

A. John 6:59-65 – Words for would-be disciples

1. John 6:59 – *These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.* At some point in Jesus' teaching on the bread of life, He had **moved** from the shore of the sea of Galilee into the synagogue of Capernaum.
2. John 6:60 – *Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"* **Three** groups of people were present during this teaching. As a whole, the religious crowd reacted negatively. Similarly, all of Christ's disciples reacted, some adversely and others determined to follow on at all costs.
 - a. The Jews' leaders: The unbelieving religious **leaders** and those who followed them rejected Christ's words.
 - b. The disciples: **Weaker** disciples, those who had believed in Jesus but were struggling to understand His teachings, reacted negatively.
 - c. The Twelve: Those disciples whom Jesus personally chose to be His **intimate** followers reacted in a generally positive manner. Most of these eventually became the apostles. These were the men who laid the foundation of the church. John 21:15-17
3. John 6:61 – Jesus knew that the way He had taught on the bread of life had caused His disciples great **difficulty**, and that many were struggling to grasp what He said. They were complaining because His teachings offended them.
 - a. John 6:61a – *But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this...* Because the disciples' continued to **focus** on the physical realm, the spiritual meanings behind Jesus' teachings became difficult to grasp.
 - b. John 6:61b – Jesus ...*said to them, "Does this cause you to **stumble**?"* The word "this" refers to Jesus' message. What had He said that caused them so much difficulty?
 - 1) Bread in Jesus' teaching represented Himself and how He was given by the Father, from heaven, to specifically come and supply eternal **life** (salvation) to the masses.
 - 2) His death on the cross for our sins and resurrection is God's provision, God's bread, for giving us never-ending life (eternal life). Our **faith** in that provision is spiritually equated to "eating" that bread. 1 Peter 2:24
 - 3) What became difficult was when Jesus changed His metaphor from eating Him as the bread of life to eating His flesh and drinking His **blood**. Of course, this was not literal, and with any logic they should have known that.
 - 4) But the question remains, **why**, did Jesus change the metaphor from bread to His body and blood? First, He truly wanted the strong reaction it brought. He wanted them to get off the fence in relation to Him and His message. Second, He wanted to project them forward to His eventual sacrifice of a broken body and shed blood.
 - a) The penalty for sin is **death** in all forms; including physical, spiritual, and eternal. On the cross, Jesus paid our death penalty for us when He suffered as our substitute before God. He bore our sins in His own body. Isaiah 53:4-5, 11; Acts 5:30; 1 Peter 2:24
 - b) In Genesis 2:17, we see that death is primarily spiritual separation from God, but as in the case of Adam and Eve, spiritual death resulted in physical death and eventually would result in eternal death in the Lake of Fire. Eternal life is the only thing that can reverse that, and Jesus is the **only** bread that gives eternal life.
 - c) To solve Adam and Eve's nakedness problem, the physical death of an animal pictured death as a necessary means of resolution for the sin problem. To kill the animal and remove its hide was bloody and **gruesome** way for an innocent animal to die. Genesis 3:21
 - 5) Jesus' referral to His flesh and blood prefigured the **sacrificial** part of His coming death. The gospel message that we believe for salvation includes both Christ's person and work.
 - a) In the future, the disciples would not only believe in Christ as a person but by faith would also trust in His **horrific**, substitutionary sacrifice given in payment for their sins.
 - b) Faith in His **sacrifice** is why He demanded the eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood. This fact would become an essential part of the gospel message preached and believed. 1 Corinthians 1:17,23; 2:1-5, 15:3-4,11; Galatians 3:1
4. John 6:62 – *What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?* Jesus not only spoke of His coming sacrifice (flesh and blood) but also added His future ascension together with a clear statement of

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His pre-existence. As God, Jesus is eternal. He never had a beginning, and He will never have an end. He would **return** to the Father. 1 Timothy 3:16

- a. Why did Jesus prophesy about this coming **ascension**?
 - b. This is because if His mention of their need to embrace by faith His impending death had caused them such consternation and offence, what would the mention of His coming departure back to heaven cause them. Would they give up completely if He **left** them?
5. John 6:63a – “*It is the Spirit who gives life...*” Only the Holy Spirit can give life. They needed to clearly know that the only one who can give eternal life is the Holy Spirit and Christ’s words came from the life-giving Holy **Spirit**. John 3:5-7
6. John 6:63b – “*...the flesh profits nothing...*” Living according to their fleshly agenda would not profit them. Living and looking at life through fleshly **human** eyes would never bring them life. They needed Jesus to challenge their thinking. They needed words that would cause them to stop and profoundly ponder life. This is what He was doing for them.
7. John 6:63c – “*...the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.*” Believing the Lord’s words would bring them life. Jesus was affirming that His teaching was not fleshly. Our Lord’s words and teaching were from the Holy Spirit, and they were life-giving. They needed to look past the offence of what He said and ponder the **heart** of the matter.
- a. Instead of pondering Jesus’ message, the unbelieving masses were merely offended by what He said. Feeling insulted, they would not stop and **consider** the spiritual aspects of His teaching. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4
 - b. On the other hand, Jesus called His disciples to thoughtfully **consider** the spiritual aspects of the life-giving truth He preached. Their fleshly reactions would profit them nothing, but if they listened to His words the Holy Spirit could give them deep and transformative life-giving understanding.
8. John 6:64 – Jesus **knew** the hearts of the people present.
- a. John 6:64a – “*But there are some of you who do not believe.*” Jesus knew that some just did not **believe** in Him or His teachings. He was perfectly aware His words would be entirely offensive to those individuals.
 - b. John 6:64b – *For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe ...* Jesus **knew** from the very beginning that many of those who were following Him (getting into boats and tracking Him down) were in it for adventure (the fantastic; the food, fame, and fights), but they did not actually believe in Him as the life-giving bread.
 - c. John 6:64c – *For Jesus knew from the beginning ... who it was that would betray Him .*” Jesus knew from the beginning of His ministry that one from His inner circle, one of 12 disciples, was a non-believer. He knew he would one day betray Him. Jesus knowingly **chose** Judas Iscariot, in order to fulfill prophecy. John 6:70-71, 13:18-19, 13:26-27
9. John 6:65 – *And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.”* God the Father draws mankind to Jesus, but as we have just observed, those who do not believe are not allowed by God to **come** to Jesus. Only believers come to be owned by Christ.
- a. Throughout this discourse, Jesus associated coming to **Him** with believing on Him. God draws, but only those who believe actually come to Jesus and are saved.
 - b. Salvation is completely God’s work and God’s plan. However, as seen in scripture, it involves a **decision** to either humbly trust in Christ or pridefully reject Him. Those who believe come to Him. Matthews 23:37, Luke 13:34-35

B. John 6:66-71 – Peter’s confession

1. John 6:66 – *As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore .* Many of Christ’s disciples rejected his difficult teaching. They were unwilling to **rethink** their theology and understand the deeper meaning of His words. These believers became offended and parted company with Jesus.
 - a. Here we see a sad reality that still happens today. Due to the impact of His teachings, many of Jesus’ disciples departed, turning back and refusing to **follow** Him.
 - b. This statement does not say that they **lost** their salvation. They did lose their intimacy and closeness with Jesus. This was a sad day for their spiritual progress and maturity. We hope that in time they repented and returned to once again walk with Jesus. How about you? Where do you stand in the discipleship process with Jesus? Revelation 2:4-5

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2. John 6:67 – *So Jesus said to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?”* Jesus challenged His twelve close disciples about their future with Him. He asked them bluntly, “Are you going to leave too?” In our lives as disciples of Christ, this **question** is often before us. Are we going to let an offense or misunderstanding sideline us?
3. John 6:68 – *Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? **You** have words of eternal life.* Speaking for the group, Peter said they would not leave. As far as Peter knew, no one else had the words of eternal life. Have you likewise come to this conclusion?
4. John 6:69 – *“ We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God .”* The **title** “*Holy One of God*” shows clearly that Peter and the disciples recognized Jesus as Messiah. Jesus was the anointed one, the Christ, the prophesied Messiah. Mark 1:24
5. John 6:70 – *Jesus answered them, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?”* Judas Iscariot, however, continued to reject Jesus’ claims. Christ **knew** Judas’ thoughts and all about his coming treachery. Christ also knew His own. Peter thought they were all onboard by faith, but Jesus knew the truth about each individual.
6. John 6:71 – *Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him .* **John** gave some commentary here. At the time Jesus spoke these words, John did not understand what Jesus meant. Many years later, when he was writing, he remembered and understood what Jesus said. John 6:64,70; 12:6