

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. I would like to invite you to take God's Word and turn with me to John chapter 6.
2. We are continuing our study of this chapter where Jesus is dialoguing with the Jews in the synagogue in Capernaum (v.59).
3. If you remember, Jesus had performed a miracle of feeding the 5000 from five barley loaves and two fish (v.9) and was now in Capernaum.
4. Prior to His arrival at Capernaum, He performed a series of miracles to His disciples while they were seeking to cross the Sea of Galilee or Sea of Tiberias.
5. While they were straining at their oars in a violent storm, He comes walking to them on the sea, allows Peter to come on the sea to Him, and stops the storm and arrives at Capernaum after He steps into the boat.
6. The crowds now are looking for Jesus.
7. For after their meal, He dismissed them with the disciples while He went up to the mountain to pray (v.15).
8. The crowd goes to Capernaum and finds Jesus in the synagogue and the dialogue that pursues begins in verse 26 and continues through verse 58.

9. As is noted by Jesus' response in verse 26, they were seeking Jesus "because [they] ate of the loaves and were filled."
10. Jesus tells them in verse 27, "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."
11. And in this section from verses 26-33, He alludes to Him being "the true bread out of heaven" (v.32).
12. Verse 34 indicates that they didn't understand what He meant by this statement, so in verse 35 He plainly says, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me with not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."
13. Because they were seeking Jesus because "they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick" (v.2) and because He fed the multitudes, Jesus says in verse 36, "But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe."
14. D.A. Carson says, "The crowd saw Him but only as a mightily endowed man, a potential king (6:14, 15), not the Son of God who perfectly expresses the Father's word and deed (5:19ff.); they have seen only bread and power, not what they signify. This crowd has witnessed the divine

revealer at work, but only their curiosity, appetites and political ambitions have been aroused, not their faith.”<sup>1</sup>

15. In verses 37-40, He tells them why they did not believe; because they were not given to the Son.
16. Jesus says in verse 37, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.”
17. John Piper says, “Salvation is not finally in the hands of man to determine. His choices are crucial, but they are not the final, decisive power in bringing him to glory, God’s sovereign grace is.
18. God elects, chooses, before the foundation of the world whom He will save and whom He will pass by and leave to unbelief and sin and rebellion. He does this unconditionally, not on the basis of foreseen faith that humans produce by a supposed power of ultimate self-determination (‘free will’).”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 290.

<sup>2</sup> John Piper, Summary of the Sovereignty of God in Salvation (Desiringgod.org, The Five Points of Calvinism, December 10, 1997).

19. Those whom the Father gives to Jesus will come. No one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him or grants it to him.
20. A.W. Pink says, “None would come to Him unless the Father had first predestinated that they should, for it is only ‘as many as were ordained to eternal life’ that believe (Acts 13:48). Each one that the Father had given to Christ in eternity past, ‘cometh’ to Him in time—comes as a lost sinner to be saved; comes having nothing, that he may receive everything.”<sup>3</sup>
21. Jesus states in the rest of this section that the Father’s will was that the one’s whom He had previously given to the Son would not be lost and that they be raised up on the last day.
22. Verse 40 says, “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”
23. Now as we come to verses 41-51, we hear Jesus’ response to the complaint of the Jews.
24. Their complaint is found in verses 41-42 and Jesus’ response in verses 43-51.

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<sup>3</sup> A.W. Pink, Exposition of the Gospel of John, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1945, 1975), 330.

**The Bread of Life (Pt.3)**

John 6:41-51 (Preached 8/10/08) © 2008

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25. Let's hear their complaint and His response to it as we read verses 41-51.
26. Read John 6:41-51.
27. As already noted, Jesus is the bread of life.
28. He stated it plainly in verse 35, 41, 48, and 51 and alluded to it in verses 27 and 33.
29. The crowds didn't get it because of their unbelief.
30. Jesus says their unbelief was due to the fact that they were not given to Him as love gifts from the Father (v.37).
31. Now as we turn our attention to verses 41-51 we hear the complaint of the Jews and Jesus' response to them.
32. Their complaint is noted in verses 41-42.

**I. The Jew's Complaint (vv.41-42)**

A. It Is Identified By Their Grumbling (v.41a)

“Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him.”

The word “grumbling” (gogguzo) is an onomatopoeic word that both means and sounds like muttered complaints and whispers of displeasure,<sup>4</sup> and was constantly used in the Septuagint of the murmuring of Israel in the wilderness.<sup>5</sup>

The reaction of the synagogue crowds to Jesus' statements was the same as the Jews in the wilderness who murmured against God both before and after the manna was given to them.<sup>6</sup>

What were they murmuring about?

Was it about His statement in verse 37 where He says, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out”?

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<sup>4</sup>John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 251.

<sup>5</sup>Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002). 2:151.

<sup>6</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Jn 6:41.

No...

B. It Is Identified By What Jesus Said Concerning Himself (v.41b)

Verse 41 continues to tell us that “the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, ‘I am the bread that came down out of heaven.’”

Again He had alluded to this in verses 26 and 33 but when He stated it plainly, their unbelieving hearts could not receive it.

So John says in verse 41 that the Jews’ anger centered in two things: 1) that Jesus said He was the bread and 2) that He came down from heaven.<sup>7</sup>

After Jesus healed the lame man at Bethesda, the Jews accused Him of breaking the Sabbath.

Jesus responded by saying in John 5:17, ‘My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.’

The apostle John says in verse 18, “For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”

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<sup>7</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Jn 6:41.

Both the Jews in Jerusalem (5:18) and the Galileans reacted negatively when Jesus placed Himself equal with God.<sup>8</sup>

1. For Jesus to say that He was the bread of life was to say that He was the source of eternal life
  - a) Jesus had stated to the Jews earlier in John 5:21, “For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.”
  - b) In verse 24 He said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”
  - c) In verses 39-40 He said, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;<sup>40</sup> and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.”
2. The Jews only thought of Jesus on a human level, as a fellow Galilean, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother they knew (v.42)

“They were saying, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How

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<sup>8</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Jn 6:41.



does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"

While He was at the feast in chapter 7, you hear the same thing in verses 25-27, "So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, 'Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?'<sup>26</sup> 'Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?'<sup>27</sup> 'However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.'"

It's sad that they say "no one knows" where the Messiah is from because Micah 5:2 says, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

A.W. Pink rightly says, "They had no hunger for 'the bread which came down from heaven.' What light this casts on the state of the world today! How it serves to explain the common treatment which the Lord of glory still receives at the hands of men! Pride, the wicked pride of the self-righteous heart, is responsible for unbelief. Men despise and reject the Savior because they feel not their deep need for Him. Feeding upon the husks which are fit food only for swine, they have no appetite for the true Bread. And when the claims

of Christ are really pressed upon them they still ‘murmur’!<sup>9</sup>

This is a good place to say that man being so wicked cannot choose Christ. As a dead corpse cannot respond to the living, neither can one who is dead in trespasses and sins respond to the gospel without divine intervention.

The Synod of Dort wrote in 1610, that “sin controls every part of man. He is spiritually dead and blind, and unable to obey, believe, or repent. He continually sins, for his nature is completely evil.”

They made this statement because Ephesians 2:3 says that before your salvation you were “by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

This means they had a natural predisposition to sin.

Genesis 6:5 says, “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

Steve Lawson in his book, *Foundations of Grace*, says, “This is the doctrine of man’s ruin in sin...All mankind is born spiritually dead in trespasses and sin. Fallen man is totally depraved.

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<sup>9</sup> A.W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1945, 1975), 334-5.

Sin has radically affected the total man. That is, each part of man—his mind, emotion and will—is defiled by sin. His mind is darkened, rendering him unable to see the truth about God, Christ, or himself. His heart is defiled and does not desire God, but instead loves his sin. His will is dead and cannot choose what is right. Plagued with this total inability, sinners are in bondage to sin, unable to change and become good. Being dead in sin, man does not even desire to pursue what is right. In short, unregenerate man is totally unable to do any spiritual good, can do nothing to remove his sin, and can make no contribution toward his salvation. Worse, left to himself, fallen man will never seek God or His grace.”<sup>10</sup>

Well, Jesus responds to the Jew’s complaint in verses 43-51.

In verses 43-46 we hear...

## **II. Jesus’ Rebuke of the Crowd (vv.43-46)**

John records Jesus’ response: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Do not grumble 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 on the last day. <sup>45</sup> ‘It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. <sup>46</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Steven J. Lawson, *Foundations of Grace, A Long Line of Godly Men, Volume One* (Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2006). 34.

‘Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.’”

Jesus tells the crowds to stop grumbling and then clarifies what He said to them in verse 37 and in essence says...

A. Their Murmuring Reveals Their Depravity (vv.43-44)

A.W. Pink says, “These words of Christ make manifest the depths of human depravity. They expose the inveterate stubbornness of the human will. They explain the ‘murmuring’ of these Jews. In answering them thus, the obvious meaning of the Savior’s words was this: By your murmuring you make it evident that you have not come to Me, that you are not disposed to come to Me; and with your present self-righteousness, you never will come to Me Before you come to Me you must be converted and become as little children. And before that can take place, you must be the subjects of Divine operation. One has only to reflect on the condition of the natural man in order to see the indubitable truth of this. Salvation is most exactly suited to the sinner’s needs, but it is not at all suited to his natural inclinations. The Gospel is too spiritual for his carnal mind: too humbling for his pride: too exacting for his rebellious will: too lofty for his darkened understanding: too holy for his earthbound desires.

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." How can one who has a high conceit of himself and his religious performances admit that all his righteousnesses are as filthy rags? How can one who prides himself on his morality and

his religiousness, own himself as lost, undone, and justly condemned? How can one who sees so little amiss in himself, who is blind to the fact that from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot there is no soundness in him (Isa. 1:6), earnestly seek the great Physician? No man with an unchanged heart and mind will ever embrace God's salvation. The inability here, then, is a moral one. Just as when Christ also said, "*how can ye, being evil, speak good things?*" (Matthew 12:34). And again, "*How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another?*" (John 5:44). And again, "Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive" (John 14:17). Water will not flow uphill, nor will the natural man act contrary to his corrupt nature. An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, and equally impossible is it for a heart that loves the darkness to also love the light.

The depravity of man is, from the human side, the only thing which will explain the general rejection of the Gospel. The only satisfactory answer to the questions, Why is not Christ cordially received by all to whom He is presented? Why do the majority of men despise and reject Him? is man is a fallen creature, a depraved being who loves sin and hates holiness. So, too, the only satisfactory answer which can be given to the questions, Why is the Gospel cordially received by any man? Why is it not obstinately rejected by all? is, In the case of those who believe, God has, by His supernatural influence, counteracted against the human depravity; in other words, the Father has "drawn" to the Son.

The condition of the natural man is altogether beyond human repair. To talk about exerting the will is to ignore the state of the man behind the will. Man's will has not escaped the general wreckage of his nature. When man fell, every part of his being was affected. Just as truly as the sinner's heart is estranged from God and his understanding darkened, so is his will enslaved by sin. To predicate the freedom of the will is to *deny* that man is totally depraved. To say that man has the power within himself to either reject or accept Christ, is to repudiate the fact that he is the captive of the Devil. It is to say there is at least one good thing in the flesh. It is to flatly contradict this word of the Son of God—"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

As said above, the unregenerate sinner is so depraved that with an unchanged heart and mind he will never come to Christ. And the change which is absolutely essential is one which God alone can produce. It is, therefore, by Divine "drawing" that any one comes to Christ. What is this "drawing"? We answer, It is the power of the Holy Spirit overcoming the self-righteousness of the sinner, and convicting him of his lost condition. It is the Holy Spirit awakening within him a sense of need. It is the power of the Holy Spirit overcoming the pride of the natural man, so that he is ready to come to Christ as an empty-handed beggar. It is the Holy Spirit creating within him an hunger for the bread of life."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> A.W. Pink, Exposition of the Gospel of John, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1945, 1975), 336-8

B. The Drawing is the Father's Work (vv.44-46)

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”

1. What does Jesus mean by “No one can come to Me”?
  - a) The words “no one” is a universal negative. They are all-inclusive. This includes every person who have ever been born or to be born. It allows for no exception apart from the exceptions Jesus adds.
  - b) The word “can” has to do with ability not permission.

Jesus is not saying, “No one is *allowed* to come to Me...” He is saying, “No one is *able* to come to Me...”
  - c) The word “unless” is also vital to our understanding. It refers to a necessary condition. A necessary condition refers to something that must happen before something else can happen.
  - d) The meaning of Jesus' words is clear. No human being can possibly come to Christ unless something happens that makes it possible for him to come. That necessary condition Jesus declares is that “it has been granted to him by the Father.” Jesus is saying here that the ability to come to him is a gift

from God. Man does not have the ability in and of himself to come to Christ. God must do something first.<sup>12</sup>

2. What does Jesus mean by the word “draw”?

Some have defined this as a wooing or an enticing to come to Christ.

Others refer to it as prevenient grace which means that the power to come to Christ is dispensed to all of mankind, thus enabling everyone to accept or reject the gospel according to their own will alone.<sup>13</sup>

The Greek word used here is *elkō*. Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* defines it to mean to compel by irresistible superiority. Linguistically and lexicographically, the word means “to compel.” To compel is a much more forceful concept than to woo.<sup>14</sup>

Listen how it is used in other places in Scripture:

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<sup>12</sup>R. C. Sproul, *Chosen by God* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996, c1986).

<sup>13</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Jn 6:44.

<sup>14</sup>R. C. Sproul, *Chosen by God* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996, c1986).



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- a) James 2:6 says, “But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally *drag* you into court?”
- b) Acts 16:19 says, “But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and *dragged* them into the market place before the authorities.”
- c) John 21:6 says, “And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find *a catch*." So they cast, and then they were not able to *haul* it in because of the great number of fish.”
- d) John 21:11 says, “Simon Peter went up and *drew* the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.”

R.C. Sproul says, “I once was asked to debate the doctrine of predestination in a public forum at an Arminian seminary. My opponent was the head of the New Testament department of the seminary. At a crucial point in the debate we fixed our attention on the passage about the Father’s drawing people. My opponent was the one who brought up the passage as a proof text to support his claim that God never forces anyone or compels them to come to Christ. He insisted that the divine influence on fallen man was restricted to drawing, which he interpreted to mean wooing.

At that point in the debate I quickly referred him to Kittel and to the other passages in the New Testament that translate the word *drag*. I was sure I had him. I was sure that he had walked into an insoluble difficulty for his own position. But he surprised me. He caught me completely off guard. I will never forget that agonizing moment when he cited a reference from an obscure Greek poet in which the same Greek word was used to describe the action of drawing water from a well. He looked at me and said, “Well, Professor Sproul, does one drag water from a well?” Instantly the audience burst into laughter at this startling revelation of the alternate meaning of the Greek word. I stood there looking rather silly. When the laughter died down I replied, “No sir. I have to admit that we do not drag water from a well. But, how do we get water from a well? Do we woo it? Do we stand at the top of the well and cry, ‘Here, water, water, water’?” It is as necessary for God to come into our hearts to turn us to Christ as it is for us to put the bucket in the water and pull it out if we want anything to drink. The water simply will not come on its own, responding to a mere external invitation.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>R. C. Sproul, *Chosen by God* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996, c1986).

John MacArthur, referring to this verse in his study Bible says, “Scripture indicates that no "free will" exists in man’s nature, for man is enslaved to sin (total depravity) and unable to believe apart from God’s empowerment (Rom. 3:1–19; Eph. 2:1–3; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 1:9). While "whosoever will" may come to the Father, only those whom the Father gives the ability to will toward Him will actually come to Him. The drawing here is selective and efficacious (producing the desired effect) upon those whom God has sovereignly chosen for salvation, i.e., those whom God has chosen will believe because God has sovereignly determined that result from eternity past (Eph. 1:9–11).”<sup>16</sup>

3. Jesus appeals to Scripture to define what He means by “draws” (v.45)

“It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’”

This is a reference to Isaiah 54:13 which says,  
“All your sons will be taught of the Lord.”

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<sup>16</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Jn 6:44.

Those who are drawn are those who are “taught of God.”

Isaiah 54 identifies them as your “sons.” This is a specific reference to individuals rather than the nation of Israel.

Those who are drawn are God’s children who were chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world.

They are the “all” and “everyone” mentioned in the rest of verse 45.

They will be “taught of God.” Everyone (the elect) who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.”

This passage helps us to define the “all” in other passages like John 12:32, which says, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

The “all” does not mean all of humanity, but all of God’s children, all His elect.

4. Jesus concludes His rebuke in verse 46 by stating again His equality with the Father

He says, “Not that anyone has seen the Father,  
except the One who is from God; He has seen the  
Father.”

Now in verses 47-51...

**III. Jesus Reiterates His Message to the Crowd (vv.47-51)**

A. He Gives the Consequences of Belief in Him (v.47)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.”

This is the message of every believer. We do not know who the elect are, therefore, we are to preach to the crowds—every individual the gospel of Jesus Christ.

B. He States Again that He is the Bread of Life (vv.48-51)

Verse 48 like verse 51 and 35 state plainly that Jesus is the bread of life and verses 49-51 is an appeal for them to eat of that living bread.

Jesus uses their illustration of the manna (v.31) to say that He is the living bread that came down from heaven.

He says, “Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.”<sup>50</sup> “This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.”<sup>51</sup>

‘I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.’”

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Have you eaten of the living bread?
2. If not, do you hunger for it now?
3. My prayer is that God will draw His elect to Himself this morning.
4. If you have not believed on Christ, Acts 17:30-31 says, “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, <sup>31</sup> because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”
5. Repent and turn to Christ now.
6. Let’s pray.