

Part 8 of the series - Three Years That Changed the World



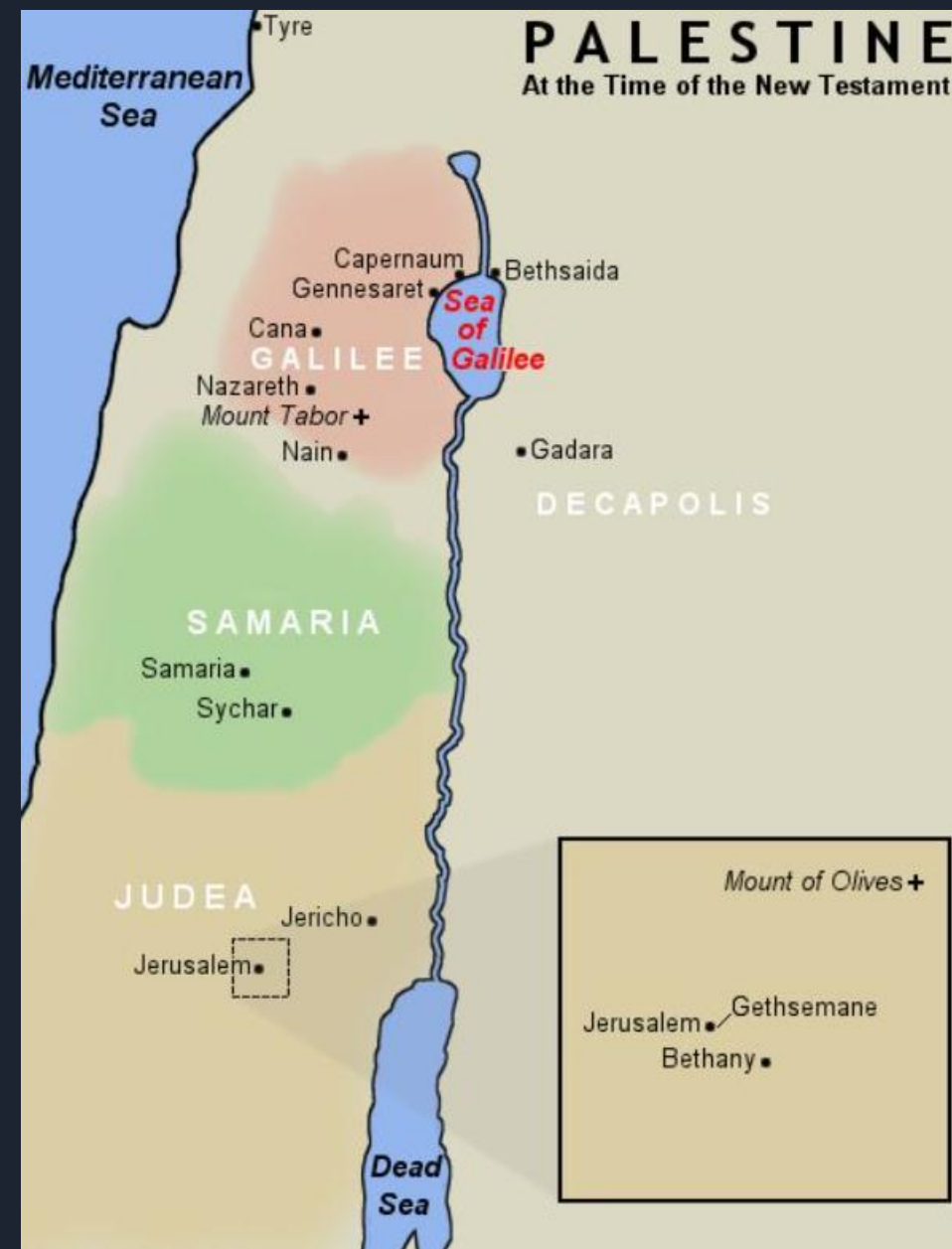
A Demonstration
of
Divine Power

John 6

"Some time after this", Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near." (John 6:1-4)

- ❖ The events recorded in this chapter ("**sometime after this**") would happen after:
 - ✓ John the Baptist was killed by Herod Antipas (Mark 6)
 - ✓ The disciples had been preaching throughout Galilee (Mark 6)
- ❖ The time between John 5 and John 6 would have been about **6 months** and the events of John 6 would have been approximately 1-1.5 years before Jesus was crucified.

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❖ The reason Jesus found himself in this part of the Galilean region was that the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem sought to kill him before his appointed time

“So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” For this reason, they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.” (John 5:16-18)

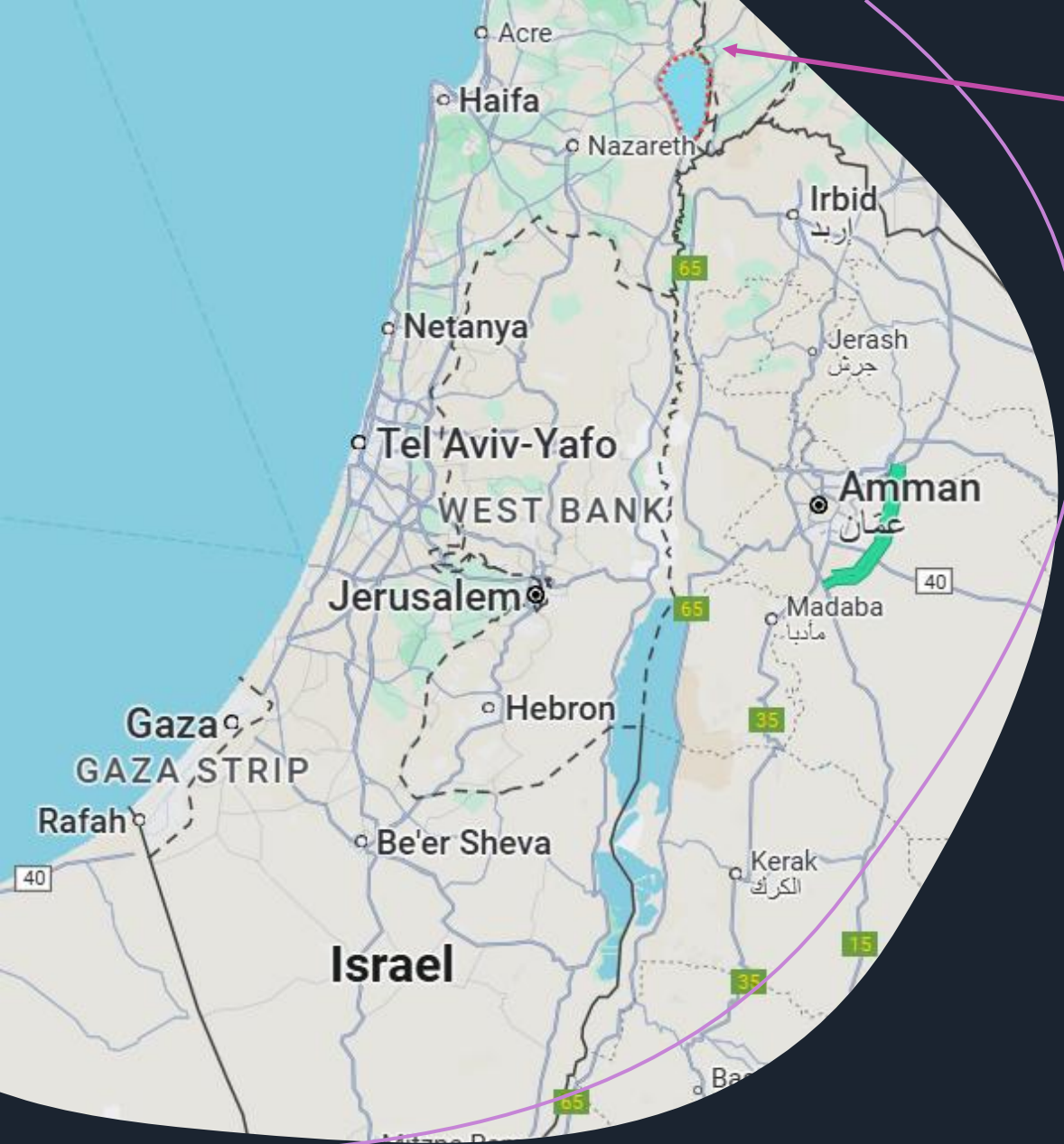
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❖ By the time Jesus and his disciples reached their destination, a large crowd (more than likely followed on foot along the shoreline) had gathered and were already waiting for them and more were on the way.

“When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. (Matthew 14:13-14)

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- ❖ John describes this great crowd of people as the ones who saw the signs and miracles that Jesus performed
- ❖ We will learn later (from the words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels) that some of these “followers” might have initially shown interest because of the signs and wonders performed by Jesus, but over time some will not be genuine in their belief that Jesus was truly God and will walk away.



Probable location of the mountainside where Jesus went is in the area of what we call modern day Golan Heights

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“When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!” Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” (John 6:5-9)

- ❖ Jesus already knew the answer to his own question (He is God, and he already knew that he planned to demonstrate his power to the disciples and the crowd)
- ❖ There were no local resources to supply the demand needed to provide food to satisfy what would probably exceed 10,000 people.
- ❖ This “impossible task” (feeding the crowd) was both a learning experience and a test to strengthen the faith of the closest followers of Jesus

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- ❖ Phillip’s answer is interesting and although it seems like a practical response, it is possible he was being pessimistic, and his faith was a little short sighted
- ❖ Andrew on the other hand tried to solve the problem by inquiring from the crowd as to how much food was available – and there was clearly not enough
- ❖ The missing response (from the disciples) was an affirmation that Jesus would provide the food. They may have been thinking it, but no one said it.

A blue sun with rays shining through a dark blue background with a purple arc.

The First Demonstration of Divine Power

**The Feeding of
the 5000**

The Four Gospel Accounts of the Feeding of the 5000

“Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (**about five thousand men were there**). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.” So, they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.”
(John 6:10-13)

“And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about **five thousand men, besides women and children.**”
(Matthew 14:19-21)

The Four Gospel Accounts of the Feeding of the 5000

“Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So, they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.” (Mark 6:39-44)

“About five thousand men were there. But he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” The disciples did so, and everyone sat down. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.”

(Luke 9:14-17)

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- ❖ This wasn't about a bunch of people just sharing their lunch – it was a miracle that demonstrated (perhaps the 12 baskets symbolic of the 12 Tribes of Israel or the 12 Apostles) that God was in their midst.
- ❖ This was a clear display of God's power and provision along with his abundant grace for we are told that everyone ate as much as they wanted and there was even leftovers for the next day for the disciples.

“After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself” (John 6:14-15)

- ❖ This may be in reference to the messianic prophecy given by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and expounded on by Peter in his sermon that Luke recorded in the Book of Acts:

“Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people’” (Acts 3:17-23)

- ❖ Perhaps the people in the crowd also made the connection between the miraculous provision by Jesus to the manna God provided to the Israelite is the wilderness

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- ❖ The people recognized this miracle was supernatural and many no doubt concluded that Jesus was the promised Messiah. However, **they seemed to want to manipulate things toward their own selfish desires. They wished to anoint Jesus as king at that moment but that was not God’s plan.**
- ❖ Before Jesus was to be the reigning “Lion of Judah” he must first be the “Lamb who bears the sin of the world”. (John 1:29)
- ❖ Sensing this, Jesus withdrew from them and went away to be alone for a while before appearing to the disciples again when Jesus will once again display his power by walking on the waters of the Sea of Galilee



The Second
Demonstration of
Divine Power

**Jesus Walks on
Water**

The other Gospel Accounts of Jesus Walking on the Water

“Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” (Matthew 14:22-33)

The other Gospel Accounts of Jesus Walking on the Water

“Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. **Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost.** They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.” (Mark 6:45-52)

“When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. But he said to them, “It is I; don’t be afraid.” Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading” (John 6:16-21)

- ❖ This is the fifth miraculous sign recorded by John and intended to demonstrate the divine power/authority of Jesus over the laws of nature
- ❖ There has never been another recorded event like this and although skeptics have lobbed their attempts to lessen its significance – it no doubt solidified the faith of those disciples in the boat for they recognized God was in their midst.

Several Observations and Takeaways

- ✓ Although Jesus was up on the mountain praying while the disciples were being tossed around by the waves – he had not forsaken them.
- ✓ In his time, Jesus would come to their aid and save them from peril
- ✓ It is interesting that all 3 gospel accounts (Luke makes no mention of this miracle) indicate the disciples were afraid (and so would I had I witnessed what they saw) and Matthew and Mark's account claim they thought he was a ghost.
- ✓ No one (the disciples included) had yet to see “human figures” defying gravity and walking on water without sinking! Further evidence that God (the Creator and controller of the physical universe) was in their midst!

Several Observations and Takeaways

- ✓ When Jesus says to the disciples in the boat, “it is I”, it could have had similar theological meaning to his claim in John 8:58, “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”.
- ✓ Regardless of the intended meaning of that statement – the disciples eventually recognized Jesus, their hearts were put at ease, and they welcomed Jesus into the boat.
- ✓ The result of this miracle was for those disciples in the boat recognized that God was in their midst for they “worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God”

The story of Christ Walking on the Water included 4 miracles:

- ✓ Jesus physically walking on the water without sinking
- ✓ Peter walking on the water (at least for a short time)
- ✓ After Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat the winds stopped blowing
- ✓ Just like that the boat instantly traversed the remainder of the distance to the western shore of the Sea of Galilee



Jesus Declares his Divine Authority

**He rebukes the crowds for their
materialistic motivation**

John 6:22-29

“The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.” (John 6:22-24)

- ✓ The crowd (still on the eastern shore of the Lake) went looking for Jesus (perhaps for another meal) but didn't find him.
- ✓ It is worth noting that people (often many people) seek out Jesus but never find him because their motivations are often materialistic and not spiritual
- ✓ After searching on the eastern shore of the Lake, they got into their boats and headed to the western shore and found Jesus in the town of Capernaum

“When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. **Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.** For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.” Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “**The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent**” (John 6:25-29)

- ✓ This is a firm rebuke by Jesus for he tells them they are seeking him for all the wrong reasons. Their desires were selfish, and materialist and they missed the significance of who Jesus is and the purpose of his mission which was the gift of eternal life if they but believed in Him.
- ✓ It was not physical nourishment they needed but it was spiritual nourishment and that was something only the Son of God could provide



Jesus Declares his Divine Authority

The True Bread of Life
John 6:30-71

“So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” (John 6:30-33)

- ✓ The crowd of people demanded a sign but their thinking was completely backwards as to how God worked:
 - They thought the order was to see first then believe for that is the way of man
 - The true/divine order was for them to first believe and then see, for this is the way of God

“So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, **but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.** For the **bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.**” (John 6:30-33)

- ✓ The crowd of people were confused and Jesus helped clear things up:
 - The Father, not Moses, provided the manna (bread from heaven) in the wilderness that they spoke of
 - The “true bread from heaven” is Jesus who was right there in front of them
 - Christ has come down from heaven to give real and lasting life to the world making Jesus the bread of God.

“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.” Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.” (John 6:34-40)

- ✓ Many of the people in the crowd still did not recognize who Jesus was for their spiritual blindness was evidenced in their superficial interest in Jesus meeting their physical needs.
- ✓ Jesus boldly declares himself to be the “Bread of Life” by emphatically using the first of many “I Am” revelations found in the Gospel of John.

“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.” Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.” (John 6:34-40)

- ✓ Anyone in a “right” relationship with Jesus will “never” (an emphatic statement) be spiritually thirsty nor spiritually hungry because they belong to Him
- ✓ Jesus then rebukes the crowd for their lack of faith and belief in him for they had the privilege of seeing him, witnessing his miracles and yet they still believed not!

“At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?” “Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.” (John 6:41-44)

- ✓ Just like their ancestors (during their time of wandering on the wilderness), they murmured, complained and grumbled because of a lack of faith
- ✓ While it was true that Jesus was the earthly/legal son of Joseph, they failed to accept there was something they didn't understand which was the virgin birth (The Incarnation) in which He (Jesus) came down from heaven (born of a virgin) and became flesh and it meant that God was now in their midst. (John 1:1, 12)
- ✓ People who are so engrained in their disbelief makes it impossible for them to come to God unless he draws them to Himself.

“It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die.” (John 6:45-50)

- ✓ Everyone who listens to God who spoke through the prophets, and learns from Him, will also listen to and believe in Jesus because Jesus is God.
- ✓ A believer (even those we read about in the Old Testament) is characterized by their continued trust in God which results in eternal life. To reject Jesus (The Bread of Life) is to reject God.
- ✓ Manna (the food their ancestors ate in the wilderness) was temporary and ultimately the Israelites came to despise it. Jesus (The Bread of Life) provided something more permanent and to believe in him meant they would not die.

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” (John 6:51-52)

- ✓ Once again (for the fifth time in this sermon) Jesus claims to be “the living bread that came down from heaven”.
- ✓ Just like the action of eating physical bread satisfies our physical hunger it does no good to know the truth but not act on it. When God awakens us to our lost condition (our sin separates us from Him) we must act by believing in Jesus (The Bread of Life).
- ✓ The Jews listening to Jesus were unable to understand the spiritual significance of what Jesus was saying because of their unbelief. (I Corinthians 2:14)

“Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.” (John 6:53-59)

- ✓ This physical illustration of a spiritual truth will be further expounded at the Last Supper (which will take place about 1 year later) where Jesus (at the time of the Passover celebration) will instruct the 12 apostles to eat the bread (symbolic of his flesh) and drink the cup (symbolic of his blood) in remembrance of Him and this will become a continued practice of the apostles and a lasting practice (ordinance) of the church until Jesus returns.
- ✓ Those who believe in Jesus will remain in Him and live because of Him

“On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?””

Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them. From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.” (John 6:60-65)

- ✓ Many of these “disciples” were not true and genuine followers of Jesus – they came to realize that following Jesus meant more than just hanging around him for they seemed to follow him to see what they could get from him.
- ✓ “What they wanted Jesus would not give and what he offered they would not receive” F.F. Bruce, The Gospel of John, page 164
- ✓ Their departure showed they were never with Jesus (1 John 2:19)

“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” Then Jesus replied, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!” (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)” (John 6:66-71)

- ✓ The 12 apostles were no doubt impacted by the departure of the other disciples and Jesus uses that to refine the faith of his true followers
- ✓ Simon Peter gave his confession of faith by pointing out that Jesus had the words of eternal life and he along with the others came to believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah – the Holy One of God.
- ✓ Although there was a devil in their midst (Judas Iscariot) who would have wanted nothing more than to have Jesus killed at that time - Jesus would continue his ministry in Galilee and eventually return once again to Jerusalem which will be the topic of next weeks lesson.