

Chapter 5 leaves the Lord standing there before the Jews, having openly stated His equality and unity with the Father. He had declared the authority and might He had been given by the Father to give life to men, and to judge all men. He could and would give eternal life to the spiritually dead and He could and would raise the physically dead. He concluded by pointing forward to the works He was yet to complete and with a dire warning of the false Messiah yet to come.

The Spirit then moved John to record another remarkable incident in the Lord's ministry here. John omits many other incidents and dialogs of interest and much of the Lord's other teachings regarding the Kingdom. Yet don't we yearn to hear more of Him and from Him as He was when He was here among men.

Chapter 6 is many months later for another Passover was imminent. Jesus, back in Galilee, crossed the Sea of Tiberias (same as the Sea of Galilee) named by Herod after the wicked Roman Emperor ruling at the time. This eastern part of Galilee was less visited by the Lord. When He came there thousands followed Him about through the countryside witnessing the many miracles and the many healed. What an occasion. What an attraction. Perhaps not unlike the excitement that accompanies religious healing services today. Except these healings were real and lasting. They conveyed God's loving kindness to the beneficiaries and to their relatives and friends. What a story they would tell and rejoice over down through their generations. Some, perhaps many, gained saving faith from this one encounter with the Lord.

The story of feeding the multitude is well known but widely unbelieved today. But notice the delightful interplay of faith in the faithful that Jesus drew out in leading them up to His action. He simply asked Philip where they could buy bread for all of their "guests." Philip, astounded, responded with the impossibility of such a thought. However Andrew had an idea. (He was the disciple who, with John, had followed Jesus home the first day they had met him.) He had no suggestions, only a report on the meager resources available. Nowhere near enough. But did he have an idea the Lord could actually use those resources and to provide for the current need? The Lord did just that. Everything was soon organized and the crowd orderly and seated. The lad's lunch fed thousands. With baskets full of leftovers. The lad donated his lunch (the lunch his mom had made for him?). Sacrificial faith often operates in small but meaningful ways. The miracle was really that. Plenty of full tummies bore witness to that. It was so "over the top" that no reasoning of men has been able to "explain" it. Every one knew what had happened.

But did the multitude realize Who this really was? No. But after He had miraculously fed thousands of them at one sitting the leaders decided He was the expected

Prophet predicted by Moses (Deuteronomy 18). Their first impulse was not to kneel in wonder but to use Him to mount a revolution against the current governing authorities. That would include King Herod, the Jewish hierarchy and religious sects, and the Romans. How far could it go? There was in this a real trial/temptation for the Lord. Satan engineered it seeking to ultimately destroy Him, or at least neutralize His testimony or divert Him from His mission. Jesus knew He was rightful King and was to reign. Satan whispers, "Why not now and avoid the cross?" Many men, a prophet sent of God or not, find it difficult to decline to ride the wave of human excitement and popularity to power and glory. We see examples all down through history, Biblical and secular, in the world and even in the Church of God. And even in the local assemblies seeking to be gathered unto the Name of the Lord alone. Yes my brethren, oversee and lead but beware of any desire to control or dominate other saints. Note Diotrephes, whom John had to withstand, 3John. Watch for admonitions and warnings in other epistles, 1Peter 5:1-5.

This temptation was just as real and Satanic as the three verbal temptations Jesus suffered at the hands of Satan in the wilderness, Matthew 4. Satan, though he departed then, had never let up tempting Him to abort His mission and compromise His calling. Watch for such incidents in the Gospels as here, even when Satan is not exposed in the text. The Lord's recognition, resistance and avoidance of these temptations are lessons for us. For Satan and his agents also desire to derail us from a godly walk and to divert us from our heavenly calling and our real mission here.

Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV) I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

We are to not seek to subdue and dominate the world for Christ now. He will not do that until He comes back from heaven with us.

John 17:14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

After He had sent the crowds away Jesus had sent His disciples ahead in the only boat across the sea to Capernaum.. They must have had questions but simply obeyed. The other Gospels give more details of the crossing, but here the focus is upon His power over the storm. We also learn that after He had calmed it they were miraculously transported, ship and all, to shore. (The Spirit did that with Phillip also, Acts 8:40.) John tells in some detail of the resulting natural confusion in

the crowds seeking to follow the miracles. This drove them to come and ask Jesus. He took the occasion to expose their true motivation in following Him, another free meal! But He patiently engaged them in pointed discussion. Labor not to produce the food which can spoil, but for that food which endures unto everlasting life. Life which the Son of man shall give unto you. He presented Himself as One whom God the Father "sealed," marked as His own approved One. The "labor" He desires is not works to earn salvation but salvation by faith. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Too simple? Way too simple for our naturally proud and self reliant hearts. But it is the way. The only way.

They had eaten and been satisfied by the bread He fed them on the mountain across the sea. But they asked Him for a sign. Huh? They piously referred back to the sign Moses had given their ancestors, manna in the wilderness. (They failed to mention their fathers had come to loath the manna and had died in the wilderness.) He patiently stepped back a little as it were, and once again opened the Way to them and to us. See now what He taught:

1. He explained emphatically the "angels food" (Psalm 78:25) that fell on the ground from heaven that Moses gave them was not *that true bread* from heaven that the Father gives. *That true bread* gives life unto the world. Not simply physical life to a world of hungry, starving people, but eternal life to a world of hungry, starving souls in need of salvation. Jesus presented Himself as ***the Bread of God that comes down from heaven***. This is His title not just a description.
2. This attracted them. But they were still thinking in terms of three square meals a day, just as the woman at the well had wanted water that would permanently satisfy her natural thirst, ch. 4:15.
3. He told them simply, "***I am the bread of Life.***" He urged them to personally come to Him. Any who did would never hunger and never thirst. Eternal Life!
4. He had to remind them that they had seen Him yet believed not. They had seen Him, God amongst them, and refused to recognize Him as such. This was an act of the will not mere ignorance. One might note reverently that Jesus Himself was unable to convince anyone personally to come to Him. Nevertheless He still preached and pled. We do too,

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

5. Then He declared the Father's desire to bring souls to Him (Jesus) despite their unbelief.

6. It is only the Father that can give souls to Him. (Quite an unique thought, isn't it.) The Father Himself is actively engaged in bringing and giving individual souls to the Son. He delights to do that. (If He didn't do this not one would come. Romans 3:9-18.)
7. All that the Father gives Him, He will certainly never drive away or cast out. (The Greek is a very clear and definite expression.) Security! Eternal Security!
8. The Lord clearly and definitely stated "I came down from heaven." (This was through the womb of the virgin which they refused to accept as fact. Do you? It is crucial to believe this. He is truly God and truly Man)
9. He came down, not to do His own will or to fulfill His own ambitions. He has been sent by the Father to do the Father's will. If nothing else they should accept Him and heed Him as one sent from the Father.
10. He clearly told them the Father's will.
11. His own personal will coincided with the Father's will but that is not the point here. His perfect obedience and fellowship with the Father is what matters. His faithfulness and obedience to His Father's will was at stake. That is what is at stake for our walk too.
12. The Father's will is that He lose nothing of what the Father gave Him but should raise it up again at the last day. How secure is that??!!
13. Who is He going to raise up and when? When is the last day? The ultimate last day when any raising will occur is when Jesus publically returns to claim and take possession of what He purchased with His blood shed on the cross. Years before that He will secretly raise the dead in Christ and meet them in the air with the believers alive at that time. That day, the Rapture, will be the "last day" for believers today, 1Thessalonians 4. This will include all those of faith from the beginning in Genesis. Some are named in Hebrews 11. They will be raised with us, Hebrews 11:30. And all believers then living will be raised bodily to heaven without dying, but will be changed to be like Christ, 1Corinthians 15. They will possess and enjoy eternal life with Him. Will you be there?
14. Those that the Father gives to Him during the seven years tribulation will suffer, perhaps die or be martyred. Those that die or are martyred will be raised when Christ returns from heaven to reign, Revelation 20:4.
15. Those that are not martyred will be lifted up and awarded positions of honor and authority in His kingdom. They will be "raised" in that sense.
16. One intensely solemn event follows the two phased resurrection, though He doesn't mention it here. The unsaved dead will be raised to be judged before the Great White Throne by the Lord Jesus himself.

By Ronald Canner, June 1, 2011