

John Chapter 6: v. 1-71. "Jesus is God's rescue plan"

¹ After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the Sea* of Tiberias. ² Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. ³ And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

⁴ Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. ⁵ Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" ⁶ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

⁷ Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹ "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

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. ¹¹ 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.

¹² So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." 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.

¹⁴ 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."¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. ¹⁸ Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing.

¹⁹ So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. ²⁰ But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹ Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

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—

²³ however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks— ²⁴ when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

²⁵ And 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 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.

²⁷ 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." ²⁸ Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

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?”

³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³² 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.

³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.” ³⁵ 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.

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 the one who comes to Me I will by no means 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 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. ⁴⁰ 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.”

⁴¹ The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.”

⁴² 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?’”

⁴³ Jesus therefore answered and said to them, “Do not murmur among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore 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 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.

⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.

⁵¹ 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.”

⁵² The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?”

⁵³ 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.

⁵⁴ Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

⁵⁷ As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ 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.”

⁵⁹ These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. ⁶⁰ Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, “This is a hard saying; who can understand it?”

⁶¹ When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² *What* then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? ⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.

⁶⁴ 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. ⁶⁵ And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”

⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. ⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”

⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Introduction

Before we come to study this section we do need some Old Testament background.

The Exodus: God rescued His people from slavery to the Egyptians, leading them out of Egypt into the land that He promised to their fore- fathers.

The mighty rescue was accompanied by signs and wonders. One of these signs and wonders was the “Passover”. This is described in Exodus 12. God passed through Egypt in judgment, killing every first born among the Egyptians, including their cattle. After this there was a period of testing and trial for the nation of Israel. They wandered in the desert for 40 years because they couldn’t trust God to help them conquer the Promised Land.

Eventually God brought them into the Promised Land. The whole Exodus period was the key to the Israelites understanding that they were a nation who belonged to God. Also that it was God who had rescued them from slavery to be His people. God is a God who rescues people for Himself.

Due to the disobedience of the Israelite nation, God punished them and they were taken into exile by a foreign nation. However God promised through Isaiah that there would be a “New Exodus” under a new leader. (Isaiah 11: v. 15-16)

Since this time the Israelites had been longing for God to bring about this rescue plan.

God did not want the Israelite nation to forget the Exodus from Egypt. Therefore He instituted an annual festival called the “Passover”. This ensured that His people remembered the rescue from Egypt. I have been to many Jewish Passovers in my time, never actually in Jerusalem. They take about 3-4 hours to go through. When you have finished you are in no doubt of the mighty hand of God who performed a miraculous rescue plan. God rescued 3 million people without firing a single gun -shot, or using an aircraft bomb.

God also provided “Manna” bread in the desert for 40 years. He did this not just to provide food each day for 3 million people, but to test the people. Let us read Exodus 16: v. 4.

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.

The test was to see if the people would depend upon their rescuer alone for provision.

Another Old Testament reference needed in order to understand the passage comes from Deuteronomy 18: v. 15-18.

¹⁵ “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,

¹⁶ according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’

¹⁷ “And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

When we come to v. 14 of John 6 we will understand the mind- set of the people. We need to understand the minds of the people at the time in order to understand the context of the passage.

Finally we need to be reminded that “Dividing the water” was part of the rescue plan. God parted the Red Sea to rescue the Israelites finally from Egypt and He parted the river Jordan during flood time for the Israelites to enter the promise land.

Any rescuer of God would be able to divide the sea, in the case of Jesus, He walked on the sea, and therefore He reminded them of this part of the rescue plan.

With all this Old Testament background in mind, we now come to better understand the passage that we will study.

There are three main things going on in this passage. Firstly there is the evidence that Jesus has come to perform God’s rescue. He does this by performing another sign. (V. 1-21)

Secondly we have the motives of the people exposed, the signs explained and the invitation given to the people.

Thirdly the rejection of Jesus’ teaching and the turning away of His disciples.

1. Evidence that Jesus has come to perform God’s rescue plan. (v. 1-21)

The first thing that we learn is that it is “Passover” time. (v.4) In the minds of the people at that time was a focus on God the rescuer. There was an expectation from the people that God’s promise to rescue would soon happen.

The second thing we need to note is that Jesus feeds the crowd miraculously with bread. The significance is not the miracle of providing bread for a great multitude of people. Although that is a miracle in itself. What is significant is v. 14.

The people connected that miracle with “the prophet who is to come into the world”.

(We learnt about that earlier from Deuteronomy 18: v. 15-18) – Power point slide)

The discerning people recognized that Jesus was the promised rescuer, however the others were just there for the miracles.

These discerning people made the link between Jesus and Moses.

God rescued and provided through Moses, now God is rescuing and providing through Jesus.

The third thing we notice in this passage is that Jesus walks on the water of Lake Galilee. This miracle provides confirmation that Jesus is the deliverer of Isaiah chapter 11.

We have already learnt in John's gospel that Jesus performed "Signs" and not just miracles to please the people or meet individual needs.

The signs in v. 1-21 were designed to teach the people that Jesus has come to perform a greater miracle than all these miracles. He has come to rescue people from their sins. He has come to provide them with New Life, abundant life. He has come to rescue them from the wrath of God.

There is no other rescue plan, the rescue plan is JESUS.

The question we must ask ourselves today is "Have we realized that JESUS is the only rescue plan for our lives. Are we trusting in anything else? Our money, our good works, our education, our former religion, our own ideas about life and death, whatever our personal ideas are, if we are NOT trusting 100% in the rescue plan by Jesus then we are absolutely doomed to failure. We have no hope. Our only hope is JESUS.

The feeding of the thousands of people with bread was a test for the disciples.

Were the disciples now trusting in the teaching of JESUS?

2. Motives Exposed, Signs explained, invitation given.(v. 22-40)

a) Motives exposed - v 26-27.

In verses 26-27 Jesus exposed the motives of the people.

Jesus said to the people that they were following Him not because of the "Sign" but because they enjoyed the fish lunch. In other words some of the people didn't see the spiritual significance of the miracle. They were out for a free lunch.

Jesus pointed out to the people that there was something better than a free lunch. When you are hungry, what can be better than a lovely free lunch? I can tell you what is better. Eternal life, sins forgiven, death conquered, a home in Heaven, peace on earth now, a personal relationship with your creator. That is worth missing a free lunch to obtain these spiritual benefits!

If you are listening on the internet or here today at O.I.C. you can be sure that Jesus will expose your motives. We don't always realize our motives until they are exposed by Jesus, through His word by the power of His Holy Spirit.

b) Signs explained - v. 27-34.

Jesus explained the signs in terms of the "Father's Work" – v. 27

In v. 32 Jesus explains that it is the "Father's Gift". Just as the free lunch was a gift to the people for their stomachs, so Jesus was Himself a gift to the people for eternal life. The Bible explains that it is by "Grace" that we can be saved, it is a gift from God. Jesus is a love gift from God for us. It is God's gift to me and to you here today, and anybody else who is listening on the internet.

It is a wonderful gift, don't despise it or reject it.

In v. 38 we are told that it is the Father's will.

The Father requires us to believe in Jesus who provides us with spiritual food that gives us eternal life. The Father's gift is the true bread from Heaven.

We are warned in v. 27 not to labor for the food which perishes. If our focus is on the things of this world and the things that it offers, then these things will not only perish, but they will give us no spiritual satisfaction.

c) Invitation Given – v. 37-40.

In v. 37 it is very clear that an invitation extends to everybody to come to Jesus. Nobody who comes to Jesus will be turned away. Everybody who comes to Jesus will be satisfied. In v. 35 it says that by coming to Jesus we will be completely satisfied.

The invitation offers people the guarantee of a resurrection to eternal life. Believing in Jesus and coming to Him is not a temporary thing. It is an eternal relationship that will never end.

We all know how painful relationships are when they do end. However a relationship with Jesus here and now will never end. He promises that and we can trust Him. He will never let you down.

Today Jesus is giving you an invitation to come to Him. He promises that you will be satisfied spiritually in your heart. Will you come to Him today, with all your problems and burdens?

3. The Rejection of Jesus teaching and the turning away of His disciples.(v. 41-71)

In v. 43-46 Jesus provides us with an explanation of why the Jews did not believe in the words of Jesus.

Jesus says in v.44 that coming to Jesus for eternal life is dependent upon the Father drawing them. The quote from Isaiah 54:v. 13 instructs us that the true people of God have always been those who are willingly listen to, and learn from Him.

The Father is the one that does His work as people pay attention to His word.

This is repeated by Jesus in v. 65.

We don't have to sell Christianity as a religion or force people to believe. We just need to clearly present the truth from God's word the Bible. As we present the truth, some people will pay attention and be willing to consider the truth.

Sadly others will reject the truth.

Jesus says some very difficult things in v. 51-58.

We must remember that it is Passover time. The mention of eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking His blood in connection with this bread would connect Jesus' death to the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb.

Although the Jews can't work out what Jesus is saying in v. 51, Jesus stresses the essential nature of His death for obtaining eternal life.

Jesus insists that unless a person depends on His death, they have no life. (v. 53)

Jesus says that His death is vital to the rescue work.

The big question throughout this passage is what Jesus means by eating or feeding on His flesh. The question is actually answered by verses 35, 40, 47, and 63.

I will repeat these verses in order to answer the question.

³⁵ 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.

⁴⁰ 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."

⁴⁷ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.

⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.

Very simply throughout the chapter feeding has been a metaphor for believing His message.

The message of Jesus includes the prediction of His death on behalf of the world.

Finally in v. 60-71 we are told that many of the disciples of Jesus went back and walked with Him no more. (v. 66)

Up to now it has only been the Jews that have grumbled about Jesus.

Now the disciples are unable to accept the teaching of Jesus.

The disciples can't accept the supernatural origin of Jesus. That He came from Heaven.

They couldn't accept Him as the Passover Lamb.

They couldn't handle the fact of God coming to this earth, in human form to die for our sins.

In v. 63 Jesus explains the whole chapter by showing that the Holy Spirit is the one who will bring spiritual life.

The Holy Spirit brings this life through the words of Jesus.

God's Holy Spirit doesn't work apart from the words of Jesus.

I want to say something very important now, listen very carefully.

The eternal life that Jesus offers can come no other way than by His Holy Spirit, through His word. All of our human efforts are useless, the flesh counts for nothing.

Sadly the disciples and many others couldn't accept this teaching.

Then finally Jesus turns to his 12 disciples in v. 67 and says " Do you also want to go away?"

Peter answered in v. 68 "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Peter goes on to say in v. 69 "Also we have come to believe and know that you are the Christ, the son of the living God."

Peter lived with Jesus, He knew that Jesus was the Son of God. Peter was not just convinced by the miracles, he was convinced by the words of Jesus and by His life.

Q. What are some of the applications we can draw from this passage today for our lives here at O.I.C. in Japan.

Firstly we need to understand the application to the people at that time and then we will clearly see what the application is for us today.

To the people at that time – The Jews were clearly expecting a rescue. However it is clear that they were looking for the wrong sort of rescue.

Their concern was for something physical to meet their immediate needs. They missed the point of the lesson to be learnt from the Exodus. They failed to recognize the events that the Exodus foreshadowed.

This was God's provision of eternal life through Jesus. Jesus makes it clear that the rescue that He has come for is to provide eternal life. Jesus will not be influenced by the crowd's agenda.

Jesus continues to make his offer clear to anyone who is prepared to come to Him.

To us here and now - The passage presents us with a challenge. The challenge is accepting Jesus on His terms. The world today is pre-occupied with their present material needs. Sometimes even Christians in Churches are only really concerned that their physical, and material needs are met. They are only interested in their health, wealth and prosperity.

When we pray to God, is God hearing more than requests for our earthly needs?

Is God hearing requests for an increase in our spiritual life and understanding of His word? Is God hearing us pray that we are willing to serve Him?

Do our prayer requests to God reflect our present needs rather than being shaped according to God's agenda, His future kingdom, and with Him in control?

Only you and I can answer these questions honestly. Being a disciple of Jesus is more than being a passenger in Church, it involves a relationship that is willing to put Him first in our lives.

The Bible says that we need to seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness and then we can trust Him to meet our physical needs. The Bible says He knows what we need even before we ask for it.

Let us challenge ourselves this week to pray for the needs of others, to pray for our growth and spiritual development, and a willingness to serve Jesus in the way He would like us to serve Him.

Have a great week!!!