

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

JOHN 6:25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

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

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread

from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

NOTES

Jesus: The Bread of Life

Lesson Text: John 6:25-40

Related Scriptures: John 6:41-52; Matthew 16:1-4

TIME: A.D. 29

PLACE: Capernaum

GOLDEN TEXT—"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29).

Lesson Exposition

The Scripture text for this week continues in John 6. The day after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, part of the crowd that had been with Jesus went to the shore of the Sea of Galilee from where the disciples had departed on their trip across the lake the night before. When they realized that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there, they boarded boats that had come across the lake from Tiberias and came to Capernaum, hoping to find Jesus.

THE CROWD FINDS JESUS— John 6:25-27

The crowd found Jesus, but the text does not say that it was at Capernaum; it says simply that they "found him on the other side of the sea" (vs. 25). Jesus had originally told the disciples to head to Bethsaida. Both of these cities were on the northern shore of the lake about four miles from each other.

When the crowd encountered Jesus, they asked Him when He had come there. Jesus did not respond directly to their question but instead made a blunt statement about their motivation. He said that they searched for Him not

because of the miracles He had done but because they had eaten "and were filled" (vs. 26).

Jesus told them, in effect, that their reason for seeking Him was not to feed their spirit but rather their body. Their motivation was purely material. Even if they had sought Jesus because they wanted to declare Him king of Israel, as John's account makes clear (cf. vs. 15), this would have been praiseworthy in a sense. But Jesus could see their hearts and knew the real reason was far less virtuous.

Jesus expounded further. He told the crowd not to work for food that perishes but for food that lasts and leads to eternal life. This is the food, Jesus said, that He would give them. Then He added that He was the One on whom the Father had placed His seal.

The placing of a seal on something by royalty is a time-honored tradition. In the United Kingdom, where this is a long tradition, the practice is called a royal warrant of appointment. It means that the item, whether a food product or some other good, is being supplied to the royal family by a man-

ufacturer. The manufacturer then has the right to display the coat of arms of the royal personage who is placing his seal of approval on the product or advertisements for the product. Below the seal are the words "By appointment of," or something similar, followed by the name of a member of the royal family.

When Jesus said that He had the seal of the Father, this was a sort of royal warrant of appointment. Jesus was telling the crowd that He can provide the food that leads to eternal life because He is God Himself, as indicated by the Father's seal.

THE CROWD ASKS A QUESTION— John 6:28-29

When Jesus told the crowd that they must labor for the food that does not spoil and perish, the people asked what they should do in order to perform the works that God required. Jesus responded by simply telling them that they should believe in the One whom God had sent. The crowd's response indicates that they knew He was referring to Himself.

Works seem to have always been a stumbling block for the Jewish people. Looking at the history of their nation and the requirements of the Old Testament, many Jews do indeed believe that an emphasis on the performance of certain rituals or deeds is connected to a right standing with God. However, righteous deeds come from a heart changed by God; righteous deeds do not change the heart or make one acceptable to God.

THE CROWD ASKS ANOTHER QUESTION—John 6:30-31

The crowd responded to Jesus' statement with another question. If they were to believe in Him, what sign would He show them in order to validate His claim that He had come from God? The crowd pointed out (as if they

needed to point out anything to Jesus) that God had supplied manna for their fathers to eat in the desert. What sign would He give to prove that He could provide food that would lead to eternal life?

After the feeding of the four thousand, which occurred sometime after the feeding of the five thousand, Matthew records that a similar dialogue took place in which a group of people asked Jesus to show them a sign. In that case, it was Pharisees and Sadducees who asked Jesus to provide a sign. Jesus minced no words, calling the Pharisees and Sadducees hypocrites and saying that it was "a wicked and adulterous generation" that wanted a sign (16:4).

Jesus' teaching on this topic of signs helps us understand the deception that will be rampant at the time of the antichrist. Knowing that the wicked will desire a sign rather than exercise faith in Jesus, Satan will be only too happy to provide this for the generation alive during the tribulation. The false prophet who will be allied with the antichrist will perform signs and wonders that will awe the population of earth and convince people to worship the image of the antichrist (cf. Rev. 13:13-14).

JESUS IS THE TRUE BREAD— John 6:32-33

Jesus responded to the crowd's statement about Moses by telling them that Moses did not provide bread from heaven. The implication of Jesus' statement is that God was the provider of manna in the desert. The people were attributing the miraculous provision of manna to Moses rather than identifying its true source—God.

Jesus then went on to identify the true Bread from heaven. The true Bread is the One who came down from heaven and gives life to the world—Jesus Himself. The manna

that God sent from heaven to feed the Israelites while He guided them through the wilderness for forty years was only a foreshadowing of the true Bread from heaven who would come many centuries later.

JESUS PROCLAIMS HIMSELF AS THE TRUE BREAD—John 6:34-37

The people did not comprehend what Jesus was saying. Like the woman at the well who asked for living water, the people asked Jesus to always give them the bread from heaven.

Jesus then told the people plainly that He is "the bread of life" (vs. 35). All those who come to Him and trust in Him shall never hunger or thirst. Then, with brutal honesty, Jesus declared that even though the people had seen Him, they did not believe.

The crowd certainly *did* believe that Jesus could do wonders of healing and miraculously provide for them. Yet, in their heart of hearts, they did not place their faith in Jesus as the Son of God. They may have accepted Him as a prophet, a miracle worker, and a great teacher (they referred to Him as Rabbi in verse 25), but their understanding did not extend to seeing Jesus as the Saviour in whom they must believe.

Continuing His response to the people, Jesus made it clear that all those whom the Father had given Him would come to Him. Since the ones Jesus was talking to did not believe in Him, it was clear they did not yet know God in the true sense. If those who did not believe would turn to Him, there was no possibility that He would turn them away.

THE WILL OF GOD—John 6:38-40

Jesus made clear to the crowd that He came to do the Father's will, and the Father's will was that He would lose none of those given to Him by God but

resurrect them to life at the end of the age. After Jesus resurrects those who trust in Him, they will enjoy life for all eternity.

Jesus made clear to the crowd the eternal implications. The crowd who came to Him now had a choice. They could choose to believe what He told them in light of the miraculous things that He did, or they could choose to continue with their deficient view of Christ and miss the full truth of who He is.

Sadly, many around the world who have rejected Jesus and His offer of eternal life are still waiting for their "Messiah," one of their own design or more to their liking. Many of the Jews at the time of Jesus rejected Him as Messiah, as they were looking for a military leader who would lead them in battle against the Roman Empire.

We simply need to trust in the One whom God sent!

—James Parry.

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. A person must seek God with a pure heart in order to find Him (John 6:25-27; cf. Matt. 5:8).
2. Salvation is not by works but faith (John 6:28-29; cf. Eph. 2:8-9).
3. God is the provider of what we need for physical and spiritual nourishment (John 6:30-33).
4. True seekers of God will believe and trust in Jesus (vss. 34-36).
5. The Father draws true seekers to Jesus, who will not cast them away (vs. 37).
6. Jesus always seeks to do the Father's will (vs. 38).
7. As God, Jesus has the power to save and raise to life (vss. 39-40).

—James Parry.