

The Gospel of John

Lesson 5 John 6:14 - John 7:13

The feeding of the 5,000 men and their families astounded the multitude. In their hearts and minds they knew Jesus was the Prophet foretold by Moses and it was their intention to make Him their king.

Jesus withdraws to the mountain⁷⁵

John ^{6:14}Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Jesus knows the thoughts of the people that He has just fed, and He does not want them to make Him a king, so He slips off to the mountain by Himself.

Jesus walks on the water⁷⁶

John ^{6:16}Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷and after getting into a boat, they *started to* cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea *began* to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. ²⁰But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.⁷⁷

The feeding of the multitude occurred by the sea on a hillside by the town of Tiberias. Capernaum is just up the coastline about six miles. The apostles and some of the disciples set out for Capernaum in the dark and are frightened as a storm occurs when they are a little over halfway to the city. Jesus comes to their aid by walking on the water.

Unlike Matthew and Mark, John does not say that the men think Jesus is an apparition or ghost.⁷⁸ Neither does John tell of Peter's attempt to walk on the water; nevertheless, both Peter and Jesus climb into the boat and they arrive safely at Capernaum.

List of events in the life of Jesus from the other Gospels, not included in John's Gospel

EVENT	SCRIPTURE PASSAGE
Peter tries to walk on the water.	Matt 14:28-33
People are healed in Gennesaret.	Matt 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56

According to Matthew and Mark, the boat lands at Gennesaret. The apostles are headed to Capernaum, a short distance away from the sea. The port used by Capernaum is at Gennesaret; therefore, there is no conflict in the story when many are healed upon their arrival in Gennesaret.

⁷⁵ Agrees with Mark 6:45

⁷⁶ Agrees with Mark 6:49

⁷⁷ Exodus 3:14

⁷⁸ Mark 6:49; Matthew 14:26

John 6:22 The next day the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but *that* His disciples had gone away alone. ²³ There came other small boats from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴ So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. ²⁵ When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here?" ²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." ²⁸ Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"

As morning dawns in Tiberias, the people see only one boat at the shore and they are waiting for Jesus to arrive in order to row over to the Capernaum area, but He does not come. Other boats begin to gather at Tiberias and they all are looking for Jesus. Finally, they load the boats and head to Capernaum to see if Jesus is there. When they find Him in the synagogue,⁷⁹ they ask Jesus how He arrived at Capernaum without their seeing Him leave Tiberias. Jesus knows they are following Him because of the food He provided for them from the five loaves and two fishes. He knows their thoughts; they are more concerned about their hungry stomachs than their hungry souls. Their question about how to perform the works of God may not be as sincere as we would hope.

Jesus does the work of God

John 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." ³⁰ So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? ³¹ "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.'"⁸⁰

Jesus' feeding of the multitude with the five loaves and two fish was not a great enough sign for them to believe in Him. It is now clear that the multitude is thinking of pharisaical works and rules instead of simple belief in the Lord as Savior. They are looking for hurdles to jump rather than the simple act of belief. The events of the previous day were of no value, so the leaders of the crowd quote the written words of Moses to Him. The food in the wilderness was from heaven; could Jesus offer them something better than that? What they really want to know is whether or not Jesus is greater than Moses. If He is greater than Moses, then they want to see Him do something else that proves His greatness.

It is not Moses but the Father

John 6:32 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. ³³ "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." ³⁴ Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread."

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will 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 certainly not 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

⁷⁹ John 6:58

⁸⁰ Psalm 78:24; Exodus 16:15

Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

Jesus sharply rebukes the crowd; it was not Moses' bread that fed them in the wilderness, it was the Lord's. Moses was their earthly leader, but he was not their physical provider; the Lord was. The manna they ate in the wilderness gave them physical nourishment, but it did not give them eternal life; nor did it sustain their life on earth since more than half of them died and were buried in the wilderness. These leaders who are speaking out for the crowd are misinformed and misled. They do not understand the simplicity of the offer from the Father and the Son. Eternal life is in front of them if they will only believe in Him. Those who put their trust in Jesus will be raised in the "resurrection of life," an event already mentioned by the Lord before the Day of Atonement in Jerusalem.⁸¹

Jews grumble about Jesus

John ^{6:41} Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." ⁴² They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"

All of the multitudes with Jesus are Jews, but when John uses the term "Jews" in his gospel, he is speaking specifically of the Pharisees who are arguing with Jesus. These Pharisees are finding fault with every word that He speaks. They know He is the son of Joseph, the carpenter from Nazareth, and they also know His mother. Because Nazareth is just a day's walk to the west in the same province of Galilee, they know Jesus from His life there. They know when He was born, and they are offended that He now claims to have come out of heaven like the bread that fed their ancestors in the wilderness.

Jesus answers the grumblers

John ^{6:43} Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ "It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.⁸² ⁴⁶ "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

The Pharisees are cawing like a flock of crows among themselves when Jesus tells them to stop grumbling. These men have heard the Word of God all their lives but it has not made an impact on them. It is not enough just to hear the Word of God; we must heed its instructions. The Word taught them that the Son of God was coming and they should be ready, but they are not. If they will only believe in Him, they will have eternal life.

Jesus is the bread of heaven

John ^{6:48} "I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.

The bread provided in the wilderness did not keep the people alive forever, but the bread Jesus is now offering will provide life eternal.

⁸¹ John 5:29

⁸² Isaiah 54:13

Jesus is the Living bread

John ^{6:51} "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

As before, the English translation does not allow the reader to grasp the intent of the Lord's word. Although Jesus repeats the claim that He is the bread of life, He changes the wording, stating that He is not just the bread that gives life; He is the bread that is alive eternally. In His emphasis to prove that He is greater than Moses, He adds a concept that is very difficult for the Pharisees to grasp. He talks about His ultimate self-sacrifice. It is not a new concept in Jesus' ministry, for He spoke of it just after His baptism, but it is new to the Pharisees. Jesus is speaking of His atoning death for all the world to have the opportunity to have eternal life. Jesus will die for the world and those who believe in Him will obtain eternal spiritual life.

Jesus is misunderstood in the synagogue in Capernaum

John ^{6:52} Then the Jews *began* to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat?" ⁵³ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. ⁵⁴ "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 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 eats Me, he also will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; 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 difficult statement; who can listen to it?" ⁶¹ But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? ⁶² "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? ⁶³ "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

The Pharisees totally misunderstand the words of the Lord, so Jesus once again explains His meaning in detail, covering both the blood and flesh. Some interpret this statement to be a reference to the Lord's Supper that He will establish at the Passover just before His death. Jesus will use it as a metaphor at the Passover, but it is not the essential element of the Passover. The Lord's Supper is to remind the believers of His sacrifice, the shedding of His blood and the hanging of His flesh on the cross. He is not saying that we are literally eating His flesh or drinking His blood; He is speaking of these things in the spiritual sense, but even His followers are having a difficult time understanding His words. Verse 63 is a summary of all that the Lord has said. The actual blood and the physical body mean absolutely nothing in obtaining that which is spiritual and that which is eternal. Only the acceptance of the Spirit of the Lord can give eternal life.

Jesus already knew that some would not follow

John ^{6:64} "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 it was that would betray Him. ⁶⁵ And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." ⁶⁶ As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?"

The words of the Lord in the previous passage are so difficult to understand that some of the multitudes fall away from the crowd of followers in disbelief. Perhaps they think Jesus is teaching some form of cannibalism, and they do not want to have any part of that. Jesus knows they will fall away; He also knows that one of His own apostles will betray Him, but he continues with His ministry. Jesus does not expect all to believe, and Judas is not a true believer. Jesus also gives His other apostles the opportunity to leave if they wish.

Peter knows there is no other way to eternal life

John 6:68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

Simon Peter is always the spokesman for the apostles unless Jesus asks a question of one of them specifically. His words are a great confession of his faith in Christ. Peter knows Jesus is the Holy One of God and he says it again at a later date. ⁸³

One of the apostles will betray Jesus⁸⁴

John 6:70 Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" ⁷¹ Now He meant Judas *the son of Simon Iscariot*, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

Jesus is not saying that Judas was the devil when He chose him several months before. John knows that Jesus is speaking of Judas because he, John, had lived through the whole ordeal. Jesus knows Judas' heart and He knows that Judas will betray Him. We do not know when Judas decided to betray Jesus, but he might have already planned his actions by this time in the story.

The Galilean ministry continues

John 7:1 After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

John's purpose for writing his Gospel is simple; he wants the church to know about the ministry of the Lord in Judea. For this reason, John does not tell of the events of the Lord's ministry which occur in Galilee. From the encounter with the Pharisees in Capernaum in March of AD 28, John skips ahead to the Feast of Tabernacles in October of AD 28, excluding 23 events that occurred in Galilee during the six month interval.

List of events in the life of Jesus from the other Gospels, not included in John's Gospel

EVENT	SCRIPTURE PASSAGE
Jesus rebukes the tradition of the Jews.	Matt 15:1-11; Mark 7:1-16
Jesus explains the parables in private.	Matt 15:12-20; Mark 7:17-23
Great is the faithfulness of the woman.	Matt 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30
Jesus heals the deaf man.	Mark 7:31-37
Jesus heals many on the mountain.	Matt 15:29-31
Jesus feeds the 4,000.	Matt 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-10
The Pharisees want a sign.	Matt 16:1-4; Mark 8:11-13
Jesus teaches about the leaven of the Pharisees.	Matt 16:5-12; Mark 8:13-21
The blind man is cured at Bethsaida.	Mark 8:22-26
Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ.	Matt 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30
Jesus rebukes Peter.	Matt 16:21-28; Mark 8:31-9:1; Luke 9:18-27
The Transfiguration occurs on the mountain.	Matt 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36

⁸³ Mark 8:27-28; Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-19

⁸⁴ Agrees with Mark 3:13

The Lord discusses Elijah.	Matt 17:9-13; Mark 9:9-13
The demon is cast out of the boy.	Matt 17:14-18; Mark 9:14-27; Luke 9:37-43
The apostles ask about the miracle.	Matt 17:29-21; Mark 9:28-29
Jesus discusses His own death.	Matt 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:44-45
Jesus pays the temple tax with a coin from a fish's mouth.	Matt 17:24-27
The apostles argue over who is the greatest.	Matt 18:1-6; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48
John is zealous without understanding.	Mark 9:38-42; Luke 49-50
Jesus warns about stumbling blocks.	Matt 18:7-11; Mark 9:43-50
Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep.	Matt 18:12-14
Jesus instructs them about church discipline.	Matt 18:15-20
Peter asks about forgiveness.	Matt 18:21-35

Feast of Booths is near, October AD 28

John 7:2 Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near.

The Day of Atonement is celebrated on the tenth of Tisri, which usually falls in the month of October. The Feast of Booths is celebrated in the same month, starting on the fifteenth of Tisri and lasting for seven days. It is also called the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Ingathering.⁸⁵ On the first day of this feast, every family is to construct a make-shift shelter from twigs of the myrtle, willow and palm trees. All Israelites are to live in the booths for seven days as a remembrance and commemoration of their ancestors who lived in such booths during the forty years of the Exodus journey. It is one of the most enjoyable and festive of all the Jewish feasts.

The brothers speak to Jesus

John 7:3 Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. ⁴ "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be *known* publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." ⁵ For not even His brothers were believing in Him. ⁶ So Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. ⁷ "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. ⁸ "Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come." ⁹ Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.

Jesus' half-brothers approach Him and encourage Him to attend the feast in Jerusalem. His brothers do not believe He is the Messiah at this time, and want Him to go to Jerusalem and perform more miracles and signs so they can determine His heavenly authority and divinity. Jesus sends them on, acting as though He is intending to stay in Galilee, but He doesn't. He secretly makes the four day journey to Jerusalem and slips in without their knowledge.

Jesus secretly goes to Jerusalem

John 7:10 But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret. ¹¹ So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, "Where is He?" ¹² There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray." ¹³ Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

⁸⁵ Exodus 23:16; Deut 16:13; Leviticus 23:33-43