, "Torture the body and push your physical endurance..." Judaism says, "Keep the law according to the tradition of the elders..." Mormonism says, "Follow Joseph Smith, decaffeinate, do a mission..." Roman Catholicism says, "Do penance, make confession, attend mass..."

But what did Jesus say... *what does it take to work the works of God?* Here is God's sole requirement...

Verse 29, "*Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."* Pleasing God is simple - **believe in Jesus.**

All religions break down into two categories. On the one hand you've got religions that expect you to *be good* or *do good*. You atone for your sin through your own religious works, charitable deeds, moral behavior.

Every religion but one fits into this first category.

The second category is Christianity. It claims God is so holy we could never do enough to please Him. Yet because He

loves us, He has atoned for our sin. He's covered our guilt, through the work and effort of Jesus.

Now the only work left for us to do is to trust in the sufficiency of God's Son. As Jesus says, *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."*

Verse 30, *"Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?"* This is an amazing question to ask... had they forgotten *what happened the day before with the fish and chips? Wasn't that a sign?* Obviously, these people didn't need additional evidence - they were just prodding for more thrills.

Jesus answers them, *"Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" The rabbis taught the Messiah would cause manna to fall from heaven as in Moses' day.*

Jesus continues, *"Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*

The true bread... the sustenance that satisfies the soul was not *manna*, but a **man**. Manna fed Israel in the desert, but the Man Christ Jesus feeds all men in all times. Jesus alone can meet our deepest hunger.

Verse 34 *"Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He*

who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”

Once, a missionary in India was boarding a train, when he handed a man a New Testament. The man opened it, noticed it was the Christian Scriptures, and angrily ripped it apart. He tossed the pages out of the window of the moving train. They were blown away.

You might think that was the end of the story... but a young man in search of the truth was walking along the rails. He reached down and picked up a scrap of paper.

He read the words, **"the bread of life."**

The Indian later said these were the most beautiful words He'd ever read. He asked a friend what they meant. He was told they came from the Christian Bible, *but a Hindu shouldn't read the Bible lest he be defiled.*

The man was undaunted. He searched for and found a New Testament and discovered this verse located in John 6, where Jesus said, **"I am the bread of life."**

The young man was converted, and became a pastor. **Now he's a distributor of the Bread of life.**

In ancient Israel bread was not just one of four major food groups, it was **the main food**. In ancient times and throughout the Middle East today bread is the sustenance of life. It's the main staple in people's diet.

When Jesus referred to Himself as **"the bread of life"** it would be like me saying to you today, **"I am the protein of life..."** or **"I am the vitamins of life..."**

Jesus is saying that He alone satisfies our spiritual hunger. He contains the spiritual nutrients, fiber, minerals, vitamins, and protein we need. **Jesus is the true soul food - the bread of life.** He contains all the USDA daily requirements. Are you *bread fed*?

And once you are, you'll never hunger or thirst again.

I once read a survey that said people who go grocery shopping without something to eat beforehand, will spend \$28.80 more on food - whereas, if they eat prior to their shopping trip, they'll spend \$37.25 less...

When your stomach is full you're less vulnerable to impulse spending... And so it is with the heart that feeds on the Bread of life. Once you've satiated your hunger, and slaked your thirst with Jesus, everything else loses its appeal. You're less likely to succumb to tempting impulses. Once you're use to being *bread fed*, nothing else can truly satisfy your deepest needs.

Jesus continues speaking in verse 36, **“But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.**

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” This idea of Jesus coming from heaven is a claim of His deity.

Humans don't exist until they're born. Jesus came down from heaven. He pre-existed before His birth.

Jesus was God, yet He had the heart of a true servant. He came *“not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”* May we all have that same attitude!

And *“This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.”* Here’s a verse that teaches what we call **predestination**. The redeemed are defined by Jesus as *“all (the Father) has given Me.”* The idea is that God chose in advance those who would be saved, and gave them as gifts to His Son...

But notice, the next verse teaches the opposite doctrine, man’s **free will**. *“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”* The redeemed are also defined as those who *“see the Son and believe in Him.”* Salvation is predicated on our choice. So *which is it?* Does God chose us, or do we choose God?

It’s interesting to me, that Jesus taught both **God's sovereignty** and **human responsibility** in back-to-back verses - and He made no attempt to reconcile the two.

Jesus understood that in God's infinite wisdom what appears to us to be a contradiction is a carefully choreographed partnership. Even though it baffles us, it harmonizes in God. **Everyone God chose chooses God. Everyone who chooses God was chosen by God.**

How can that be? I don't know. But it’s what the Bible teaches over and over - and we need to take it by faith.

Once a man asked the famed preacher CH Spurgeon how he could reconcile that the Bible teaches both predestination **and** free will. Spurgeon's reply was classic, "I never try to reconcile friends."

Verse 41, "The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

They clearly understood what Jesus was claiming. To pre-exist His birth was a proclamation of His deity.

"Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." Three times now Jesus has spoken of the resurrection of our bodies. Evidently, in the mind of our Lord, our salvation isn't complete until the day our decaying body has been made new.

Ultimately, God's salvation will redeem everything that sin has touched - and sin's impact is far-reaching.

Yes, it's severed our relationship with God, but it's done more. There's a litany of symptoms... sin has caused *natural disasters, aging and death, hostility between man and animal, disease and sickness...*

And Christianity promises to cure all these ills...

The salvation Jesus brings will put an end to all sin's destructive consequences. Jesus' work climaxes on the day He raises our dead bodies from the grave.

Jesus continues in verse 45, “It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' (Here Jesus quotes Isaiah 54:13.) Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.”

I had an uncle who served in the Navy in WW2, and played baseball on the service team with the famed Yankee slugger, Joe DiMaggio. As a kid I always saw my uncle as somebody special simply because he'd been on the same baseball field with Jolt'n Joe.

But imagine the disciples reflecting on verse 46...

They had lived with a Man who had actually seen the Father in heaven. No earthling has seen God the Father except Jesus - and the disciples lived with Him, talked to Him, even heard Him speak about His Father!

It reminds me of John's letter, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life.”

Jesus tells them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life.” Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven.

If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” Jesus compares Himself to the manna that God fed the Israelites in the wilderness.

Every day for 40 years God supplied a miracle. A mysterious wafer appeared on the ground. *Manna sustained the people physically.* Manna was good for belly and body, yet those who ate the miracle manna eventually died. Moses’ bread didn’t supply eternal life.

In contrast, Jesus says anyone who eats of His bread - or believes in Him - will live forever. Jesus is eternal fuel. Feed on Him and it guarantees eternal life.

As it turns out, the manna’s primary purpose was to depict Jesus... It did so, in at least six ways:

First, it was a **mystery**. The word “*manna*” means “**what is it?**” Jesus was likewise a mystery to the Jews.

Second, it **came at night**. Jesus came in the darkness of man's sin... **Third**, manna was **small** which speaks of Christ's humility... **Fourth**, it was **round**, which speaks of His eternal nature... **Fifth**, it was **white**, which speaks of His purity... **Sixth**, manna was **sweet to the taste** - which also describes Jesus.

In essence, manna was the ultimate appetizer. It was suppose to whet Israel’s appetite for the main entree who would follow - the bread of life, Jesus the Messiah.

Verse 52, “**The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"** This had been Jesus’ problem communicating with

Nicodemus, and the woman at the well. Recall Rabbi Nicodemus' question to Jesus' command "you must be born again?" He said, "How can a man be born when he is old?" They took Jesus literally while He was speaking to them figuratively.

"Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you." Obviously, Jesus wasn't advocating cannibalism. Eating human flesh and drinking blood were outlawed by God's Law.

Jesus meant to be taken **metaphorically**. To eat and drink in a spiritual sense is to believe. Eating and drinking - like faith - are simple, natural acts. A child enters the world with the innate ability to eat and drink. These are not skills that have to be taught or learned.

And likewise, humans are born into this world with the ability to have faith. Everybody trusts and believes in somebody or something... To "*eat His flesh*" and "*drink His blood*" was the equivalent of trust and faith.

It's sad that when it comes to communion Roman Catholicism has made this same mistake as *Nicodemus, the woman at the well, and the Jews...*

They've taken the words of Jesus literally rather than figuratively. The Catholic conception of communion - or as they call it, **transubstantiation** - says that when the wine and bread are blessed by the priest they literally and materially become the blood and body of our Lord.

This is the same kind of wooden literalism Jesus rebukes here in John 6. To prod the spirituality of His disciples Jesus spoke these truths in spiritual terms.

Verse 54, “Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” Again, Jesus mentions the resurrection.

“For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” Just as your body metabolizes natural foods - as our spirit interacts with the Spirit of Jesus, we draw from Him spiritual strength.

“As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.” Eating and drinking are to the material world what believing and receiving are in the spiritual world.

Jesus sees faith as *spiritual consumption*.

Faith is more than an intellectual assent, or agreement - it's participation. Faith puts all the effects and promises of Jesus to the lips of my life, so when I chew on their implications, I partake of their power...

In a spiritual sense faith is like eating and drinking.

It's been said, “You are what you eat.” Your body digests and metabolizes whatever food you feed it.

Thus, a healthier diet produces a healthier body.

And this is also true spiritually. Faith does for the spirit what eating does for the body. It digests, and consumes, and

metabolizes what it's fed. As Jesus said, *"So he who feeds on Me will live because of Me."*

If you want the healthiest of all diets feed on Jesus.

Jesus says, *"This is the bread which came down from heaven - not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."*

These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?" What an amazing exchange...

Jesus had spoken to them figuratively to challenge them to think more spiritually-minded. He was prodding them to see life from a spiritual, eternal perspective.

But they complained He was just being difficult...

At every turn, the disciples wanted Jesus to make the way *easier* rather than *harder*. *If you've got that mentality it won't be long before Jesus offends you too!*

Verse 62 *"What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?"* Jesus is asking them, *would it be easier for you to believe I came down from heaven if you saw Me go back up to heaven?*

They'll actually get that opportunity one day!

After Jesus' resurrection His disciples were there on the Mount of Olives as He ascended back to heaven.

But in the meantime, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” When Jesus spoke of eating and drinking His flesh, feeding on Him, He was referring to *spiritual dynamics*, not *physical digestion*.

Real life, that is eternal life, isn't the work of a gall bladder, or gastric juices - but of God's Holy Spirit.

What concerns Jesus is not the operation of your *digestive tract*, but are you on the right *spiritual tract*!

In verse 64 Jesus makes a jarring statement.

“But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.” Jesus knew from the day Judas signed on, that he'd betray Him.

“And (Jesus) said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father. From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”

This was a turning point for many of the multitude. It was here that Jesus started thinning out the crowd.

His “*hard sayings*” as the disciples called them, had turned back the ambulance chasers and thrill seekers.

The *bread and circus crowd* became discouraged and chose to go home. It's here - in John 6 - that Jesus started separating the *pretenders* from the *contenders*.

Verse 67 is a moment of decision for Jesus' closest men. “Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go

away?" It's their choice... but I love Peter's response, "But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ (that is, Messiah), the Son of the living God."

I'm sure Peter didn't understand all Jesus said, but He'd seen and heard enough to know Jesus had the goods. There was something different about Jesus.

The more Peter saw and heard Jesus, the more it narrowed his choices. Jesus claimed to be God and both His power and words had backed up that claim.

Jesus alone has the words of eternal life!

At times I feel like Peter, following Jesus is stretching and challenging - at times it can even be unsettling.

You're never quite sure what to expect. There are trials along the way - even persecution. You never know where the road might lead next - but when it's over and you've obeyed, you're never disappointed.

The words of Jesus always bring life and hope.

I love Peter's conclusion. He says to Jesus exactly what I've said to Him a thousand times, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Chapter 6 closes "Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve."