

# The Gospel of John

## Chapter 6:41-51

*April 13, 1997*

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
- Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
- Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
- Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
- Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
- Chapter 6 The Bread of Life

- **Review and Introduction**

In the previous section, the morning after Jesus fed the multitude, the people search out and find Jesus in Capernaum. Jesus perceives that they sought Him because they were hungry for more food rather than for eternal reasons. He instructs them to pursue the bread that comes from heaven which endures to everlasting life rather than the food which perishes. Having introduced the Bread of Life analogy, Jesus expands upon it in this section and entreats them to partake of Him.

- **Exposition of John 6:41-51**

*41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."<sup>42</sup> And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"*

- The people despise Jesus because of their familiarity with his humanity. Given that Christ is in Capernaum which is in the area where He grew up (born in Bethlehem, fled to Egypt, returned to Galilee), we understand why the people struggled with Jesus' claims because they knew all about Him. The point here is that we cannot understand Christ if we are thinking as natural man. In order for natural man to understand these things, the Father must make him a spiritual man and give him a new heart, new eyes and new ears so that he can perceive their true meaning.
- It is quite ironic that they struggled with His humanity because the incarnation was really a great manifestation of His love for us. The book of Hebrews tells us that Christ took on the flesh of a human so that he might accomplish (at least) two things: 1) So that He could act as our High Priest (Heb 4,5,6,7) and 2) So that He could die. (Heb 2:9)

*43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves."<sup>44</sup> "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."<sup>45</sup> "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.*

- Our Lord's response to them is to stop murmuring. He in essence is saying that their confusion cannot be alleviated unless the Father draws Him. Their complaining was of no use because the only way they would be able to understand what He was saying was if the Father would give the spiritual faculties to perceive.
- This is an absolutely glorious verse. The Father is in the business of giving the Elect to the Son. He does so by drawing them to Him. Those who are drawn will believe in the Son. Those who believe in the Son, though they die, will be raised to everlasting life at the second advent of our Lord.
- Jesus quotes Isaiah when He instructs them that "they shall be taught by God." Who in this verse is meant by "they" and what is meant by "all"? First the word "all" is restricted by the word "they". It means each and every one of "them". We can see contextually here that "they" refers to those who are drawn by the Father. But for an even deeper look, we must review Isaiah in order to get the first meaning of the verse and then see how Jesus applies it here.
- Notice in Isaiah that the whole passage is addressed to the barren one and her offspring. From Galatians 4, we know that the picture of a barren woman is used to describe Sarah. In this chapter of Galatians, Paul contrasts the two covenants by using the pictures of Hagar and Sarah. Those who are the descendants of Hagar are the children of the slave woman and those who are the children of the once-barren woman Sarah, are children of the free woman. The children of the free woman are the children of God's covenant of grace and are the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem which is the true Church of God—those who by faith are included in Christ.

*46 "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father."<sup>47</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.*

- None of the Patriarchs, none of the great people of the Faith, have seen the Father the way the Son has. But as Christ will declare later, and as the author of Hebrews declares, if we have seen the Son then we have seen the Father.
- Initially, our Heavenly Teacher—the Father is invisible to us (except by general revelation). We do not know Him and

we cannot see Him. While we were sinners and dead to spiritual things, the Father began to teach us. It isn't until our instruction from Him draws us to the point of belief in Christ that we begin to know our Teacher. It is only through Christ, by *being in Christ*, that we are able know that we have been drawn, taught and given to the Son.

***48 "I am the bread of life."<sup>49</sup> "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead."<sup>50</sup> "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die."<sup>51</sup> "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."* NKJV**

- Again Christ contrasts His work with the work of Moses and he also contrasts the efficacy of the manna in the wilderness with Himself—the heavenly bread. The bread which the forefathers ate, although it was a gift of provision from the Father, was only a shadow or picture of the bread which was to come in Christ. The manna was not able to accomplish that which the heavenly bread could accomplish by giving everlasting life.