

# G R A C E

Reformed Baptist Church

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## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

*The Bread of Life*

John 6:29 – 36

May 15, 2005

### BACKGROUND

- At this point, Jesus is, likely, in a synagogue in Capernaum addressing those in attendance.
- Possibly, the Scripture reading in the Synagogue this day was **Exodus 16:11-36**

### Verses 29 – 30

<sup>29</sup>“Jesus answered them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.’ <sup>30</sup>So they said to him, ‘**Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?**’”

- In Verse 29, Jesus states that the Jews must believe in Him whom the Father has sent (the Son)
- The Jews respond by demanding a sign
- The Jews indicate that if Jesus performs a sign, then they will believe
  - Notice the irony here: Jesus had just fed the 5,000 as well as performed other signs, yet the Jews did not believe
- The question, “What are you going to perform?” is a common Old Testament expression of doubt (see Job 9:12; Ecclesiastes 8:4; Isaiah 45:9)
- Read **1 Peter 1:8** (also John 20:29)
  - Read **Romans 10:1-17**
  - Read **1 Peter 1:23**

**Genuine faith is born, not out of the physical senses [i.e. once we see we will believe], but rather, it is a gift, secured by the atoning work of Christ [through His death and resurrection], given by the work of the Holy Spirit through the instrument of the imperishable seed – the Word of God.**

### Verse 31

- Here, the Jews recall an account from the Old Testament (all CAPS in the NASB)
- Most likely, this is a quote taken from **Psalm 78:23-25** and **Exodus 16:4-5**, but it is possible that it is also from Nehemiah 9:15 and Psalm 105:40.

<sup>23</sup>Yet He commanded the clouds above  
And opened the doors of heaven;  
<sup>24</sup>He rained down manna upon them to eat  
And gave them food from heaven.  
<sup>25</sup>Man did eat the bread of angels;  
He sent them food in abundance.                      Psalm 78:23-25

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. <sup>5</sup>"On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily."                      Exodus 16:4-5

- Rabbis taught that the Messiah, or “the latter Redeemer” would bring down manna from heaven, just as Moses, “the first Redeemer” did.

### Verse 32

<sup>32</sup>Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **it is not Moses** who has given you **the bread out of heaven**, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.”

- Notice: Jesus does not acquiesce to the demands of the crowd
- Had He done so, He would have validated their basis of unbelief.
- Jesus knows that the crowd is focused too much on Moses [and what he did] rather than on God, the originator of all things
- In response to the crowd’s demand for a sign, Jesus “does not promise any significant event yet to happen, but rather offers an interpretation of what has already happened, inviting the people to see in the actual occurrence of the Feeding of the Multitude the sign which they design.”

- The crowd had seen the Feeding, but they had not seen the sign [i.e. understood its spiritual significance]
- How does Jesus’ “interpretation of what has already happened” apply to us today?
- Read Proverbs 9:5
  - In this Proverb, wisdom is described [figuratively] as a person [i.e. it is personified]. Because of this, many Jewish authorities refer to the Law of Moses, or the Torah, as the “bread [of God]”
- Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law [of Moses]
  - **Matthew 5:17** states, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”
- Also, the showbread [the bread in the Temple] was also referred to as “the bread [of God]” in Jewish tradition
  - Inside the Temple, in the Holy Place, there was the Table of Showbread, on which twelve (12) loaves of bread were placed, representing the twelve tribes of Israel
  - Jesus is the fulfillment of the showbread, just as He is the fulfillment of the entire Temple (see John 2:19,21)
- Further, manna from the wilderness was placed in the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 16:32), on top of which was the Mercy Seat where the *shekinah* glory of God hovered (Exodus 25:22; Leviticus 16:2)

### Verse 33

<sup>33</sup> “For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.”

- The bread of God, in this context, gives **life**
  - The “bread” of the Torah, the Law, does not give life, but rather points to the *true* Bread, the Life-giver, the Lord Jesus Christ
- The bread of God, in this context, gives life **to the world**
  - Unlike the manna in the wilderness, following the Exodus, which gave life to **Israel**, the *true* Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, gives life to the world – without distinction of race (i.e. non-Israelite Gentiles, as well as Jews).
  - Notice the similarities, here, with the use of the term “world” with the account in John 3 of Jesus and Nicodemus (“For God so loved the *world*”)

- The verb for *gives*, is here in the Present Tense, means that the Father gives the bread of Jesus Christ in the present.
- This also points to the idea of a *Realized Eschatology* – that eternal life begins NOW in the PRESENT.

### Verse 34

<sup>34</sup> Then they said to Him, “Lord, always give us this bread.”

- Notice the similarities between the crowd’s response to Jesus’ words, and the Samaritan woman’s response in John 4:15: “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.’”
- The response of the crowd reveals their continued misunderstanding. They state, “Lord, *always* give us this bread” (or, “*from now on* give us this bread”) – as if the Bread from Heaven needed to be given over and over again, like physical bread.

### Verse 35

- Jesus now reveals Himself to the crowd, stating, “I AM the bread of life...”
- In the same way, He revealed Himself to the Samaritan woman at the well, stating [literally], “the (One) speaking to you, I AM.”
- This is the first of seven such I AM (ego eimi) statements in the Gospel of John:
  - I AM the bread of life (6:35)
  - I AM the light of the world (8:12)
  - I AM the gate (10:7, 9)
  - I AM the good shepherd (10:11, 14)
  - I AM the resurrection and the life (11:25)
  - I AM the way the truth and the life (14:6)
  - I AM the true vine (15:1, 5)
- Jesus indicates that those who eat of the Bread of life, will not need to eat of His bread continually [unlike physical food which one must eat of repeatedly].
  - Our salvation is sure once we are saved by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- This statement by Jesus further reveals how He fulfills Old Testament / Jewish expectations related to the Messiah (see Isaiah 55:1; 49:10      Revelation 7:15-17):

<sup>15</sup> “For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over

them. <sup>16</sup> “They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; <sup>17</sup> for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”

- However, the truth that we will never hunger does NOT mean that we are not continually dependent upon Him, or that we must not continually feed upon the Word; but, rather, it means that we are perfectly, and eternally satisfied [i.e. we are forever SAVED by grace], in that we have been given the true Bread which give life eternal – the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Observe, however, the great paradox:

**The more we feast upon the Bread of Life – the more we hunger for Him and the more we desire to intimately know the Almighty, triune God.**

### Verse 36

<sup>36</sup> “But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.”

- The crowd has only “seen” a “miracle-worker”, one who is worthy to be an earthly king. However, they have not believed *in Him*, as the Son of God, the **true object of their faith**, the **true Bread of Life**.
- Let us never forget, true belief, true faith, comes only through the Word of God, not through physical sight
- Read **Romans 10:1-17**