

# JOHN

## Chapter 6

### *Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand*

After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. 2 And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. 3 Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. 4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. 5 Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, **“Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?”** 6 He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. 7 Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 9 “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” 10 Jesus said, **“Have the people sit down.”** Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. 11 Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, **“Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.”** 13 So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. 14 When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!” 15 Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

6:1–15 The feeding of the 5,000 is the one miracle, apart from the resurrection, found in all four Gospels. It shows Jesus as the supplier of human need, and sets the stage for his testimony that he is the bread of life (v. 35). (CSB)

John's gospel proclaims Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, to lead people to trust in him alone as the only Savior, and so have eternal life, which he alone gives. For this purpose, John selectively reports some of the “signs” Jesus performed (Jn 20:30–31). The first is the wedding at Cana (Jn 2:11). The second is the healing of a crippled man (Jn 5:1–11). This “sign” caused quite a stir among the religious authorities, who tried to kill him (5:16–18). Shortly after this Jesus heard of the death of John the Baptist (Mt 14:6–13). These events prompted him to take his disciples to a solitary place, away from the crowds. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

The feeding of the 5,000 is the third “sign” in John, recorded also in each of the other gospels (Mt 14:13–21; Mk 6:32–44; Lk 9:10–17). The whole of John 6 needs to be read to catch the meaning of the “sign.” The multiplied loaves and fish point ultimately to that “bread which does not perish,” to the Lord Jesus Christ, who says, “I am the bread of life.” What does Jesus mean by “bread of life,” and how do we eat of him? Because of the emphasis on believing and teaching in vv 35–50, many scholars today consider “bread” to be the teachings of Jesus, the Gospel, and “eating” as believing in this Gospel. However, the early church fathers saw in this chapter a “prophecy” of the Eucharist that Christ would establish. Especially vv 51–58 contain what many perceive to be Eucharistic overtones. Luther did not think this section speaks of the Eucharist. For him, the eating is spiritual: believing and trusting in the Gospel. Yet I do not feel it is proper to entirely leave out the Eucharistic thoughts that this narrative invokes, especially since John's

gospel does not contain an account of the institution of the Lord's Supper. (Cf. John 3 and Baptism.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

John's Gospel proclaims Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, to lead people to trust in him as the only Savior, and so have eternal life. For this purpose, John selectively reports some of the signs Jesus performed (20:30–31): the wedding at Cana (2:1–11), healing a nobleman's son (4:43–54), and the healing of a crippled man (5:1–11). The feeding of the five thousand is the next sign in John, recorded also in the other Gospels (Mt 14:13–21; Mk 6:32–44; Lk 9:10–17). The whole of John 6 needs to be read to catch the meaning of the sign. The multiplied loaves and fish point ultimately to that "food that endures to eternal life" (6:27), the Lord Jesus Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Because of the emphasis on believing and teaching in vv 35–50, many scholars consider this bread to be the teachings of Jesus, the Gospel, and eating of it to be believing in the Gospel. However, the Early Church fathers saw in this chapter a prophecy of the Eucharist that Christ would establish. Especially vv 51–58 many perceive to be explicitly eucharistic. Luther did not think this section speaks of the Eucharist, but of spiritual eating: believing in the Gospel. Yet we feel the eucharistic thoughts this narrative invokes cannot be overlooked, especially since John's Gospel does not contain an account of the institution of the Lord's Supper (see John 3 and Baptism). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The day begins with the news of the death of John the Baptist. It continues with the return of the disciples from a short-term missionary journey. Following the disciples are five thousand men and their families. Jesus tried to get away from the crowd by crossing the sea, only to find the crowd waiting for him on the other side. He wanted to mourn in solitude, but instead he was surrounded by people. He wanted to spend time with just the disciples, but instead he got a crowd. He wanted time to think, but instead he and people to face. (A Gentle Thunder – Hearing God Through the Storm – Max Lucado p. 90)

**6:1** *after this – meta*, "After" probably refers to a number of months after Jesus healed the crippled man. The explanation that the "Sea of Galilee" is "the Sea of Tiberias" helps somewhat in the dating of John's gospel, since it was considerably past Jesus' earthly ministry when the sea was named after Tiberius Caesar. It would appear from the context that Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee to escape the press of the multitudes following him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

*went away to the other side...Sea Of Galilee* – This was an area around Bethsaida on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus' journey accomplished two things: it brought the disciples to a quiet place for rest and teaching (Mk. 6:31); and it provided a setting in the wilderness (Mt. 14:13) for the sign John records. The crowds would have no place to go for food, and the disciples would have to turn to Jesus in an impossible situation (v. 5). Jesus also was moving away from Jerusalem, the stronghold of those who wanted to kill Him (5:18; 7:1). (TLSB)

*Sea of Tiberias*. Probably the official Roman name, while Sea of Galilee was the popular name. The name came from the town of Tiberias (named after the emperor), founded c. A.D. 20, and probably was not much in use during Jesus' ministry. (CSB)

**6:2** *large crowd* – This was a time of great popularity for Jesus. A great crowd, *ochlos polus*, followed him. The main reason: they saw the "signs" Jesus had been doing. They appeared to be

more interested in witnessing the signs than in whom or what they signified. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

*signs* – John always refers to Jesus’ miracles as “signs,” a word emphasizing the significance of the action rather than the marvel (see, e.g., 4:54; 6:14; 9:16; 11:47). They revealed Jesus’ glory (see 1:14; cf. Isa 35:1–2; Joel 3:18; Am 9:13). (CSB)

**6:3** *sat down* - On the other side of the sea, Jesus ascends a mountain with his disciples for rest and to escape the multitudes. The imperfect *ekathēto*, literally “he was sitting,” indicates a period of restfulness. We take *mathētōn*, “disciples,” to include the Twelve, though not mentioned specifically. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:4** *Passover*. See note on 2:13...Notes from Exodus below: (CSB)

12:11...*Passover*. Explained in vv. 13, 23, 27 to mean that the Lord would “pass over” and not destroy the occupants of houses that were under the sign of the blood. (CSB)

12:23...*pass over. the destroyer*. In Ps 78:49 the agent of God’s wrath against the Egyptians is described as “a band of destroying angels.” God often used angels to bring destructive plagues (see 2Sa 24:15–16; 2Ki 19:35; see also 1Co 10:10, a reference to Nu 16:41–49). (CSB)

12:26...*your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’* The Passover was to be observed as a memorial feast commemorating Israel’s redemption and appropriating it anew. As observed today, it includes the asking of similar questions by the youngest child present. (CSB)

Why does John include this parenthetical sentence? Probably to show that when the multitudes should have turned south to Jerusalem, they headed north to Jesus, because the “signs” they had seen or heard of were even more important. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:5-6** Jesus is moved with compassion, even though he knows many are seeking him because of curiosity or selfish reasons. They have come a long way on foot to see him. His question is for the sake of Philip, and us readers, not because Jesus is at a loss. He is “testing,” from *peirazō*, used in the LXX for God testing various people in Gen 22:1; Deut 13:34; Jud 2:22; 3:1, 4; 2 Chron 32:3 1. These verses show that God tests in order to exercise and thereby strengthen the faithful, and to separate them from the unfaithful. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:5** *Philip*. Since he came from nearby Bethsaida (1:44), it was appropriate to ask him. (CSB)

Keep in mind that Philip has been forcing out demons and healing the sick (Mark 6:13). We’d expect him to be optimistic. A bit of faith would be appropriate. After all, he had just spend several weeks seeing the impossible happen. He can recite the stats, but can’t see how to help. He can crunch the numbers, but he can’t construct the answer. (manager vs. leader) And though the answer to prayer is standing next to him, he doesn’t even pray. Equally disturbing is the silence of the other disciples. It never occurred to the disciples to turn the problem over to Jesus. God’s faithfulness has never depended on the faithfulness of his children. He is faithful even when we aren’t. No, we don’t give up. We look up. We trust. We believe. We remember of baptism. And our optimism is not hollow. Christ has proven worthy. (A Gentle Thunder – Hearing God Through the Storm – Max Lucado pp. 90-93)

2 Corinthians 12:9 “But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

2 Timothy 2:13 “if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”

1 John 3:19-20 “This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.”

**6:6** Jesus wanted to strengthen their faith in Him as they faced an impossible situation. (TLSB)

**6:7** Philip’s answer implies that the apostles’ treasury had insufficient funds. A denarius was the usual daily wage for a laborer; in today’s currency, 200 denarii would amount to tens of thousands of dollars. Calculated another way, if lunch for each man and his dependents cost just \$5, the sum would be \$25,000. Jesus wants to bring out the hopelessness of relying on human resources alone before he acts with divine power. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:8-9** Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, seems to have searched the multitudes for food that could be shared. Perhaps Andrew’s faith in Christ shows through just a little. Here is a small supply of food, and he asks rhetorically, “How far will they go among so many?” trusting that Jesus has the situation in hand. By God’s almighty power a little can go a long, long way. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:9** *a boy* - Greek *paidarion*, “child”; common in LXX but used only here in NT. (TLSB)

*barley loaves*. Cheap bread, the food of the poor. (CSB)

**6:10** *people sit down* PEOPLE SIT DOWN - The young child is willing to allow the Lord to use his meager supply. Jesus desires that they should “recline,” *anapesein*, the normal way Jews ate, and the grassy area encouraged this arrangement. If women and children had been counted in addition to the 5,000 “men,” *andres*, the number may have exceeded 8,000 or more. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

*was much grass* - Providing comfortable seating. (TLSB)

Notes for Mark 6:39... Grass is green around the Sea of Galilee after the late winter or early spring rains.

Only Mark records this detail, possibly a vivid recollection from the disciple’s memory. (TLSB)

*about five thousand*. The number of men; women and children were not included (Mt 14:21). (CSB)

**6:11** *given thanks* - The head of a Jewish household customarily pronounced a blessing at meals. (TLSB)

Jesus takes the small boy's loaves and gives thanks, *eucharistēsas*, thus acknowledging his Father as the good and gracious Giver. The Greek word would remind John's readers of the thanksgiving offered over the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, which is the same word behind the name *Eucharist*. But again, we would not want to press this connection to the extreme. Jews normally offered a prayer of thanksgiving before every meal to acknowledge God as the true owner and giver of all food, and their total and daily dependence upon him. Though not stated, the disciples probably took from the hand of Jesus and distributed to all the hungry. Jesus gave and gave, and the food did not run out. The more he gave, the more there was to give. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:12** *eaten their fill* - Note from Matthew - They were satiated (to satisfy fully – to indulge excessively – gorge). (CC)

All the people had plenty to eat, and leftovers too! Jesus will not have leftovers thrown away. In our throw-away society, this should remind us of the need to “recycle” left-over materials. Leftovers of food should be placed in our refrigerators and eaten, rather than thrown into the garbage can. A valuable lesson in stewardship is shown here. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

*Gather the pieces.* See note on Mk 6:43... (*twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.* Bread was regarded by Jews as a gift of God, and it was required that scraps that fell on the ground during a meal be picked up. The fragments were collected in small wicker baskets that were carried as a part of daily attire. Each of the disciples returned with his basket full.) (CSB)

**6:13** *twelve baskets ... left over.* There was abundant supply. (CSB)

The “sign” is the multiplication of the food under the hand of Jesus, and includes the leftovers. It appears that each of the Twelve gathered up one *kophinos*, a small basket for a traveler's provisions. The twelve baskets are juxtaposed to the five loaves to stress the true miracle. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:14-15** The people's response about “the Prophet” like Moses echoes Deut 18:15–19, and literally “the coming one” reflects Ps 118:26. Some had thought John the Baptist was the Prophet, but recently he had been murdered by Herod. Through his prophet Moses, God had provided manna in the wilderness. Now through Jesus, God provides abundant bread in the wilderness. “The Prophet” and the Messianic King were closely linked in Jewish thought, and Jesus' miracle moved some to try to force Jesus to be their “bread king.” But Jesus knew their intent and withdrew to the solace of another mountain. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Many today want Jesus to be their “bread king.” Prosperity theology, the “health and wealth gospel,” says, “Serve God faithfully and he will grant you earthly rewards.” This must be warned against constantly in our materialistic age. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:14** *sign.* It pointed people to the Son of Man and the food for eternal life that he gives (v. 27), but they thought only of the Prophet, i.e., the prophet of Dt 18:15 who would be like Moses (see 1:21 and note). Through Moses, God had provided food and water for the people in the desert, and they expected the Prophet to do no more than this. (CSB)

As God had miraculously provided manna in the wilderness after the exodus, so Jesus miraculously provided food for these people. This sign also proved Jesus was the Christ. (TLSB)

**6:15** *make him king.* Jesus rejected the world's version of kingship as a temptation of the devil. (CSB)

People wanted to make Jesus a king on their terms (political, earthly) rather than accept Him as the King He was and is (heavenly, eternal). Satan offered the same temptation (Mt. 4:8-9). The disciples likewise held this view of Jesus (Mt. 16:21-23). (TLSB)

**6:1–15** Jesus' feeding of 5,000, the next sign recorded in Jn, reveals Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God (20:30–31). Like those who had "eaten their fill," we also are tempted to seek the Lord only for the earthly things He can give us. Fortunately for us, Jesus reigns as our heavenly King, who calls us to repentance, fills us with needed spiritual blessings, and gives us everlasting life. • O Christ, satisfy not only my temporal needs but also my deepest spiritual needs. Amen. (TLSB)

*Jesus Walks on the Water*

**16** When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, **17** got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. **18** The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. **19** When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. **20** But he said to them, "**It is I; do not be afraid.**" **21** Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

**6:16** *evening* - Darkness approaches. (TLSB)

**6:17** *got into a boat* - According to Mark, Jesus sent the disciples ahead so He could dismiss the crowd and have some private time for prayer (Mk. 6:45-46). Small wooden boats were used by fishermen and travelers. (TLSB)

*had not yet come to them* - This anticipates events to take place and emphasizes Jesus' absence. (TLSB)

**6:19** *three or four miles.* Mark says they were "in the middle of the lake" (Mk 6:47). (CSB)

*frightened.* They thought they were seeing a ghost (Mt 14:26). (CSB)

In the darkness, the disciples initially thought the figure walking on the wind-tossed sea was a phantom (Mk. 6:48-49). (TLSB)

**6:20** *it is I* - Literally "I am." (TLSB)

*do not be afraid* - Note from Mark 6:49-50...This command will be echoed at another important moment of revelation - at the empty tomb (16:6). (TLSB)

**6:21** *immediately the boat was at land.* Some think that this was another miracle. In any event, the boat's safe arrival is implicitly credited to Jesus. (CSB)

Wind immediately ceased (Mk 6:51), and they reached the near shore. (TLSB)

**6:16–21** By walking on the storm-tossed sea, Jesus shows His disciples that He is the eternal King, ruler of all creation. Today, when life’s problems overwhelm us, fear may cause us to lose faith in God’s protection and care. But Jesus is true God and true man in one person; Jesus has saved us from sin and evil, assuring us of His divine protection in every situation. • Lighten our darkness, O Lord, and protect us against the dangers of the night. Amen. (TLSB)

*I Am the Bread of Life*

**22** On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. **23** Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten 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 boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. **25** 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, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. **27** Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” **28** Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” **29** Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” **30** So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, 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 from heaven to eat.’” **32** Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave 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** They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” **35** Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever 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 whoever comes to me I will never 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** And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. **40** For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” **41** So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” **42** They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” **43** Jesus answered 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 will all be taught by God.’ 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** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. **48** I am the bread of life. **49** Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. **50** This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. **51** I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” **52** The Jews then disputed among themselves, 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 you. **54** Whoever feeds on 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 Whoever feeds on 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 whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” 59 Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.**

**6:22–24** The crowd could not figure out what had happened to Jesus. But they wanted to see him again, so they looked for him in the most likely place, Capernaum. (CSB)

When daylight came, the crowd whom Jesus had fed realized that He was gone. They were puzzled by Jesus’ absence. There had been only one boat, and Jesus stayed behind when the disciples left in it. When a fleet of boats landed on the shore where they were, they got in the boats and headed for Capernaum to search for Jesus. Still excited by the free lunch He had provided, they were eager to find Him. (LifeLight)

On the morning after the miracle of the loaves there was great excitement and astonishment on the northeastern shore of the lake. The people that had remained in that neighborhood over night, expecting to take hold of Jesus in the morning, were deeply perplexed. Only one boat had been at the place of the miraculous feeding, and that was the one into which the disciples had gone. This boat had not had Jesus as a passenger, and it had not returned. The question therefore was: How had Jesus gotten away? They were at a loss to explain His absence. But meanwhile other boats from Tiberias landed in the neighborhood of the place where the miracle had been performed. So the people took advantage of the opportunity thus offered. They were determined to find Jesus at all costs, and therefore they took some of the boats and crossed the lake to Capernaum. (Kretzmann)

**22:23** *Tiberias* – Large Greek city on the Sea of Galilee, mentioned only in John (6:1; 21:1). Herod Antipas built it in AD 16-22 and named it in honor of the reigning Roman emperor. (TLSB)

*had given thanks* - “after the Lord had given thanks.” In the Greek text, this is a genitive absolute (*eucharistēsantos tou kuriou*) that seems to lend eucharistic imagery to Jesus’ work of feeding the five thousand. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

**6:24-35** The conversation between Jesus and his addressees in our text is immediately preceded by two miracles: Jesus’ feeding of the five thousand (vv 1–15) and Jesus’ walking on water (6:16–21). The first miracle accounts for the talk about food in our text. The second miracle accounts for the people’s question in v 25, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The Gospel already surfaces in the relationship between our text and its immediately preceding context—in two ways: first, in the situation, and second, in the method of Jesus’ teaching. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

*The situation:* From v 15 of this chapter, we learn that Jesus had avoided the people he talks to in the text because they wanted to make him a king. Their pursuit of him was prompted by less than commendable motives: curiosity, materialism, and carnal security. Despite the untoward beginning of this encounter, Jesus makes the best of a bad situation and tries to elevate the people’s thinking to a higher and more spiritual plane. On the one hand, Jesus does not hesitate to



correct the mistaken approach of the people (v 26), but, on the other hand, neither does he angrily dismiss the crowd nor turn away from them in contempt. His conduct suggests an evangelical approach for pastors today: Take people where they are, with all their limitations, and with simultaneous integrity and kindness move them ahead in their understanding of God's Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

*The method of Jesus' teaching:* Be it reverently said, Jesus exploits the situation. In the context of the feeding of the five thousand, the people are thinking of bread. Similarly, to the woman at the well in John 4, Jesus presents the Gospel in the metaphor of water. Again, it seems, Jesus' procedure in these incidents provides an obvious precedent for us pastors today in our ministry to people. Present the Gospel, wherever possible, in terms of their situation and understanding. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The pericope being studied comes after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (Jn 6:1–14). This is the only miracle that is included in all four Gospels. St. John alone provides the account of Jesus' speech regarding himself as the Bread of Life. This Dominical Word was occasioned by the aftermath of the sign of the feeding when, John says, the crowd wished to take Jesus by force and make him a king—their kind of king, an earthly “bread king” (6:15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

This lesson includes the first of Jesus' “I am” sayings (6:35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). This is a distinctive feature of John's Gospel over and against the Synoptics. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Our text speaks of what happened the day following the feeding of the 5,000. Two days before Jesus and His disciples had crossed the Sea of Galilee from west to east. The next day He preached the Gospel and fed the 5,000. That evening He dismissed the disciples and He went up on the mountain to pray. The disciples boarded a boat and began to cross to the western shore. A severe storm came up and Jesus came to His disciples, walking on the water. He boarded the boat and they came to land. The next morning the crowd looked for Jesus. (Buls)

**6:25** *they found him* – “After they had found Him.” They call him rabbi. This crowd was respectful to Jesus but they were unbelievers. They ask Him: “When did you get here?” What they did not know was that He had crossed the sea in a miraculous manner. They must have been aware of the storm on the lake during the night. They are amazed at the fact that He got there so quickly. The “when” also includes the “how.” (Buls)

*heurontes*, “found”: a confirmation for those who suspected a miracle had taken place. Jesus had walked on the water to arrive at the other side (vv 16–21). The interrogative *pote*, literally, “When have you become here?” (with the perfect *gegonas* instead of the more common aorist) also entails the question, “How?” But Jesus does not respond with an explanation of his miracle. Instead, he immediately gets to the more pressing question of why they had followed him. Was it out of faith or self-interest? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

*other side* - “The other side” is Capernaum, in the synagogue (v 59). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

*when did you get here* - *ghinomahee* – To come or to arrive. Also “how” is a part of the mix.

As noted in the preceding section, the people's question, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" reflected their surprise and curiosity. How and when did Jesus get to the present location? How did he manage to beat them there? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Bonus Gospel lies in providing a broader and more profound answer to the people's question than they desired (an answer not given in the text but supplied elsewhere in the Bible). Listen, for example, to the answer of Gal 4:4–5. "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." ("When the time had fully come"—that's when the Rabbi got here!) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Or listen to the answer of Lk 2:1–7. "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David. . . . While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son." ("In those days. . . . While Quirinius was governor of Syria"—that's when the Rabbi got here!) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Jesus does not respond with an explanation of His miracle. Instead, He immediately gets to the more pressing question of why they had followed Him. Was it out of faith or self-interest? (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume, Part 3)

The people who pursued Jesus across the lake betray predictably human curiosity: "Rabbi, when did you get here?" they asked. They were aware that Jesus had not come by the boat that had conveyed his disciples across the lake (v 22). So how—and when—had Jesus arrived? The very asking of the question indirectly corroborates the account of Jesus' miraculous walking on the water (vv 19–20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

"on the other side." The walk halfway around the lake, the Sea of Galilee, is about ten miles. Since the crowds knew Jesus had not departed with the disciples by the one available boat (v 22), they were surprised he had arrived so quickly. They were unaware, of course, of his unique crossing (6:16–21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

When they had finally located the object of their quest on the other side of the lake, they opened on Him with the question as to His manner of getting there, for the when includes the how. They were always scenting the abnormal, the miraculous, in connection with this man; it was the only thing which made their quest worth while, in their estimation. But the purposes of Jesus do not agree with their curiosity, and therefore He did not give them a direct answer. His telling of the walking on the water would have precipitated a crisis then and there. (Kretzmann)

**6:26** *truly, truly I say* – The expression "in very truth I say to" occurs here and in verse 32. Jesus uses it here because the people themselves did not know their own true character so well as did Jesus. For their own good He tells them. Their motive is utterly carnal. Note that Jesus did not answer their question. (Buls)

Lenski: He replies to men's hearts not merely to their words. (Buls)

Amen, amen: Jesus' precursor of strong words to come. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 3)

“Jesus answered”—or did he? True, he did not answer the crowd's specific question. Jesus wasted no time on trivial matters. But he “answered,” that is, spoke to, their urgent and immediate problem: their need for the “food that endures to eternal life” (v 27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Jesus knew the reason for their insistence, for the great interest they were showing at this time. With solemn emphasis He tells them that the reason why they sought Him was a wrong one. (Kretzmann)

*signs* – “Signs” in the plural without the article suggests that the feeding of the 5,000 (6:1–14) had multiple significance, revealing a number of things about Jesus. The people had physically seen the signs but had not understood or believed them to be divine signs. Their lack of faith was shown by their ill-conceived effort in 6:15, and will be shown again when they request a “sign” (singular) in v 30. Here Jesus affirms that they have already seen a number of “signs” (plural). See also 14:9, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Faith in Jesus was the purpose of all the signs (20:3-31). At the miraculous feeding, the crowds saw only the gift, not the Giver. (TLSB)

Here, Jesus speaks of “signs”; the crowd he addresses will use the same word in the singular in v 30. As with most stop signs, people need to heed signs lest they put their lives in danger. Jesus did signs to support his mission to save people. He did them to serve, not to be served. In his state of humiliation, Jesus tended to shelve his divine attributes so that he could be tempted like we are but without sinning. Jesus, as the Formula of Concord (Article VIII, “The Person of Christ”) reminds us, had his human nature and divine nature contribute toward (not detract from) the salvation of people in keeping with the promises of God. Jesus' signs point to him as the one and only Savior of humankind. For a more detailed discussion of signs, one might wish to consult one or more of the following: Kittel and Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 7, pp 200–261; Alexander et al., eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, pp 775–81; Crim, ed., *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume, pp 824–25; *Wilson's Dictionary of Bible Types*, pp 405–9; Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, vol. 2, pp 625–26. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

They had indeed seen some of His signs with their bodily eyes, but they had not given them the proper attention; they were altogether lacking in the understanding that these signs were evidences, proofs, of His divinity, of the fact that He is the Son of God, the Redeemer and Savior of mankind. Thus the meaning of the great signs before their eyes escaped them entirely. (Kretzmann)

Signs and baseball signs from coach.

HAD YOUR FILL – *Echortasthēte*, “you were satisfied”: this verb, meaning “to be full, satiated,” is used by the synoptic evangelists for the miraculous feedings of the 5,000 and the 4,000 and a few other times (Mt 5:6; 14:20; 15:33, 37; Mk 6:42; 7:27; 8:4, 8; Lk 6:21; 9:17; 15:16; 16:21), but John used the passive *empimplēmi*, “to fill, satisfy” in Jn 6:12. The Johannine writings have *chortazō* only here and in Rev 19:21. It is also the LXX term in Ps 78:29; 105:40 for God miraculously providing food for Israel in the wilderness during the exodus. Jesus, therefore, is affirming that his own work is a divine miracle of deliverance. Luther’s translation has *sett*, akin to “satiated.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

They sought Him because their concern was for their bodies and stomachs. If these were but filled; their souls were not a matter of concern to them. (Kretzmann)

**6:27** *food* – *brōsin* “food” is a general term for anything eaten; in contrast to *sarx*, “flesh” (6:51 *passim*) and *kreas*, “meat” (Rom 14:21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

*that perishes* – *Apollumenēn*, “perishing,” means death is certain; not only the food perishes, but also those who eat it. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

This verse contains a prohibition, then a command followed by an explanation. Jesus uses the word “work” of the attitude and endeavor of the regenerate Christian. Its true character unfolds in verses 27-29. In verse 27 Jesus means “make the lasting food your constant endeavor.” In verse 28 the mob uses the same word in a work-righteous manner. And in verse 30 they use the same word with reference to Jesus as if He had never done a sign. (Buls)

Jesus compares the temporary good with the eternal food. Daily food and eternal food are both a gift of God. Where you have the one, you have the other. Who will give this gift? The Son of Man. Jesus is laying stress on His humanity which has received divine gifts from His divinity. Jesus uses the word “endures” or “remains” to get their minds off of mere physical food. But the crowd returns to the use of the word “bread” in verse 31. Jesus goes along with them and uses the word “bread,” but in a different sense: It is heavenly, genuine bread, God’s gift to them. In verse 33 He adds that it constantly comes from heaven and gives spiritual life to the whole world, not just to the Jews. Then in verse 35 He identifies Himself with that bread. It is both living and life-giving. Manna was neither of these. It is received by faith, not by human endeavor, and lastingly does away with spiritual hunger and thirst. A masterpiece in train of thought. (Buls)

This man standing before them is truly God. “Because God has set His seal” explains how this can happen. (Buls)

Bengel: ‘Has sealed’ -- has pointed out and distinguished Him by this very miracle. (Buls)

A “food” for which the world strives: youthfulness. In *Time Flies* (New York: Doubleday, 1987, pp. 98, 150, 164, 176), Bill Cosby wrote on the youth culture as he turned 50:

Like everyone else who makes the mistake of getting older, I begin each day with coffee and obituaries. . . . I do not mind, of course, if a few of them were ninety-five; but when I find ages close to mine, I get a chill in my aching bones. . . . At fifty, I know the way of all flesh intellectually, but a part of me still feels as immortal as a child. . . . I cannot deny that I am getting older in a country where a major religion is the Church of Acne. . . . Am I aging gracefully? Aging

gracefully is for Baryshnikov; Cosby stumbles along, doing as well as he can and doing it in the here and now. The past is a ghost, the future a dream, and all we ever have is now. This philosophical flash may belong in a fortune cookie, but it's the best I can do at fifty. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Compare this verse with v 35 and note the progression in Jesus' revelation of the truth. In v 27, Jesus points out that he gives the food of eternal life, but in v 35 he reveals that he *is* the food of eternal life. The Giver and the gift are one and the same! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Jesus posed an absolute contrast between physical and spiritual "food" without denying the importance of the physical. (TLSB)

But their efforts were worthy of a higher cause; they should work with equal diligence, not for the perishable food of the body, but for that food which will last into life everlasting. Kretzmann)

People can eat only a certain amount of food, and they usually need less than they eat. What's left eventually spoils. In the hot Mediterranean climate without modern refrigeration, food would not keep long at all. So Jesus warned the people not to focus all their energies on getting the "food that spoils, but...food that endures to eternal life. (PBC)

*eternal life*. Not something to be achieved but to be received by faith in Christ. (CSB)

*eis*, "to eternal life," is both temporal and teleological (cf. *TDNT* 2:426–29). The food of Christ lasts (does not spoil or perish) until eternity, and it sustains the faithful who eat it on their journey toward the goal of eternal life. Luther: "in das ewige Leben." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

For there is such a food which nourishes the soul and preserves the soul unto eternal life. That food alone was worth acquiring, for its effects would never lose their power. "Ye should not seek Me for the sake of transitory things; for I (this He wishes to say) am a different teacher, who does not preach of perishable food, how sowing, baking, plowing should be done; for all this ye know well even before, and Moses has taught you how ye should work. My teaching has not that aim, neither should ye come to Me for that, but that I give you an eternal food." (Kretzmann)

The apostle John uncharacteristically reported the feeding of the five thousand after the three other gospel writers had also included it. We have noted how John usually assumed his readers were familiar with the other gospel accounts. But only John's gospel has recorded the discourse that now follows, which is most meaningful when we realize it happened the day after the miraculous multiplying of bread. (PBC)

Matthew 24:35, Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

*Son of Man*. Submission of the Son to the Father is one of John's major themes (see note on 4:34). (CSB)

On the relative clause "which the Son of Man shall give you" Lenski remarks: "'shall give' removes every synergistic notion from the command 'work for'." And on "sealed" he writes: "The seal he affixed to Jesus these people had seen on the previous day in the miracles he worked especially in that of the bread." (Buls)

This is Jesus' messianic self-designation, drawing on Dan 7:13-14: the heavenly one, given "authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped Him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume, Part 3)

*Father has set his seal* – esphragisen – To put a stamp of approval on something to verify that in this case Jesus is the one who bring eternal life. This verb speaks of something that has taken place in the past and that was at Jesus' Baptism.

Note from Jeremiah 32:10... Seals were lumps of clay stamped with a signet ring or cylinder that impressed the clay with a person's official insignia. They were placed over the strings that bound a folded document, which kept it closed. Nearly 400 clay seals (bullae) have been discovered in Israel, many from the "house of Bullae" in Jerusalem, which was likely burned when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 587 BC. The fire hardened and preserved these seals. Two seals have been discovered that name Baruch the Son of Neriah the scribe (v. 12), which could have come from Jeremiah's secretary. (TLSB)

This spiritual food, which would strengthen unto eternal life, the Son of Man would give them, not because of special merit on their part, but freely, out of divine love and grace. For He had gone forth from the Father, as a proof of which He bore the seal of God. The miracle of the day before and other signs showed that God had commissioned Jesus as the Minister to give the food which nourishes unto everlasting life. They were a proof that the eternal Son of God could give eternal life to such as accepted Him in faith. "And that He says: The Son of Man, therewith He indicates clearly and publicly that God the Father has a Son whom they can see before their eyes, take hold of, hear, and feel; as St. John also says of Him: Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled; that same bodily person, born of the Virgin Mary, He will give you an eternal food." (Kretzmann)

In Luke 15:22, the father's ring signals his approval and giving of authority. Hag 2:23 promises that the "ideal Zerubbabel" will come as God's signet ring. The verb is aorist, a one-time action in the past. When did this happen? At Jesus' baptism the Spirit's visible descent and the Father's voice unmistakably declare Jesus to the Son. The same verb is used of God "sealing/stamping" Christians with the Spirit (Eph 1:13) – an allusion to Baptism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume, Part 3)

**6:28** *What must we do ... ?* They missed the point that eternal life is Christ's gift and were thinking in terms of achieving it by pious works. (CSB)

In their question they lay stress on "we." "What must WE do in order that WE might work the works of God?" (Buls)

Kretzmann: They were caught in the idea that there must be some merit on their part, that they must perform something for their salvation.

Lenski: These people imagine that there is an entire scale of such works, a multiplicity of meritorious deeds to be done by them . . . . Jesus speaks of grace; they think of work-righteousness. (Buls)

They are thinking of the multitudinous legal works required by Judaism. (Buls)

The human penchant for salvation by works betrays itself in the people's question, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Remember the rich young ruler? He had the same problem. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" he asked (Mk 10:17). Similarly, Paul and Silas's jailer: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). The problem of works-righteousness is as old—and as continuously persistent—as the problem of sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

ergadzomahee – Means the toil and commitment required. They had missed the point and were thinking of earning something by their own deeds that is why the word "works" plural, is used.

"Work God's works?" reuses Jesus' verb *ergazomai* from v 27 and adds the plural noun *erga* from the same root. The present subjunctive verb denotes continual activity. The plural, "God's works," suggests that the questioners anticipate the continual doing of many works. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

What must we do? What's the meaning of life? An essentially religious question. Hamlet answers, "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world!" (Act I, Scene 2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Which works? Can we find hope in the Law/Morality? In "God Whose Gifts in Gracious Flood," Victor Hugo, like many others, seemed to think so:

God whose gifts in gracious flood  
Unto all who seek are sent,  
Only asks you to be good  
And is content (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Some of the people in the multitude at least were impressed by this statement of Jesus that they should labor, that they should earnestly strive to acquire food with such wonderful power, and they wanted to know what they must do in order to make themselves fit to perform such works as would be acceptable before God, as would be well-pleasing to Him. They were caught in the idea that there must be some merit on their part, that they must perform something for their salvation. (Kretzmann)

**6:29** *work of God*. Believing in Jesus Christ is the indispensable "work" God calls for—the one that leads to eternal life. (CSB)

The crowd asked about righteous "works" (v. 28), but Jesus singled out one necessary work: faith in Him, which is God's gift. (TLSB)

The proper understanding of this verse is crucial to the whole pericope. Note that "work" is singular. Furthermore, contextually "of God" must be subjective genitive in the sense of "which God gives." The verb "believe" is in the present tense, a continued believing. (Buls)

Lutherans have a unique understanding of the word "faith." (Buls)

*Formula of Concord*, S.D., Art. II, Free Will, 25-27 (Tappert p. 526 where John 6:29 and 44 are quoted): Holy Scripture ascribe conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal, and everything that belongs to its real beginning and completion in no way to the human powers of the natural free will, be it entirely or one-half or the least and tiniest part, but altogether and alone to the divine operation and the Holy Spirit, as the Apology declares. (Buls)

Luther, Lenski, Ylvisaker, Kretzmann and Stoeckhardt are worth reading on verse 29. (Buls)

Lenski: We, indeed, must do the believing, but our believing is the work of God. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: Faith is nothing but willingness, a work of man which pleases God. But God Himself and God alone works this willingness, brings about this work in man. (Buls)

Luther: Faith is a divine work which God demands of us; but at the same time He Himself must implant it in us, for we cannot believe by ourselves. (Buls)

What a thrilling surprise is Jesus' answer: "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." We work in God's behalf—how? By letting God work in our behalf! To show our response to God, we're directed to believe in him—and that, too, incidentally, is the work of God (the Holy Spirit), not of ourselves. And why are we asked to believe in him? So that through our belief in him, he might give us the gift of eternal life! The first thing we're urged to do by way of thanking God for all his benefits toward us is to accept another benefit from him: salvation. We repay God for all his blessings by merely receiving another blessing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The work of God is not a work we do for God. It is the work of God does in us so we believe in His Son. We believe and live. (PBC)

*ergon* – The act, deed or labor necessary. There is only one act of believing in Christ as our savior that is needed. It is not a good work on our part but a response to God's offer of grace. Even the faith we receive through grace is a gift from God. We did not choose him, he chose us. John 15:16.

But just one "work" (*ergon*, singular) is Jesus' answer. "Believe" is present tense, denoting a continuing posture of trust, not a once-and-for-all decision. Lest the verse be misunderstood to imply that faith/believing is a good work done by man, note that Jesus is stating *what* one should do; here he is not describing *how* one is enabled to do it. Just a few verses later Jesus will address the issue of *how* one is brought to faith, and he makes clear that faith is the work of God in man, not man's work (Jn 6:44). See also Jn 12:32; and the work of the Spirit in Jn 14:15–31; 16:5–15. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

But Jesus corrects that notion. There is only one thing which they should do, and that is to believe on Him whom God has sent. Faith is here spoken of as a work of man which he does in order to obtain salvation. That side of faith, trust, full and complete reliance in Jesus and His salvation, that is brought out here: the fact that every believer must accept and hold Jesus and His salvation. That is actually a work of the believer, an act of reason and will. True, this faith must be wrought by God and cannot come into being without God's power; also, faith is not a work which merits redemption, it is not that its moral excellence saves men. But when God has worked faith in the



heart of man, when spiritual life has been engendered in the heart of man, then man is active in accepting that wonderful food which nourishes unto life eternal. (Kretzmann)

Romans 10:17, “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

**6:30** *What will you do?* They seek from Jesus a sign greater than the gift of manna that had accompanied Moses’ ministry. (CSB)

The answer in verses 30-31 betrays their spiritual blindness. Though they had witnessed a sign they now ask Jesus to work one so that they believe. (Buls)

Luther: The learned and the work-righteous always know better. They love God as lice love a tramp; far from being interested in his welfare, their one concern is to feed on him and suck his blood. (Buls)

Whenever man prescribes a condition on which he will believe, it is not faith but work-righteousness which is speaking. (Buls)

When hearts grow hard in unbelief, no miracle is enough to change that condition. These people had just seen Jesus multiply bread and fish to feed them, yet the next morning they asked Him to give them a sign that would move them to believe. (PBC)

Strack-Billerbeck (*Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud and Midrasch*, Munich, 1922–28) quote a rabbinic saying that Jews must listen to a prophet who gives a “sign and wonder.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

“See . . . and believe” contrasts with the implication in v 26: they saw but didn’t believe. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

“What will you do . . .” uses *ergazomai* again, as in vv 27 and 28. The force of their challenge is, “What labor will you do that will prompt our labor for which you called (v 27)—labor to earn spiritual food?” They are thinking in terms of works-righteousness: they want a work done by Jesus to merit their own meritorious “works of God” (v 28). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

That Jesus demanded faith in Himself as a condition of their obtaining salvation, this the Jews now understood. They therefore demanded proof of His ambassadorship and of His ministry, which, as He claimed, elevated Him to the divine rank. It is a most peculiar thing that they did not yet understand the relation between the miracles of Jesus and His divine mission, His deity. They challenge Him to produce some extraordinary sign which would convince them beyond question, which would oblige them to believe. (Kretzmann)

**6:31-35** “bread.” Bread was treated respectfully as a gift from God that was not to be taken for granted. If bread is found on the ground in the Holy Land, it is not to be stepped on. Some have fed it to dogs or put it on an elevated branch for the birds to eat. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

**6:31** *manna*. A popular Jewish expectation was that when the Messiah came he would renew the sending of manna. The crowd probably reasoned that Jesus had done little compared to Moses. He had fed 5,000; Moses had fed a nation. He did it once; Moses did it for 40 years. He gave ordinary bread; Moses gave “bread from heaven.” (CSB)

Manna: See Ex 16:15, “What is it?” Jesus’ reply in v 32 implies that the people still don’t know that he is the true spiritual food from heaven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

The crowd quoted the OT to support their demand that Jesus perform a miracle like Moses had done, which they assumed was greater than Jesus’ signs. (TLSB)

They back up their statement with Scripture. What are they saying? (Bulls)

- a. That Moses did a greater work than did Jesus; and,
- b. That the gift of manna was greater than the feeding of the 5,000.

*bread from heaven* – Ps 78:24, “grain of heaven”; and 105:40, “bread from heaven.” The LXX translates both by *artos*, “bread,” the word Jesus uses throughout John 6 for himself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

**6:32** *truly, truly I say* – Here is another “In very truth I tell you.” Jesus uses it to correct them. The Father, not Moses, gave them manna. (Bulls)

Furthermore, the genuine bread from heaven is a present fact, a gift of God. Note that the verb “gives you” denotes a permanent giving. Manna was very temporary. Manna was not the genuine, heavenly bread. It was only a type thereof. (Bulls)

As Jesus is standing there He is offering Himself to these unbelievers. (Bulls)

Luther: Christ denies Moses all power to help obtain eternal life. (Bulls)

Lenski: Note the contrasts: Moses -- my Father; did not give -- is giving; bread out of heaven, as these people understand it -- bread out of heaven, as Jesus understands it; out of heaven, not applicable to the manna, which never was in heaven -- out of heaven, applicable to the genuine bread, which actually was in heaven and actually comes down out of heaven. (Bulls)

Jesus corrected them, pointing out that the manna in the desert did not come from Moses but from God, and that the Father still “gives” (the present tense is important) the true bread from heaven (life through the Son). (CSB)

Jesus supplies two correctives to the crowd’s comment in the prior verse. First, the correct antecedent for the “he” in “He gave them bread from heaven to eat” (v 31) is God, not Moses. God was the ultimate source for the manna and quail provided for the Israelites in their desert wandering. Second, even that food that God provided was “food that spoils” (v 27). It only sustained bodily life, a life that would eventually end. At best, that food was only a type, a foreshadowing, of the food, Jesus, the bread of life, standing before the crowd that very moment. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Is Jesus saying that it was not Moses who gave the manna, or that the manna given through Moses was not the true bread from heaven? The negative *ou* preceding “Moses” and the perfect

verb *dedōken* suggest the literal translation, “It is not Moses who has given you the bread out from heaven.” The meaning is that the manna that began in the wilderness was a perishable, physical gift—from God, through Moses; and more importantly, Jesus affirms that “my Father gives (*didōsin*, present tense: continues to give) you the true (*alēthinos*, “true, genuine, authentic”; Luther: *rechte*) spiritual bread from heaven.” That bread is Jesus himself. Later, Jesus will say that *he himself* gives the bread—claiming unity with the Father—and that the bread he gives is his flesh for the life of the world (v 51). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Are you as capable as Moses? The crowd knew and enjoyed the physical food provided in the feeding of the 5,000. But that was a one-time event. “Are you able to be like Moses, who continually fed us ‘angel food’ through 40 years in the wilderness; and who fed not just 5,000 people but a whole nation?” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

They put the matter so as to make Him responsible for their faith or unbelief. They expect a sign from Him something like that of Moses, who produced manna for the Israelites in the wilderness. They refer to a passage from Scripture, Ps. 78: 24-25, which speaks of this wonderful feeding with bread from heaven. In a way, the expression "bread from heaven" could stand, since the manna had fallen down from the sky with the dew, but at best this was merely a figurative expression. (Kretzmann)

**6:33** *the bread of God.* Jesus moved the discussion to something (and Someone) much more important than manna. (CSB)

This verse explains Jesus' previous statement. "Of God" distinguishes this bread from all others. Jesus is, of course, speaking of Himself when He says: "Which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Jesus differs from manna in these respects: (Buls)

1. He is the bread of God;
2. He, unlike manna, comes down from heaven;
3. He gives life. Manna was unable to do that;
4. He gives life to the world, all people.

Manna merely sustained life, and was limited to the covenant people. Manna was given to living people to keep them alive. The genuine bread gives life to people who are dead, spiritually dead. (Buls)

“The bread of God” (previously “the bread of heaven”) is Jesus, who comes down from heaven. The participle *katabainōn*, used also for the descending Spirit in Jn 1:32, is present tense, indicating more than Jesus’ descent at his incarnation: today Jesus continues to come down through Word and Sacrament to give us life. *Zōe* is true, indestructible life, in contrast to the qualified-by-death life of the body; a life that can be given (and taken away) only by the God who has life in himself. This life is in the One who came down and who alone gives it to the whole world (*kosmos*) and not just to Israel, as Moses did. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Jesus therefore declares, with great emphasis: Not Moses gave you bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true Bread from heaven. Even in the desert it was not Moses that gave the

children of Israel the manna, and so, at best, Moses can be spoken of in this connection by courtesy only; he had nothing to do with the miracle. But here matters are different; here is the true Bread from heaven given to all men by the Father. He that comes down from heaven with the purpose of giving life to the world, He is the Bread of God, Jesus the Savior. He is the Bread from heaven in deed and in truth, and by His work of giving salvation He establishes that fact beyond doubt. (Kretzmann)

**6:34-35** A simple request is given a direct, immediate answer. Jesus' audience asks for the bread of life, and Jesus responds, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

**6:34** *sir* - Considering the speakers, *kurie* (usually "Lord") is better translated as a polite "Sir." Their request for him always to give such heavenly bread is similar to the Samaritan woman's request for Jesus always to give her living water (Jn 4:15). In both cases the speakers understand water/bread in a physical sense, and are groping for a true and spiritual understanding of Jesus' gifts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

LB, TEV, NIV, JB and NEB translate "Sir." That is very likely correct because they are still unbelievers. Compare their answer with that of the Samaritan woman at 4:15. They really do want this bread, but they think that Jesus is speaking only of physical bread. (Buls)

*this bread.* Probably another misunderstanding, like that by the woman at the well (4:15; cf. also Nicodemus, 3:4). Their minds ran along materialistic lines. (CSB)

This saying impressed the Jews very deeply; they had but a faint conception of what the Lord might mean in speaking of this wonderful Bread, something like the woman of Samaria. They begged Jesus that He would always, at all times, give them that bread. Their understanding was still not clear, but they have caught enough of His earnestness and enthusiasm, and desire plain information. Note: A great deal has been gained if we can get the unbelievers to ask questions concerning Jesus and His salvation, perhaps persuade them of the fact that Christianity in itself is worthwhile, invite them to come to church. (Kretzmann)

*Give us this bread always.* The people continue to understand daily bread as something physical, as something separate and distinct from the person of Jesus/God. We too eagerly go after that which nourishes the body; but we have a greater need. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

**6:35-51** The bread of life discourse occurs in a Passover context (6:4), bringing to mind the sacrifice this Incarnate One will offer to atone for sin. By giving his flesh for the life of the world, Jesus declares this atonement is universal and not particular. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Jesus' teaching here will soon divide those who believe in him (his disciples) from those who do not; those offended by his words about eating his flesh will withdraw from him (6:66). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**6:35** *I am.* The first of seven self-descriptions of Jesus introduced by "I am" (see 8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). In the Greek the words are solemnly emphatic and echo Ex 3:14. (CSB)

Jesus clearly identified Himself as the source of real life, which lasts forever. (TL5B)

Bengel: 'I am' -- To those who seek Him, He offers Himself immediately. (Buls)

Westcott: This form of expression (I am) is not found in the Synoptists. It occurs not infrequently in John's Gospel, and the figures with which it is connected furnish a complete study of the Lord's work. (Buls)

This is the first of the seven "I am" passages in this Gospel. It is repeated in verses 41, 48, and 51 in this chapter. The others are found at 8:12; 10:7-9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; and 15:1-5. The combination "I am" with reference to Christ also appears in 4:26; 6:20; 8:18; 13:19; 14:3 and 18:5. In each case it means: "I (and no one else) am, etc." (Buls)

John makes extensive use of the "I am" statements of Jesus. This phrase harkens back to Ex 3:14-15, where God reveals himself to Moses in the theophany of the burning bush that is not consumed. Moses asks God for his name and God responds: "I AM WHO I AM." This Johannine phenomenon is discussed in many reference books and commentaries (*The Lutheran Study Bible* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009], 1784-85; Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*; Green, McKnight, and Marshall, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*; and the last Appendix in the Anchor Bible, vol. 29, Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, to name a few). The significance of this designation as a claim to be God can probably be seen best in Jn 8:58-59, where the reaction to Jesus' use of this term was a hostile crowd seeking to stone (cf. Lev 24:16) Jesus for what their hard hearts supposed to be blasphemy on his part. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

This "I AM" comes from Exodus 3:14. . It also means "He is" or "He will be." Basically it is an assertion of authority.

*the bread of life.* † May mean "the bread that is living" and/or "the bread that gives life." What is implied in v. 33 is now made explicit and repeated with minor variations in vv. 41, 48, 51. It is possible that both meanings are implied.. (CSB)

"Of life" means both "living" in verse 51 and "life-giving" in verse 54. Manna was neither of these. (Buls)

Luther: To come to Christ is the same as to believe in Christ . . . He is speaking of bread in the sense of coming to Christ, that is, believing in Christ. For to eat, to come to Christ, and to believe in Christ are all one and the same thing . . . It is obvious, therefore, that in this chapter the Lord is speaking of spiritual eating. (Buls)

Lenski: 'The bread of life' like 'the water of life' in chapter four is Biblical allegory which unites the figure 'bread' with the reality 'life' and thus always interprets itself. (Buls)

Here Jesus introduces the idea of drinking as well as eating. Later in the chapter he will speak of eating his body and drinking his blood (vv 53-56). Luther comments (Luther's Works, vol. 23, *Sermons on the Gospel of John, Chapters 6-8*):

It is faith which eats him. . . . To "eat" here refers to a spiritual eating and consuming (p. 116).

“I will be the Donor, the Baker, the Brewer, and the Farmer. Yes, I Myself will be the Food; I Myself will be the Bread. It must be your concern to eat” (p. 14).

We cannot give ourselves this food; we must obtain it from the Son of Man. Therefore all that is necessary is that Christ affix His seal, and I am assured that my God is gracious to me (p. 15).

When I have this food, I will reject not only physical food but also the spiritual food served by the fanatics and schismatic spirits (p. 19).

“What must we do . . . ?” [v 28]. The Lord replies [v 29]: “[B]elieve on the Son. . . .” With this one statement the Lord directs our attention to the subject of faith, overthrowing all their external worship of the Law and of works (p. 22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

At this point Jesus becomes clear and emphatic. “Do you understand? I am the bread of life. If you receive Me by faith, you will have eternal life. You will be in a loving, saving relationship with Me and with My Father. And that relationship will never end. Even death will not end it. (LL)

Jesus now makes a plain, frank statement. He had not said that He would give the wonderful bread that came down from heaven, but He had asserted that this miraculous Bread which came down from heaven had the power to give eternal life. He Himself is that Bread of Life. No matter who it is that comes to Him, he will no more suffer with hunger, just as he that drinks of the living water of His salvation will never again be bothered with thirst. To come to Jesus means to believe in Him as the Savior of the world. All the desires and longings of the soul find their complete gratification in Him and His mercy. (Kretzmann)

*will come to me* – “Comes” can be interchanged with “believe” and “hungry” with “thirsty.” In Jesus all spiritual hunger and thirst is satisfied. WE have that blessing from Jesus as long as we believe in Him. (PBC)

*shall never thirst* – This alludes to Jesus as the living water that quenches thirst forever. Notes – Acts 2:42.

“Thirst” alludes again to Jesus as the living water that quenches thirst forever (Jn 4:14). In light of “born of water and the Spirit” in Jn 3:5 and the identification of the flowing water with the gift of the Spirit in Jn 7:37–39, Jesus’ promise here is fulfilled in Holy Baptism; that is the occasion when one “comes to me [Jesus]” and by the Spirit’s power “believes in me.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

John 3:5 “Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.”

John 4:14 “but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 7:37-39 “On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those

who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

The following OT references that tell about God's wisdom and revelation helping with hunger and thirst and giving life. Notes – Acts 2:42..

Psalms 119:103 “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”

Proverbs 3:18 “She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed.”

Proverbs 4:4 “he taught me and said, “Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live.”

Proverbs 8:35 “or whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD.”

There are further parallels in OT wisdom literature where God's wisdom or revelation satisfies hunger and thirst, and gives life (Ps 119:103, 131; Prov 3:18; 4:4; 8:35; 9:1–12). Compare also Sirach 24:20, where wisdom personified says of herself, “Those who eat me will hunger for more, and those who drink me will thirst for more.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

**6:36** Contrast 20:29. (CSB)

But although the Son of God and such perfect satisfaction was brought so near to the Jews, yet they did not believe. They have seen Him in His ministry of miracles, and they have heard the words of life which issued from His mouth at such times, but they have refused to believe. They should know, therefore, that everything which the Father gives to the Son will come to Him. To come to Jesus is to believe; faith is a spiritual coming. The heart and the will of a person goes to Christ, is joined to Christ. (Kretzmann)

**6:37** God's action (see v. 44; 10:29; 17:6; 18:9), not man's (v. 28), is primary in salvation, and Christ's mercy is unfailing (see vv. 31–40; 10:28; 17:9, 12, 15, 19; 18:9). (CSB)

All those people actually come to Jesus whom the Father has given to Him as His own. Faith is the result of God's merciful selection. It is a call and selection of grace, and therefore none of those that come to Him in faith will the Lord cast out. God's thoughts are thoughts of peace and mercy only; He has no desire for the death of any sinner. To fulfill this merciful kind purpose of His heavenly Father Jesus has come into the world. (Kretzmann)

No one has the willpower to choose to believe in Jesus or come to God. Faith comes to the believer as a gift from God, just as physical life comes as a gift. (TLSB)

**6:38-40** *to thelēma*, “will,” used eleven times in John's Gospel. In 1:13, John contrasts God's will with both the will of flesh and of man; God's will causes belief and rebirth; neither the will of flesh nor of man can. Obedience to God's will serves as Jesus' food (4:34) and enables others to know Jesus' teaching is from God (7:17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**6:38** *I have come down from heaven.* Repeated six times in this context (vv. 33, 38, 41, 50–51, 58), emphasizing Jesus’ divine origin. (CSB)

**6:39** *I should lose nothing.* The true believer will persevere because of Christ’s firm hold on him (see Php 1:6). (CSB)

Salvation of the believers is secure in Christ, who let’s none of His own slip through His fingers (cf. 1 Peter 1:3-5). (TLSB)

It is the will of the Father that Jesus will lose none of those whom the Father has given Him. They are all equally precious in His sight, far too dearly bought to be lost. Those, therefore, whom the Father has given to the Son as His own, the Son should raise from the dead on the last day to give them the full enjoyment of the blessings and the glory which are their heritage. (Kretzmann)

*the last day.* An expression found only in John in the NT (see vv. 40, 44, 54). (CSB)

**6:40** *looks* – This is seeing Jesus with eyes of faith. The chief worship of the Gospel is to desire to receive the forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness. (TLSB)

*raise him up at the last day.* Death cannot destroy the life that Christ gives. (CSB)

For the sake of clearness and emphasis, Jesus repeats the same thought. It is the will of the Father who sent the Son into the world that everyone that looks upon the Son in faith, that accepts Him as the Son of God and the Savior of the world, shall, without fail, have eternal life, shall become partaker of the glories of heaven by and in the resurrection. In Christ we have been chosen unto eternal life. (Kretzmann)

**6:41-51** The preceding context is vital for understanding today’s Gospel. Jn 6:41–51 serves as divine commentary on the feeding of the 5,000 in Jn 6:1–15, the one miracle presented in all four gospels. But only John tells us the following: the miraculous sign took place near the Passover (Jn 6:4); Jesus conversed with Philip and Andrew (6:6–8); a child’s food was involved (6:9); Jesus himself distributed the food (6:11); and afterward the people wanted forcibly to crown Jesus their king (6:15). Use a synopsis to understand better the high Christology of the Johannine version. In the sermon, an introductory review of the feeding will help people better understand Jesus’ claim to be the bread of life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Unlike the synoptic gospels, John contains Jesus’ interpretation of the feeding (Jn 6:25–29). The context immediately preceding our text provides several helpful and important keys to understanding. First, Jesus admonishes his listeners for low expectations. They seek food of limited, even spoiling, value while he offers something approved by God and of eternal worth (Jn 6:26–27). Second, people who do not understand the gracious offer first ask what they must do, and then ask Jesus to do something spectacular before they will trust him (Jn 6:28–31). The succinct Christology of Jn 6:32–40 provides the basis not only for the grumbling of unbelievers (6:41), but also for Jesus’ review and reinforcement of the truth in our text. In brief, Jesus teaches that he is and offers something better than the trusted paradigm of Moses. Jesus is the bread of life, who does the will of the Father, and he will raise up on the last day all who believe, giving to them eternal life. Christology and the gift of eternal life provide two promising pillars for today’s Gospel message. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)



The verses following our text form next Sunday's Gospel, which personalizes Christology. Using terms that remind many of the Eucharist, Jesus stresses the reality of the divine food that we receive in him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

John 6:41–51 is highly Christological. It begins and ends with the dramatic "I AM" claims that are impossible to translate with equivalent force. Jesus, as the divine "I AM," is the "(living) bread that came down from heaven" (Jn 6:41, 51). The grumbling of v 41 stands in reaction to Jesus' initial claim in v 35. To understand the metaphor, it may help to meditate on it also as a simile: "I am just like food that causes life" (Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of John* [United Bible Societies: London, 1980] 198). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

The text has two unequal parts: vv 41–42 express unbelief, and vv 43–51 explain the gift of God in Jesus Christ and call people to faith in him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Like the Gospels for the preceding Sunday and the succeeding Sunday, the Gospel for this Sunday presents Jesus as "the bread that came down from heaven" (v 41), which "gives life to the world" (v 33). Informing all of these Gospel selections, of course, is the account of Jesus' miraculous feeding of the five thousand, with which John 6 begins. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

But the Gospel for this Sunday does not simply mirror the Gospels for the preceding Sunday and the subsequent Sunday. A new feature in today's Gospel is the mystery of Christ's person. V 42 explores the mystery of how Jesus can be simultaneously human and divine. How can the son of Joseph and Mary, people whom Jesus' audience knows, claim to have come down from heaven? Given that puzzle, it is no wonder Jesus insists in v 44 that no person can come to faith "unless the Father . . . draws him" and in v 45 that such a person must "be taught by God." That is another new feature in this Gospel selection: the accent on God the Father's activity in our salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

**6:41-42** Jesus' opponents thought they knew His background and parentage (cf. Mt 13:53-58). Thus, any implication that He was more than of human origin was grounds for complaint on their part. (TLSB)

The people in our text seem to be more disturbed by Jesus' claim of coming down from heaven than they are by his claim that he is the bread of life. How can a person whose father and mother they know claim to be the Son of the heavenly Father? How can a person whose birthplace they know to be Bethlehem claim to have originated in heaven? To be sure, the question of Jesus' origin is germane to the question of Jesus' "breadship." The people correctly reason that if Jesus didn't really come down from heaven, then his claim of being the bread "that endures to eternal life" (v 27) is not true either. What Jesus claims to do for us can never be divorced from who Jesus is. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

**6:41** *the Jews*. At this point the Jews started to grumble, to murmur among themselves, to express their disapproval. The idea that this man should Himself be that wonderful Bread which had come down from heaven seemed preposterous to them. (Kretzmann)

Literally, "were grumbling." This is an allusion to the Israelites' grumbling in the wilderness (cf. Ex 15:24). (TLSB)

Some commentators feel that a different audience is introduced at this point. But there is no proof for this. (Buls)

The Gospel of John uses the term "the Jews" in pejorative sense, meaning Jesus' enemies, those who hated Him. (Buls)

Though they grumble at Him, He does not abandon them but keeps on offering Himself to them. The cause of their grumbling is stated at the end of verse 41 and explained further in verse 42. Verses 41-51 center in the person of Christ. (Buls)

The text begins with the same Greek verb, *gonguzō*, used in the Septuagint to describe the "grumbling" of God's people following the Exodus (Ex 16:2–11). The word invites us to compare the rejection of Jesus to a lack of faith in the God of the Exodus, and encourages us to examine our own unfaithful grumbling. Now, as in the past, people grumble when their problems are not immediately solved, or they do not understand what is happening. Grumbling exposes dissatisfaction, selfishness, and lack of trust in God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:42** *son of Joseph* – They could not merely not understand how this could be true, but they believed themselves to be in possession of evidence to the contrary. They were sure that they knew His antecedents, they were acquainted with His mother, they knew the name of His father. Note: It has always been an offense to the reason of man that God and man are united in the person of Jesus. (Kretzmann)

The question in the first part of the verse expects an affirmative answer. The second question amounts to doubting what Jesus said of Himself. They are plainly denying His divinity. (Buls)

Lenski: 'Out of heaven have I come down.' That, indeed, is the vital point in all that Jesus said to them. It has ever been the stumbling block and rock of offense for unbelief. (Buls)

In preaching, instead of constantly referring to "the Jews" (6:41), try using a descriptive term like "unbelievers." Listeners who think only of others could miss the text's warning about faithlessness, and its invitation to all to trust Jesus as God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

The unbelievers in the text do not accept Jesus' claim to be the I AM who came down from heaven because they see the human side of life. They connect Jesus with Joseph and Jesus' human mother, rather than heaven. Since this element of unbelief is the foil of Jesus' self identity, it is important to provide contemporary analogies to prepare the listeners to appreciate Jesus' saving message. Like unbelievers of old, we grumble when we do not get immediate gratification. God seems too human for us unless miracles constantly help us. We want divine intervention that gives us what we want, when we want it. For ancient unbelievers, Jesus could not have a human family and still be the incarnate Lord from heaven. When Christians today claim to know God through the revelation of Christ in Word and Sacrament, unbelievers scoff. The human side of divine revelation continues to provoke opposition. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:43** *do not grumble* – But the Lord here advises against all murmuring, against all attempts to make the matter plausible to reason. (Kretzmann)

Jesus' command to stop grumbling (present imperative) also means stop doubting. The sermon may explore how God's command to stop negative behavior challenges latent unbelief and is a prolog of faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Lenski: In external and worldly matters let reason be the judge. But in heavenly matters and in matter of faith, when a question of salvation is involved, bid reason observe silence and hold still. 'No one' is applied here to the entire human race, to the whole world, with no one excepted, inclusive of the mightiest, the holiest, the wisest, and the most learned . . . But you come to Him when the Father shows you His great mercy, when He assures you that He will reveal Himself as having sent His Son into the world out of paternal love, as is written John 3:16. (Buls)

**6:44-47** The declaration that no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him can be understood as an invitation to stop resisting God. Jesus quickly gives two reasons to stop pulling away from God: he promises resurrection on the last day and the fulfillment of the prophetic promise of learning from God. The OT reference invites people to learn of God in Jesus Christ. The text emphasizes the resurrection on the last day because of the repeated terminology in vv 39, 40, 45, 54. Set the goal that every listener may know more certainly the gift of eternal life in Jesus. It may be helpful to contrast the Christian promise with New Age false promises of divine knowledge through introspection or the teachings of mere humans (L. Ron Hubbard, etc.). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Repeatedly, Jesus clarifies that coming to Jesus, believing in him, and seeing God are not the outcome of human effort. "No one can come to me unless the Father . . . draws him. . . . 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me." No one can see the Father unless he sees the Son, who alone "has seen the Father." How well Luther put it: "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ . . . or come to Him" (*Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, p. 17). As St. Paul reminds us, "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

**6:44** *draws*.† People do not come to Christ on their own initiative; the Father draws them. (CSB)

This verse begins with a present general condition to which there are no exceptions. Implicit in this verse is the thought that natural man is spiritually blind, dead and an enemy of God. Lenski notes that Luther based the explanation of the third article on this verse. (Buls)

The verb "draws" denotes the drawing of a dead weight, as for example in the beaching of a ship. God alone can draw. This verse excludes every vestige of synergism, also that of a Christian who is tempted often to think that he has spiritual powers of his own. (Buls)

In John 12:32 Jesus uses the verb "draw" with reference to His crucifixion. There is no drawing, apart from the crucified Christ. (Buls)

For the third time Jesus says: "And I will raise him on the last day." Look at verses 39 and 40. In verse 39 it is contrasted with losing a Christian: "I will not lose anyone but I will raise him." In verse 40 Jesus makes clear that where there is faith in life eternal, there the individual has the assurance of resurrection. And in verse 44 we are told that through the monergistic drawing of the Father, Jesus will raise the individual on the last day. Faith does not grumble but rejoices in the Father and the Son. (Buls)

For no man can come to Christ by His own reason and strength. All brooding and disputing will not work faith in the heart. There must be a drawing on the part of the Father, by whose strength faith is worked in the heart. Without this work on the part of the Father there can be no faith nor any rising to eternal life. (Kretzmann)

God alone has the power to make the spiritually alive (cf. 5:25-26). "To have God, you can easily see, it not to take hold of Him with our hands or put Him in a bag (like money) or lock Him in a chest (like silver vessels). Instead to have Him means that the heart takes hold of Him and clings to Him. To cling to Him with the heart is nothing else than to trust in Him entirely. For this reason God wishes to turn us away from everything else that exists outside of Him and to draw us to Himself" (LC I 13-15). (TLSB)

**6:45** *the Prophets*. The section of the OT from which the quotation is taken. (CSB)

*Everyone who ...heard and learned from the Father*. Only those who learn from God come to salvation, and all who learn from him are saved. (CSB)

This is from a section in Isaiah, where the prophet foretells Zion's future glory when the Messiah will rule His people. (TLSB)

Jesus correctly quotes Isaiah 54:12 which foretold justification through faith in Christ. His hearers had misquoted Scripture in verse 31 in the interest of work-righteousness. (Buls)

God is the great teacher. The Father draws the individual by causing the individual to hear and learn of Jesus. That person comes to Christ which is synonymous with believing in Him. Isaiah 54 describes the blessed condition of those who believe in the Savior described in Isaiah 53. (Buls)

Lenski: The fact that some, like these Galileans, hear with deaf hearts and ears and refuse to learn is here not considered by Jesus. (Buls)

Kretzmann: Those that are taught of God, that have learned the lesson of their own inability and lack of strength, and therefore both hear the Father and in all things learn of Him, only they can come to faith in Christ. The Father uses no compulsion, but makes use of teaching only. (Buls)

True. God uses His ordained servants of the Word so that people may hear and learn what God, the great Teacher, says. (Buls)

That is the origin, the reason of belief in Jesus: the Father draws to the Son; He influences heart and will in such a way that a person accepts Jesus as His Savior and disregards entirely all difficulties which his reason may experience in the understanding of the person of the Savior. God not only gives the power to come to faith and to choose the good, but He works, creates all good in man and makes him willing. Faith is altogether a work of God. "What does 'no man' mean? Do you think it refers only to a cow or ass, or some other animal? Rather 'no man' here refers to the entire human race, the whole world, no man excepted, the most powerful, the most holy, the most prudent, the wisest. It is spoken briefly, but it is a powerful phrase, which thrusts down and throws to the ground all that is called human wisdom, reason, judgment, righteousness, and holiness, also religion and worship. For to come to this article and salvation in Christ no wisdom helps, no prudence, no shedding of blood and giving of alms, nor what the entire human generation is able to do with wisdom, with piety and sanctity. For it says: No man can come to

Me, except the Father draw him. This should be taught” 34) This fact Jesus substantiates by a passage from the prophets: They will all be taught by God, Is. 54, 13. Those that are taught of God, that have learned the lesson of their own inability and lack of strength, and therefore both hear the Father and in all things learn of Him, only they can come to faith in Christ. The Father uses no compulsion, but makes use of teaching only. He appeals to the reason and understanding, to the heart and the will of men, teaches and persuades and makes them willing. And this is possible only because God incidentally illumines the heart. In that way the Father works the willingness, in that way man becomes eager to come to Jesus by faith in His atonement. This is not to be understood as though there were any physical contact between God and man; the knowledge of God was not communicated directly, by immediate vision of God. (Kretzmann)

**6:46** There is only one Man who has received His Being directly from God and who is also in immediate communication with God; He it is that has seen the Father. For that reason it is essential that a Christian believe the Word of Jesus without the slightest doubt, since His deity demands as much. (Kretzmann)

In John 6:2, 14, 30, 36, and in the first in 46 forms of "to see" are used. In all instances it is mere physical seeing, apart from faith. (In verse 40 Jesus speaks of spiritual seeing, faith, a work of God in man.) In 46b it is said of Jesus that He has seen the Father. But He is the God-Man. Jesus is making reference to both His divinity and to His humanity. (Buls)

Luther: Do not stray into the belief that one can come to the Father without the Person of Christ. Therefore He binds our ears and our hearts to the Word of this Man . . . Stick to the external Word, and listen to it. (Buls)

**6:47** Jesus changes neither text nor contents of His sermon in one particle. He repeats the main thoughts again to impress them upon His hearers. It is faith in Him which gives eternal life; that is the only way in which salvation may be obtained, by believing in Him. (Kretzmann)

"I tell you the truth" for the third time in this sermon. (Buls)

In verse 26 He revealed their true character (law). In verse 32 He offers them Himself (Gospel). Here in verse 47 He makes a summary statement: The believer has eternal life already now. Some versions insert the words "in Me" based on textual evidence. No problem, in view of what precedes and follows this verse, "in Me" is implicit here. (Buls)

Note that everlasting life is not merely a future blessing. This blessing begins in this life already: "He who believes has everlasting life." Note the present tense of *has*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

**6:48-51** Jesus' claim to be the bread of life come down from heaven is the central thought repeated in vv 48, 51, and the other comments build on it. There are two key elements in the claim. First, "bread of life" must be understood as a metaphor illustrating necessity, and "down from heaven" means "of divine origin." The bread of life is not one optional food among many. For ancients, to have bread was to live, while to lack bread was to die. The metaphor may be compared to relief efforts in a war-torn area where people are dying of starvation. Patristic writings suggest contrasting the "bread of life" to the "food of death" (Genesis 3). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:48** For He is that Bread of Life in which they must trust. (Kretzmann)

This sentence occurs three times in this sermon, here and in verses 35 and 51. Note the "I" is emphatic -- "I and none other." The word is used this way eleven times in verses 25-71. (Buls)

Incidentally, Jesus is referred to by various pronouns no less than sixty times in verses 25-71. He is attempting to draw His hearers to Himself because He wants to save them. (Buls)

What is the point of comparison between "bread" and Jesus? Bread covers all food necessary for man in this life lest he die. Jesus covers all that is necessary for man for the life to come, lest he perish. He differs, of course, from ordinary food. The latter merely sustain life. Jesus gives life, spiritual life, everlasting life. "Bread" is used figuratively here. Jesus is not speaking about the Lord's Supper. (Buls)

**6:49-50** These verses explain v 48. Manna was a blessing of limited value: it did not destroy the power of death. The blessings given Moses' generation were not the ultimate gift of God. The pastor may review blessings that a church has experienced, such as rapid growth, building a new sanctuary, or peace during a crisis, and note how such blessings must not draw attention or faith away from the ultimate blessing of eternal life in Christ. As another example, some people continually review the "good old days" but overlook God's present and future blessings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

**6:49** *they died.* Jesus' opponents had set their hearts (cf. v. 31) on that which could neither give nor sustain spiritual life. (CSB)

The Jews themselves had referred to the manna in the wilderness and had called it bread from heaven. But what lasting value could be in food which did not sustain life beyond the few years of this earthly existence? Their fathers had died. (Kretzmann)

**6:50** *eat of it and not die.* Jesus' gift is in contrast; the life he gives is eternal. (CSB)

Jesus is not only telling them that manna could not save their ancestors but also that the kind of food which they were seeking (look at verses 26 and 34) cannot save them eternally. It cannot keep death away. They are not believing. They are not hearing and learning. They are not taught of God. They will not permit the Father to draw them. They can reason only on the unregenerate level. Therefore, they are unhappy and grumble. (Buls)

But he that receives the Bread of Life by faith would have sustenance to carry him beyond this life into life eternal. (Kretzmann)

**6:51-58** Not an obvious reference to the Lord's Supper: the words of institution are not recorded, no wine is present, Jesus speaks of flesh" and not "body," and the crowd is generally hostile and unbelieving. However, John records many veiled references to Jesus' future service, such as His work on the cross (1:50; 2:4, 19-22; 4:32; 6:62; 12:32). Whereas the other Gospel writers collected Jesus' parables, John collected Jesus' enigmatic, or riddle-like sayings. (TLSB)

**6:51** *the bread I give* - Life-giving bread; synonymous with "bread of life." Cf. 1:4; 5:26. (TLSB)

For the third time Jesus says: "I am the life-giving bread." Here we have a repetition of the thought in verse 50, except that this time He speaks of eternal life. (Buls)

The last five words denotes the vicarious atonement "in behalf of the life of the world." (Buls)

Ylvisaker: It is the true human nature of Jesus, the Bearer of eternal life, which faith must appropriate in order to partake of the life . . . . His human nature, or, in other words, Himself, as the One made man, is food, indeed which satisfies the inmost needs of humanity and apart from Him, this food may not be found . . . . It is ever correct to say that Jesus uses the term 'flesh' and 'blood' because He would choose a clear and adequate expression to designate His human nature, as of flesh and blood. . . . To eat is, then, in this passage, to believe. He that believes also eats and drinks Christ . . . . If He were merely 'flesh', a human being only, then the eating and drinking of Him would not avail unto eternal life, it would have no beneficial effect whatsoever. But He is also 'spirit', that is, God in essence and in truth, and it is this 'spirit' which permeates and animates His true humanity which makes Him the true Bread from heaven. (Buls)

*come down from heaven* – Katabas “having come down” Jesus draws upon the imagery of the manna to explain what we confess in the creed, “who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Martin Luther uses an excellent and time-honored illustration to explain this “coming down,” this incarnation of the Son of God as true man: When iron is without fire, it is surely still iron. But when it is made to glow, and fire or heat enter into it, then I can say, “This iron no longer acts like iron; rather it acts like fire.” It is iron, to be sure, but it is so full of fire that when you see or touch it, you cannot say, “This is iron.” But rather you feel sheer fire, to the extent that you have fire before your eyes. Now if you want to burn a hole through a barrel with it, or burn a brand on something, it is not the iron that does it, but the fire. For if I took cold iron which was not glowing, I could not burn a brand onto anything with it; I must take iron which has fire in it. On the other hand, the fire does its work nowhere except in the iron; [in that very place it burns and bores]. Thus here the divine power is present bodily in the humanity of Christ and acts as God should act, or acts as the fire acts in the iron. One indeed sees only flesh and blood, which are like a fiery iron, for they have been entirely deified – God through and through. (WA 33:191) Therefore, to partake of this living bread from heaven, which is Christ’s flesh, is to receive the very life of God and the salvation its brings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

This verse is like a benediction. Observe how the claim expands upon the claim of v 40. Of interest are the three tenses in which *katabainō*, “come down,” appears: present (vv 33, 50), perfect (vv 38, 42), and aorist (vv 41, 51, 58). The three tenses emphasize the mysterious reality of the divine incarnation: Christ came (aorist), has come (and remains—perfect), and continues to come (present). In all these the theological truth is that salvation is God’s initiative and God’s act. God comes down: human beings do not reach up. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

The phrase “eats this bread” metaphorically means “believes that Jesus is God incarnate.” Grammatically, the whole sentence is a future more vivid condition which, in Greek, raises the certitude of the claim. The word *sarx*, “flesh,” brings to mind Jn 1:14 and would challenge and correct any reader with docetic tendencies. The word will be used four more times in the verses immediately after our text, emphasizing the humanity of Jesus and the reality of his saving life, death, and resurrection. Jesus is not just a good idea, a lovely attitude, or an inspiring ideal. In his humanity he brought God into our world, and now he invites us to “eat” that truth, i.e., to make it our own. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Although the everlasting life Jesus promises is free to the believer, it is costly for the donor, Jesus. This truth is suggested first by Jesus calling “this bread” that he gives also “[his] flesh,” and second, by the word *give*, which has levels of meaning. *Give* not only means “distribute” or “hand out” (as in Jn 6:27, 31–32) but also means “give unto death” (a reference to Christ’s imminent crucifixion). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Whether or not the Gospel selections from John 6 are talking about the Lord’s Supper (before it was instituted by Jesus) is debated by exegetes. Certainly, the average reader or listener can hardly avoid associating the passages with the Eucharist. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

To legitimize and facilitate that association, I suggest a Gospel handle approach, that is, simply suggesting a connection between these passages from John 6 and those Scripture passages elsewhere that record the institution of the Lord’s Supper—without getting bogged down in the exegetical question whether the imagery of bread, flesh, and blood in John 6 are generic in intent or specifically applicable to the bread/body and wine/blood of the Lord’s Supper. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The Gospel handle could be the question of Jesus’ audience in the verse right after our text (v 52): “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” The answer they expected was a negative one: “He can’t. It’s impossible.” Surprise, surprise! Lk 22:19–20 and 1 Cor 11:20–29, with their descriptions of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, give an unexpected, positive answer to the question in Jn 6:52. In the Lord’s Supper, Jesus does give us his flesh to eat! In the Lord’s Supper, Jesus’ “flesh is real food and [his] blood is real drink” (Jn 6:55)! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The use of this Gospel handle approach is not intended to solve the exegetical question. Its selection is intended only to make sure the listener is enriched spiritually by thinking of the Lord’s Supper in connection with the fabulous truths of the texts from John 6. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

In the early Christian Community the heresy of Docetism arose. That is the teaching that Jesus did not truly have a human nature, but only apparently so. To counter Docetism the Christian Community insisted that the Words of Institution in Matthew, Mark, Luke and St. Paul be taken literally. Therefore, in order to correct both errors, Docetism and the literal interpretation of the Words of Institution are to be taken figuratively. (Buls)

*eats of this bread.* Appropriates Jesus as the sustenance of one’s life. (CSB)

*phagēi*, “devour, eat.” FC SD VII 61–62 explains that eating is believing and believing is eating. *hē sarx*, “flesh.” John uses this term differently than does Paul, who often uses flesh for man’s corrupted nature (Rom 8:6; 2 Cor 1:17; Gal 6:8; Eph 2:3; but notice also the neutral sense simply referring to the human body: 2 Cor 10:4; Eph 5:31; 6:12). John favors the term as emphasizing man’s most physical sense, most crucially when he says the Word became flesh (1:14). The Father has given Jesus authority over all flesh (17:2). Outside Jesus, the flesh resists God, but Jesus obeys God and his flesh strengthens the obedience of others. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

*I will give...the world...my flesh.* Looking forward to Calvary. Providing eternal life would be costly to the Giver. (CSB)



Note from 1:14... God's Word was embodied. John elsewhere refers to Jesus' humanity (4:6; 11:35; 19:28). "The Word, that is the Son of God (John 1:14), assumed the human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So there are two natures – the divine and the human – inseparably joined in one person. There is one Christ, true God and true man" (AC III 1-2). "The divine essence is not changed into the human nature. But the two natures, unchanged, are personally united" (FC SD VII 36). (TLSB)

The incarnate Word offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (1:29). "The Sacrament was instituted to comfort terrified minds. This happens when they believe that Christ's flesh is given as food for the life of the world" (Ap XXII 10). (TLSB)

Jesus then expanded the thought to show for whom He is the bread and at what cost. He came to give the bread, His human flesh, for the life of the world. God's own Son came as a human being to give up His perfect life for the life of all in this world. Jesus' words pointed to the cross and His sacrifice for us there. (PBC)

Anyone partaking of Him by faith will live forever. Jesus here gave a powerful testimony of His own person. By repeating the great facts which are the substance of His sermon, Jesus wants to work faith in the hearts of His hearers. The teaching concerning Jesus, His person and His office, the great facts of His salvation, is the means by which God draws hearts to the Savior, works willingness to believe And in one short statement Jesus also tells the manner in which He will earn salvation. He will give Himself, His body, His flesh, into death , for the sake of the life of the world. The human nature of Christ was sacrificed, was given for the salvation of the whole world, for all men without exception. In this way Jesus becomes the Bread of Life, the Bread from Heaven. (Kretzmann)

**6:52** *Jews then disputed among themselves* – Heated argument erupted over Jesus' language in v. 51, which the audience found offensive. (TLSB)

Their fighting showed itself in words. The truth often divides people from each other. The fault lies not with the truth, but with the flesh of man. When human reason, devoid of saving faith, asks "How can this be?" (verses 42, 52) Jesus counters with what God, in Christ, can and does do. He does not argue. He preaches the Gospel. But the way, their first "how" was asked because they rejected Jesus' divinity. With the second they reject the Gospel. (Buls)

Bengel: The Jews were questioning as to the possibility; Jesus replies as to the necessity; for in fact the latter infers the former. (Buls)

Luke 12:51 "Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division."

The Jews do not understand the nature of faith, which must lay hold of and "inwardly digest" the flesh of Christ as the only way to God and only source of salvation; nor can they grasp Christ's allusion to the Sacrament of the Altar, which He would institute on the night of His betrayal. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

**6:53–58**† Jesus' statement that "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (v. 53) is not a direct reference to the Lord's Supper. In this discourse he emphasizes faith in response to testimony (see vv. 35, 40, 47, 51). Flesh and blood here point to

Christ as the crucified one and the source of life. Jesus speaks of faith's appropriation of himself as God's appointed sacrifice. (CSB)

*trōgōn*, "chewing": conveys gnawing, crunching, or gnashing with teeth. John uses this word almost exclusively, here and in 13:18, where "He who chews my bread has lifted up his heel against me" (author's translation). Present tense here points to ongoing activity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**6:53** *unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man* – Here we have the fourth and last "In very truth I tell you." This clause always denotes Jesus' divinity and authority. It is always used of an important truth. It was used the first time, verse 26, to reveal something about His hearers which they did not realize fully, if at all. It was used the second time, verse 32, to show them several errors in their thinking. It was used the third time, verse 47, to stress the faith alone theme in His sermon. And, finally, it is used here in verse 53 to introduce a present general (axiomatic) condition which serves as a warning to which there are no exceptions. (Buls)

This verse speaks of the present. The "as your very own" means "as your very own to satisfy your great spiritual needs." Faith in Jesus Christ is the closest personal relationship known to man. (Buls)

"Son of Man" appears thrice in this chapter: here and in verses 27 and 62. Look at each use in its context. The flesh and blood of this man are so precious because they give life. In verse 62 it speaks of His exaltation. This is no ordinary man. (Buls)

Lenski: To parallel the eating of the flesh with the drinking of the blood of the Son of man, as Jesus parallels them here, is to point in the clearest way to his own sacrificial death. (Buls)

Luther: To eat is synonymous here with to believe . . . Remember during your entire life that all depends on this doctrine . . . Wherever this doctrine remains in the pulpit, there is no danger from any heretics or errors . . . In his Gospel St. John is intent upon impressing the doctrine of justification on the consciousness of the world and on making it clear. (Buls)

*ean mē*, "unless"; used sixteen times by John, much more than Matthew (six times), Mark (five times), Luke-Acts (seven times), or Paul (ten times). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Jesus does not give some sort of spiritualized explanation of His previous statement. Instead He affirms the utter physical-ness and concreteness of what He said. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you." These words emphasize the fact that we should not separate faith from the person of Christ. To believe in Christ means to be united with Christ, who is flesh and blood. It is not a coincidence that Luther's explanations of faith rely heavily on physical metaphors: grasping, hanging on, clinging to, and so forth. Faith is taking hold of the concrete person of Jesus Christ as a present person, one who is truly there both as God and man. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Faith is not mere spiritualized reflection about Jesus who is present only intangibly or solely in the heart. In contradiction to the enthusiasts who want to self-reference their spirituality and find Christ within themselves, we know that Christ is present with us and comes to us externally and outwardly. "We must hold firmly to the conviction that God gives no one His Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word. . . . We should and must constantly maintain that God

will not deal with us except through His external Word and sacrament” (Tappert, Smalcald Articles III, VIII, 3, 10) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

There is to be no talk about faith that is divorced from the object of faith, which is the flesh of Christ, who comes to us in His preaching and His supper. “Now, these people are so foolish as to separate faith from the object to which faith is attached and bound on the ground that the object is something external. Yes, it must be external so that it can be perceived and grasped by the senses and thus brought into the heart, just as the entire Gospel is an external, oral proclamation. In short, whatever God effects in us He does through such external ordinances” (Tappert, Large Catechism, Baptism, 30) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

**6:54** *who ever feeds on my flesh...blood* – “There is a twofold eating of Christ’s flesh. One is spiritual, which Christ describes especially in John 6:54. This ‘eating’ happens in no other way than with the Spirit and faith, in preaching and meditation on the Gospel, as well as in the Lord’s Supper.” (FC SD VII 61). (TLSB)

Therefore, it would be absurd to say that Jesus’ words in this verse have no connection with the Sacrament of the Altar: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” To say that these words are only speaking of faith is to separate faith from the real presence of the One to whom faith clings, the One who comes to us with His flesh and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. The fact that Jesus’ words are meant to be taken literally is emphasized by His concluding remark, “I will raise him up at the last day.” We look forward to a real, bodily resurrection on that day because of our real, bodily receiving of Christ’s flesh and blood in the Sacrament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Again and again Jesus came back to the truth those Jews resisted. By including His blood in the picture, He made sure they would be proven wrong if they took Him literally (Leviticus 17:12). But if they saw the spiritual truth (Leviticus 17:11), they would see in Jesus’ blood the blood of atonement. With the blood the reference to His sacrifice on Calvary was complete. (PBC)

*has eternal life* – Verse 53 is a warning. Verse 54, which states the opposite of verse 53, is a promise. (Buls)

Note that the verb is in the present tense, continued action. Twice before Jesus had spoken of “life eternal,” in verses 27 and 40. In the first instance Jesus spoke of having the lasting food which results in life eternal. In the second instance He spoke of seeing, which is believing, the Son of Man for life eternal. There Jesus added: “I will raise him on the last day.” Now in verse 54 once more Jesus speaks of life eternal, the possession of the one who is closely bound to Jesus’ flesh and blood by faith. Again Jesus adds “And I will raise him on the last day.” (Buls)

Like golden threads these themes run through Jesus’ sermon. He yearns for their conversion and at the same time His is strengthening His disciples’ faith. (Buls)

John 3:15 “that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life”

John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

**6:55** *true food and my blood...true drink* – As the Jews grumbled among themselves, they denied that Jesus could be the bread from heaven. They balked at the very idea of eating Jesus’ flesh.

Many felt He was a fake: “Eat His flesh! Drink His blood! Preposterous! In response Jesus insisted He was talking of true meat and true drink. The Jews had known figurative flesh and figurative blood. The OT feasts and sacrifices were shadows; Jesus was the reality. (PBC)

Only through faith in Christ crucified do people have what they really need for eternal life, a life with God that earthly food and drink cannot provide. “His flesh is a truly life-giving food and His blood a truly life-giving drink” (FC SD VIII 76). (TLSB)

The verse is a compound sentence. Why use the word "real" or "genuine" here? Bengel says: "This affirmation is opposed to the doubt of the Jews." Evidently he means that the Jews were rejecting Jesus' flesh and blood as that of the God-Man. (Buls)

Lenski: 'Real' denotes food that will then do exactly what Jesus says. (Buls)

Ordinary food for the body is temporary and merely sustains life. Jesus' flesh and blood is eternal and gives eternal life. Ordinary good is produced by the earth which is God's creation. Jesus' flesh and blood comes from Him Who is the eternal God. This food and drink are true, genuine, real both as to essence and purpose. (Buls)

**6:56** *abides in me and I in him* – In Baptism Jesus came to live in us through the Spirit.

This is a major theme in John, defining the relationship not only of persons in the Trinity (1:32-33; 14:10; 15:10), but also between believers and Christ (5:38; 8:31; 15:7, 9-10). St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “I wish to follow with all my strength the lowly Jesus; I wish Him, who loved me and gave Himself for me, to embrace me with the arms of His love, which suffered in my stead; but I must also feed on the Paschal Lamb, for unless I eat His flesh and drink His blood I have no life in me. It is one thing to follow Jesus, another to hold Him, another to feed on Him. To follow Him is a life-giving purpose; to hold and embrace Him a solemn joy; to feed on Him a blissful life” (SLSB, pp. 292-293). (TLSB)

Compare this verse with verse 54. The first part is identical. But in verse 54 we are told what the individual believer has and what will result from this on the last day. In verse 55 we are told that the individual believer is closely bound up with his Lord. (Buls)

"In" should be compared to John 17:23. This "in" denotes the mystical union between believer and Savior. This use of this preposition is found only in the New Testament and no place else in literature. Even a husband and wife are not so closely bound as are believer and Savior. Furthermore, the bond between husband and wife ends when either one of both die. But the death of the Savior brought about this bond between believer and Savior, and it will last forever. (Buls)

John 15:1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.”

John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 17:23 “in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

These words draw us into the Upper Room on Maundy Thursday, where Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit” (John

15:5). We “remain” in Christ and He in us by the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood. John 15:1 ““I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

When one partakes of this flesh and blood of Christ, one is participating in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) and through faith receives all the blessings of life that Christ has and gives. Martin Luther: “[Chris wants to say,] ‘If you grasp my flesh, you are not grasping ordinary flesh and blood, but you eat flesh and blood which deify, that is, which give the character and power of the Godhead.’ They do not act like flesh and blood, but they have the character and power which God has. . . . This flesh . . . will deify you through and through, that is, give you divine power, virtue, and activity, take away sin, and help you out of all misery” (WA 33:188). So it is that the ancients often referred to the Sacrament as “the medicine of immortality. John 15:1 ““I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Jesus was also talking about an intimate spiritual union that takes place between His and us when we believe in Him and continue to feed on Him. Each Christian needs to see the importance of continuing to nurture faith in Jesus. We do that by the Word, as Jesus shows elsewhere (8:31). When faith is so nourished, the believer remains in Jesus and Jesus in the believer. So in our faith we are united with Christ. We cannot explain how that works; we just know it does because Jesus said so. Each day and each hour we have the comfort of knowing that He stays with us. (PBC)

**6:57** *I live because of the Father* – The Son, begotten of the Father from eternity (see Nicene Creed), is one with the Father (10:30). (TLSB)

The first clause speaks of Father and Son. The second clause speaks of Son and believer. (Buls)

Luther: This means that just as Jesus derives His life from the Father from eternity, so we, too shall live in Him, but with this difference, that He is God's Son from eternity, and that He accepts us in mercy as heirs of His possessions and makes us partakers of His divinity. (Buls)

John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.”

John 10:38 “But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.”

John 14:10 “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work”

**6:58** *the bread that came down from heaven*. As in v. 49, the value of the manna is limited and is contrasted with the heavenly food Christ gives. For the tenth time in this chapter reference is made to Jesus’ coming down from heaven or to the bread from heaven. (CSB)

From verse 32 to 51 Jesus uses the word "bread", which is figurative. From verses 51 to 58 He uses "flesh" which is literal. And in verse 58 He uses the word "bread" twice figuratively. (Buls)

Lenski: The concluding statement merely rounds out the entire discourse . . . Jesus means to say: 'I have not told you fully about this Bread that actually came down out of heaven and how it differs from that manna . . . It makes him who eats it live forever.' The discourse thus closes with an implied invitation. (Buls)

Compare verses 48 to 51<sup>a</sup> with verse 58. Verse 58 summarized what Jesus had said earlier. He uses bread of Himself, the incarnate Christ, figuratively. Eating this bread means believing in this Christ. (Buls)

By the way, note that Jesus speaks of Himself as flesh and blood in verses 51-57 but that for "blood" there is no counterpart as there was with "flesh." He does not say "bread and wine." This is another indication that Jesus was not speaking of the Lord's Supper. (Buls)

The sermon began with Jesus speaking about life eternal (verse 27) and it ends here in verse 58 with "he shall live forever." He yearns to give those who reject Him eternal life. (Buls)

The manna had limited value but the heavenly food Jesus gives us has eternal use. (PBC)

To summarize and close His talk, Jesus repeated the comparison He made earlier with the manna (verses 49, 50). Those who heard Jesus that day did not misunderstand Him. He made sure of it by continually returning to key thoughts. Each of the following repeats several times:

- Jesus is bread.
- Jesus, the bread, came down from heaven, sent from the Father.
- Whoever eats the bread, that is, believes in Jesus, has eternal life.
- Jesus will raise that person up at the Last Day.

Jesus taught these truths at the synagogue, where worshipers met regularly. (PBC)

**6:22–59** Unlike the perishable manna God gave to Israel through Moses, Jesus comes down from heaven as the true bread to give life to all who believe in Him. Contrary to popular notions, no one “chooses” to believe in Christ; the initiative belongs entirely to God through His Word (v 44; cf 14:6). Those united by faith to Christ will be raised up on the Last Day to enjoy eternal communion with the Father. • O God, draw me ever closer to You through Your Word and Sacraments. Amen. (TLSB)

#### *The Words of Eternal Life*

**60** When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” **61** But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? **62** Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? **63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. **64** But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) **65** And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.” **66** After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. **67** So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” **68** Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, **69** and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” **70** Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” **71** He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

**6:60** Of our versions only KJV and NKJV translate "Therefore." Likely the word means this is a narrative. It is not an easy word to translate. Very often translators leave the little words untranslated, sometimes with, sometimes without, justification. (Buls)

They say: "Why waste time listening to Him." Compare John 10:20: "He has a devil and is mad." The Gospel is foolishness to the unbeliever. (Buls)

NEB has an attractive rendering: "This is more than we can stomach! Why listen to such talk?" (Buls)

"Hearing" is used in two senses in this verse. They heard Him and yet they could not hear Him. (Buls)

*disciples* - This is wider group of followers than the Twelve. (TLSB)

*hard*. Hard to accept, not hard to understand. The thought of eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking his blood was doubtless shocking to most of Jesus' Jewish hearers (see note on vv. 53–58). (CSB)

sklayros – means “hard, dried, rough,” with the connotation here of something that is harsh and unpleasant. It is interesting to note that the noun form of this word sklarotas means “hardness of heart, stubbornness,” as in Romans 2:5. And sklarotrchos means “stiff-necked, stubborn” as in Acts 7:51. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

This raises the question of what actually is hard in this instance. It is Jesus' teaching or the hearts of the hearers? The answer is the latter. Jesus' teaching is only hard to sinful man because of the sclerosis of our spirits, our stubborn, hard-hearted refusal to listen to and believe His Word. Jesus' life-giving teaching ricochets off of stony and faithless hearts. Sinful man fails to see the real source of the problem and instead blames Jesus for being hard, harsh and unpleasant. It is only such that Jesus is sklaros, “a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall” (Romans 9:33) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Ironically, without making that connection themselves, they were saying Jesus was hard to accept. (PBC)

1 Corinthians 2:14 “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

2 Corinthians 4:4 “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Ephesians 4:18 “They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.”

**6:61** *disciples were grumbling* – The Greek implies that no one needed to inform Jesus as to their reaction. All of John 6 is replete with evidence of Jesus' divinity and humanity, and furthermore, by virtue of the incarnation divine powers and attributes were communicated to the man, Jesus Christ. (Buls)

The emphasis is on a "snare" rather than on a "stumbling block." The Truth ensnares the unbeliever, not because it is Truth, but because of the unbelief of the individual. Jesus is not asking for information. He is reminding them of the consequences of unbelief. (Buls)

Again there is grumbling reminiscent of what the children of Israel did in the wilderness in the days of Moses. Note especially that those who are doing the grumbling are the disciples of Jesus! Thought this is not a reference to the Twelve, there is nevertheless dissension in the ranks of the other followers of our Lord. Trouble is not coming to Christ from the “outside” but from the “inside.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Already in 6:15 we can see that there were other expectations and agendas at work here. So it is in the church still today. Many of the “disciples” of Jesus often have worldly goals and plans that are not consistent with the Gospel. When Jesus and His Word don’t turn out to be quite what they expected, they begin to grumble and murmur, turning away from the Lord’s teaching or wanting to change it to make it more palatable. Their motivation is earthly success rather than godly faithfulness, human acceptance rather than divine favor. Unbelief is just as much a threat from within the visible institution of the church as it is from the outside. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

*do you take offense at this* – Offend is a form of scandalon. A “scandal” a *trap stick* (*bent sapling*), that is, *snare*. This draws to the mind of the original hearers/readers the stick an animal stumbles over, causing the trap to shut. The Jews would see the crucifixion of the Messiah as a stumbling block because anyone killed on a cross was cursed. It was scandalous to think that their God was executed as a criminal.

*skandalizei*, “to stumble.” Matthew uses this word and its root *skandalon* nineteen times, but John only twice—here and 16:1. A metaphorical understanding presents no scandal; those offended must have taken Jesus’ words literally. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Scandalon includes both the idea of being offended as well as falling away or going astray. Those who do not receive the truth of Christ in faith are scandalized by His words; they fall into unbelief and go astray from following Him. The Gospel creates faith or causes people to stumble. “We peach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor.1:23-24). The incarnation of Christ and the sacramental nature pf faith caused these disciples to stumble. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Isaiah 8:14 “and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare.”

Matthew 11:6 “Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.”

Matthew 13:57 “And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor.”

Romans 9:31-33 “but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.” As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”



1 Corinthians 1:22-24 “Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

1 Peter 2:8 “and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.”

**6:62** *Son of Man*. The conditional sentence is an example of what is called "aposiopesis." (Buls) Robertson: "It is a conscious suppression of part of a sentence under the influence of a strong emotion like anger, fear, pity." (Buls)

Jesus is disappointed in them. (Buls)

We supply "what then?" AAT: "What if you see the Son of Man go up where He was before?" (Buls)

They "saw." Look at verses 2, 14, 26, 36. A similar thought occurs in 3:12. Also 8:28 and Matt. 26:64. There are far greater things which would yet follow: His crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension. These great saving acts of Jesus Christ would stagger people's imagination. He is saying: "You will need faith to accept these great truths." (Buls)

*ascending*. Probably refers to the series of events that began with the cross, where Jesus was glorified. (CSB)

If the claim that Jesus is God in the flesh was offensive, how much more shocking would it be for them to see Him ascend in the flesh to His heavenly throne as Lord over all creation! If the notion of eternal life being given through the body of Jesus was appalling to them, how much more appalling would it be for them to behold the true humanity of Jesus sharing fully in His divine glory as the Son of God! (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

If they can't accept that Jesus is God and man they will also not believe it when he ascends back to heavenly glory.

*where he was before*. Referring to Jesus' heavenly preexistence. (CSB)

**6:63** Cf. 3:5–6, 8. *are spirit and ... life*. Are the Spirit at work producing life. (CSB)

Just as fleshly bodies need spirit to have life, believers need the Holy Spirit to make them alive. The Spirit is given through Jesus' words. When Jesus is talking about "flesh" He is not saying "My flesh," as in vv. 51, 54-56. Jesus contrasted the sinful nature ("flesh") with the spiritual nature, which lust for bread rather than the things of God (v. 26), which cannot help in spiritual matters. (TLSB)

The Holy Spirit proceeding eternally from the Father and the Son, uses the Word of God to create faith and life in hearers. (TLSB)

Note that this verse begins with a compound sentence the parts of which are divided only by a comma. In the first member of this compound sentence both subjects and predicate have articles. They are interchangeable. (Buls)

No law can "make alive" in the sense of "justify." People are made alive, are justified, only through Christ and His Gospel. No one or nothing else can do that. (Buls)

The words "Spirit and flesh" in this verse have evoked much discussion and many books. The Calvinists explain "flesh" as "**MY flesh**" (Jesus' flesh). But if that is what Jesus meant He contradicted what He had said in verses 51, 53-56. In fact, He would be denying the whole discourse. (Buls)

Lutherans have interpreted this word in two ways: (Buls)

1. Kretzmann and Luther: "The contrast between flesh and spirit in 63 has nothing whatever to do with the Eucharist, since it opposed the work of the Spirit of God and the unprofitable working of the nature condition of man."
2. Ylvisaker and Bengel: "If Jesus were merely 'flesh,' a human being only, then the eating and drinking of Him would not avail unto eternal life, it would have no beneficial effect whatsoever."

Furthermore, Lutherans have interpreted "Spirit" in two ways:

1. Luther and Kretzmann: "The Holy Spirit." (Buls)
2. Ylvisaker and Bengel: "But He is also 'spirit,' that is, God in essence and in truth, and it is this 'spirit' which permeates and animates His true humanity, and make Him the true Bread from heaven which mediates eternal life for everyone who eats and drinks of Him. He is God and man in one person." (Buls)

Compare what Jesus says about "His Words" in verse 63 with what Peter says in verse 68. The Lutheran teaching about the means of grace is very important. We find the Lord only in His Word, especially His Gospel. (Buls)

Jesus words in this verse are not meant to be taken as a denigration of created, material things. Rather, His words refer to the inability of ordinary temporal things to give eternal life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

“The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life.” Jesus gives us His Spirit and life by means of His words. Christ’s Spirit and life are left to float around un-locatedly for us but are joined concretely to the Word. Therefore, we should not seek these gifts apart from this Word of Christ. Martin Luther explains:

If the Lord had stopped short after the words “It is the Spirit that gives life,” the schismatic spirits would have shouted: “Spirit! Spirit! Baptism and the Lord’s Supper will not do it. No, you must creep into some corner and wait for the Spirit.” To anticipate and forestall this, Christ adds these words: “The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life ...” Christ does not want to give you the right to run to and fro in search of the Spirit, to lose yourself in reverie and say: “I have this by inspiration of the Holy

Spirit.” Actually, it may be the devil who inspired you! ... [Christ] binds us solely to His Word. He does not want to see the Holy Spirit divorced from His Word. Whenever you hear anyone boast that he has something by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and it has no basis in God’s Word, no matter what it may be, tell him that this is the work of the devil. Christ does not bind you to anything but His mouth and His Word. He does not want to leave you wandering aimlessly about; He wants you to hear His Word. He declares: “The words which I speak are spiritual. Therefore if you want to obtain the Holy Spirit, you must adhere to My words; for they are spirit and life.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

The Jews’ offense at Jesus’ Word is not surprising. They were depending on their flesh, trusting their own reasoning, for understanding. But their flesh could not comprehend Jesus because His message was of the Spirit and was meant to reach their souls and give spiritual life. (PBC)

**6:64** *some of you do not believe* – It is not a surprise to our Lord that even many of His disciples are rejecting His teaching. As the Son of God He was aware from the beginning who the unbelieving ones were, those whose motives for following Him were impure. He knows very well that even among the Twelve there is one who sklaros and faithless, one who would betray Him to death. Again we are reminded that some of the worse assaults on Christ’s church and His teaching come from among those who are known as His followers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Does the first sentence of this verse mean that some of the crowd did believe? The commentaries hesitate to answer this question. Does the word "crowd" in verse 66 denote a group different from the "crowd" in verse 60? The fact that John narrows it down to Judas in verses 70-71 perhaps indicates that all of the hearers who had been with Him at Bethsaida and came to Capernaum left Him. But we cannot be dogmatic. The text does not inform us on this point.

"From the beginning" -- how far back does this phrase take us? In any case the phrase plainly indicates Jesus' divinity and that Jesus knew before this day in Capernaum who would not believe and also that Judas was going to betray Him. We stand in awe of the love of Jesus. Though He knew that some would *nodssot* believe and that Judas was going to betray Him, Jesus made every attempt to bring these people to Christian faith. (Buls)

Lenski: As regards Judas: Jesus chose him 'not for the purpose' of betrayal but only 'with the knowledge' of that betrayal . . . . This foreknowledge rested on the act of Judas, not the act of Judas on the foreknowledge. (Buls)

That's about as far as anyone dare go in explaining this verse. (Buls)

Bengel: John has diligently marked the successive steps in the deadly wickedness of Judas and entertained an especial antipathy towards him. (Buls)

Judas and those who arrested Jesus did not catch Jesus off guard. Long before they laid their plans Jesus knew what they were going to do. (Buls)

Even from the time Judas joined the disciples, Jesus knew Judas would betray Him. This does not mean Judas was predestined for damnation. (TLSB)

**6:65**† Coming to Christ for salvation is never a human achievement (see vv. 37, 39, 44–45). (CSB)

Expression used for faith five times in ch 6 (vv 35, 37, 44, 45, 65). Cf Eph 2:8–9. (TLSB)

*unless it is granted him by the Father* – Faith and its object are a gift of the Father. Trace this thought through the whole discourse. In verse 65 we have a present general, axiomatic conditional sentence to which there are no exceptions. Ponder the "it has been granted" phrase. God has granted this gift before the believer is even aware of it. Forms of this verb are found in verses 37, 39, 51, 52, and 65. A sermon could be preached on this verb in these five verses. Christianity is monergistic throughout. Confessional Lutheranism is very sensitive concerning this matter. (Buls)

The NIV translation “enabled” is weak and could give the synergistic impression that the Father activates a dormant ability with ourselves to come to Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

He told them again, therefore, that they could not come to Jesus, that is, believe in Him, unless the Father enabled them to come. Every Christian can thank God for Jesus and faith. (PBC)

**6:66** *From this time*.† May also mean “For this reason” or both. (For two meanings possibly implied in one phrase, see notes on 1:5; 3:3; 6:35; 16:9.) (CSB)

*many ... turned back*. Jesus had already made clear what discipleship meant, and many were not ready to receive life in the way he taught. (CSB)

As a result of what? They rejected the offer and gift of faith from the Father. Look at verses 37, 44 and 65. Man has no ability to bring himself to God. His rejection of God's gift of faith is fatal. As a result "they no longer associated" with Him. "Walk" is used metaphorically in the Scriptures to denote a style of living. (Buls)

We see in this sixth chapter of John a great reversal in Jesus' popularity. After the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus had throngs following Him; they had wanted to make Him king. Now upon hearing the specifics of His teaching, the great crowds are gone, and Jesus is left with only His closest followers. Even when the Messiah Himself is doing the preaching, the Gospel doesn't always meet with numerical success. In fact sometimes just the opposite is the case – the preaching of the truth drives away unbelieving followers. Large crowds don't necessarily mean large numbers of believers. Sometimes the Lord grants numerical success, as He did on Pentecost; sometimes He doesn't, as this account shows. This should be of great comfort to the preacher. It is not his task to be successful in a worldly sense but to be faithful to the Word and to leave the results to the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

**6:67** *do you want to go away as well* – Jesus doesn't direct this question to them as if He feared that they too were doing to leave or as if He were ignorant in regard to their attitude. The way the question is worded in the Greek shows that He expects a negative answer. Jesus asks this question not for His own sake but for their sake. He wishes to draw them closer to Himself. The question invites a confession of faith. It is an opportunity for them to be revealed as ones who

were truly given by the Father to come to Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Jesus does not coerce people to follow Him. (PBC)

**6:68** As in the Synoptic Gospels, Peter acts as spokesman. (CSB)

*words of eternal life.* The expression is general. Peter was not speaking of a formula but of the thrust of Jesus' teaching. He perceived the truth of v. 63. (CSB)

We sing this verse when we about to hear the Gospel lesson as a part of our worship service. Like Peter, we are saying that this is the only word that counts and we want to hear it.

The materialistic Jews, verse 34, and Peter use the same term, but how differently! "Words" are those which contain and which give eternal life. Compare what Jesus says about "His Words" in verse 63 with what Peter says in verse 68. The Lutheran teaching about the means of grace is very important. We find the Lord only in His Word, especially His Gospel. (Buls)

Peter's reply shows that Jesus is not just one religious option among many others of equal value. He is the only one who reveals the Father. He is the only one who gives everlasting life. Any other place that the disciples might go would only offer false teaching and false hope. Jesus alone has the words that are Spirit and life. Having been brought to faith in Christ, they will follow no one else. Peter's confession stands in sharp contrast to references to Judas in vv64, 70-71. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

**6:69** *We have believed and come to know.* Since the Greek verbs are in the perfect tense, they mean, "We have entered a state of belief and knowledge that has continued until the present time." (CSB)

The conviction of faith precedes the acknowledgment. Furthermore, Peter uses the Greek word "know," to know with approval, as opposed to know without approval. (Buls)

*the Holy One of God.* Applied to Jesus in Mk 1:24; Lk 4:34 (see Ac 2:27). (CSB)

Further description of Jesus' identity as Messiah (cf Ac 3:14; 4:27, 30; 1Jn 2:20). Title used once by demons (Lk 4:34). (TLSB)

There are variant readings for "Holy One of God." Some have "the Christ," "the holy one of God," "the Son of God," "The Christ," "The Son of the Living God." In all simplicity Peter is saying that they believe that Christ is truly what He says of Himself in this discourse and, though they had said nothing, as far as we know, they were deeply impressed. Furthermore, they did not follow Judas, a devil, who rejected Jesus and His Word. (Buls)

The word for "Holy One" is *agios*, which can also be translated as "saint." Jesus is the Saint of God. All those who are made one with Christ in faith, who are baptized into His body, and therefore call "saints." For they have been made holy by the redeeming work of the "holy One

of God. This title for Jesus calls to mind similar designations in the OT: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine ... For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior (Isaiah 43:1, 3). And it is written in Psalm 16:10, “You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

**6:70** *a devil*. Judas (v. 71) would oppose Christ in the spirit of Satan. (CSB)

Judas, inspired by Satan, would betray Jesus. (TLSB)

Here the question expects an affirmative answer. (Buls)

The fact that Judas is called a devil a year before he betrayed Jesus is a chilling thought. (Buls)

Bengel: Here was the point at which Judas ought to have repented . . . he was a devil, not merely evil to himself, but even dangerous to others. (Buls)

Lenski: 'Devil' designates the real moral nature of Judas and the mind that had finally developed in him. Those other disciples who did not believe in Jesus left, and nowhere are such men called devils; but Judas remains, remains even as one of the Twelve, remains and consents to Peter's confession, not with ordinary hypocrisy, but with lying deceit such as Jesus predicates of the very devil himself in 8:44. (Buls)

**6:71** *Iscaiot*. Means “a man from Kerioth” (in Judea; see Jos 15:25) and would apply equally to the father and the son (cf. 12:4). Judas seems to have been the only non-Galilean among the Twelve. (CSB)

*one of the Twelve*. And therefore one of the last persons likely to betray Jesus. (CSB)

**6:60–71** Faced with Jesus' true identity and the necessity of faith in Him, many stop following, and even one of the Twelve aligns himself with Satan against Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus' words bring life; they are the means the Father uses to draw people to Himself. • O Lord, let me always say as Peter did, “You have the words of eternal life.” Amen. (TLSB)