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John 6:35.

John continues to hammer on the question: "What think you of Christ?" He masterfully brings one word-picture after another to clarify the issue of the Person of Christ but always with the view of the responsibility of the listener to respond preferably in the positive. In the first chapter he was depicted as the Light. In the second chapter He was depicted as the Temple of God. In the third chapter, the serpent lifted up in the wilderness. Fourth chapter - Living Water. Fifth chapter as the beloved Son of the Father. And now we come to the sixth chapter - Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life.

John is masterful in his word pictures about Christ. As the Light of the world Jesus Christ is linked with the most basic of life-giving qualities. Without light not only would we stumble around in the darkness (we should not lose sight of the implications of this regarding sinners without Christ¹) but our very lives would be impossible because all that we know by way of existence is completely tied in with the rising and falling of the life-giving sun.

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Without Christ - the Temple of God we would have no legitimate of our *necessary* object of worship. Without Christ, we would fall into idolatry - Paul covers the implications of the deleterious effects of this condition in Romans.² Man needs Christ as his object of faith - in a personal relationship. Without Christ, man is malnourished in the most basics of his survival resource. Let me go as far as to say this; our present world-condition of turmoil, hate, mass murder - specifically what is going on in the troubled hot-spots in the world is a direct reflection of men who are without Christ and men who are ruled without the values that come from such men who do have Christ as the object of their faith.

Without Christ, the Serpent in the wilderness, there would be no cross - no hope - and, to borrow from Paul in his treatise on the importance of the resurrection of Christ, we would be most miserable in our hell-bound condition. More than we can imagine hangs on the fact that the mission of Christ and the cross was successful. Just as there was healing in the Moses' account of the raising of the serpent - Christ offers healing to the masses of the world today - both in Salvation and in the spin-off benefit of a society that is affected by the values that come from lives that are Christ-centered. Our nation was founded on these values and they have served us well down through the centuries.

¹ Acts 17:27 "that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, (56) though He is not far from each one of us;"

² Romans 1:19 - 32.

Without Christ the Living Water, our very survival would be in jeopardy. We can survive for weeks without food, but without water it becomes a matter of days. Many bible students attribute the term Living Water to the Old Testament reference to the Rock that followed the Hebrews in the wilderness - Paul alludes this in 1 Corinthians 10:

[1] Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; [2] And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; [3] And did all eat the same spiritual meat; [4] And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. [5] But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

This concept of a Rock that followed the Hebrews in the wilderness providing life-giving water, was widely believed by the non-believing Jews of the day and by extension perhaps by the Samaritans. It was widely understood that this figure was a picture of the LORD providing life-giving survival to the Hebrews from whom both the Jews and the Samaritans descended. It thus becomes a strong word-picture of the dependence that we have on the Lord for our very existence.

The Fifth image is that of the divinity of Christ. In His mystical union, Christ alone as the Lamb of God was fit not only be the sacrifice for the sins of the world but to receive glory and honor from all. The image in Revelation is so glorious that we must look at Revelation 5:11, 12.

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; [12] Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Rev. 5:11, 12.

Remember the witness of chapter five. Only Jesus Christ could bring this wonderful Salvation to fruition - He alone deserves our worship and adoration.

We now come to the sixth image of Christ - the sixth "tool" in our survival kit for humanity, if I can, use that approach - Christ the Living Bread. We should not forget the importance that the Manna had in the Hebrews survival in the wilderness. This image points, again, to our dependence on the Lord for our very survival. I'm trying to tie two things in here. Of course, the primary issue is the salvation of the sinner, as it should be. But try to imagine a world where there is no restraint without the influence of the Lord! Would humanity have survived thus far - I think not. In fact this divine, providential restraint on the disastrous effect of total abandon to evil is alluded to by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7. Satan will not be able to work his total destructive plan on humanity until the Restraint - the Holy Spirit - is removed, during the Great Tribulation. So we have Christ the Bread of Life for us all. Partaking this Bread of Life results in eternal life; **"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my**

flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51).

Christ, the Bread of Life a Feast for the Sinner.

And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. [12] When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. [13] Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. [14] Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

This is truly a miracle. We know the story well. I wish to point out some points in this survey rather to go into detail. The secondary theme as we will see later and for that matter throughout John's gospel is the survival of man. The gospel of John presents the Person of Christ and certainly presents a strong evangelistic tone. But the underwriting tone that the Jews *should* have not missed was that their very survival depended on the acceptance of Christ as their Lord tragically, this was not to be the case as we know from history. The problem here was that thousands were following Jesus for various reasons legitimate or not and had not taken care of their basic needs of food and water. Jesus takes care of this situation and at the same time provides a wonderful example of His role as the giver of life to the sinner and their protection.

When all was done the disciples gathered up the remnants of the miracle food and there was enough left over for the feeding of the twelve disciples - a lesson not to be lost by John, I'm sure. This feeding served as the tipping point for the Galileans deciding whether or not to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord as we will see later on in this lesson.

A False Response by the Galileans to a Legitimate offer by Christ.

When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. John 6:15.

Once again, we see the spiritual blindness of not only the people in Jerusalem but now in Galilee. The pop-messiah had been strongly ingrained in all the people. They intended to make Jesus *their king* - not the Son of God and King of Israel as did Nathanael.³ This really is the crux of the tragedy of Galilee's rejection of Christ. They had formed their belief not on the scriptures and the presentation that Jesus Christ made of Himself but of popular belief and on selfish desires to be fed by Christ, to be freed by Christ from Roman rule and the pure sensationalism of seeing "signs."

Christ, the Protector of the Believer.

³ **“Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.”** John 1:49. Notice Nathanael's spiritual emphasis of Christ being *both* the Son of God *and* King of Israel. Sharp contrast with 6:15.

And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, [17] And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. [18] And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. [19] So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. [20] But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. [21] Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. John 6:16 - 21.

This miracle is almost a side-note but an important one. There are a couple of important notes. We should not lose sight of the fact that Christ's protection occurred after they willingly received Christ into the boat. Towns points out that immediately after they received Christ into their boat, not only were the waters quieted but they were immediately on the shore safe and sound.⁴

We should not lose sight of the fact that Christ's protection occurred after they willingly received Christ into the boat

Jesus uses the term that Jehovah used in the Old Testament "I AM" (Εγώ εἰμι) in His reassurance - actually, the original could be more properly "I AM, be not afraid - a clear reference to His Deity - note their willingness to receive Him. This is not only referring to their dependence on Him for saving the day but their acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

Decision Time for the Galileans.

And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? [26] Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. [27] Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. [28] Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? [29] Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. John 2:25 - 29.

It's decision time for the Galileans. We are about to see the difference between superficial in Christ as a popular figure - a man who had been popularized by the masses according to

These unbelieving Galileans followed Jesus Christ around for the feeding and the signs - not that they might hear words of life - truly a tragedy.

⁴ Actually, the quieting of the waters is not recorded here. For that detail read the same account in the synoptic Gospels; Matt 14:22, 32; Mark 6:45 - 53.

local folklore and true belief in the Person, Jesus Christ. Jesus lays down the issues. These unbelieving Galileans followed Jesus Christ around for the feeding and the signs - not that they might hear words of life - truly a tragedy. The popular phase of Jesus' ministry was about to come to a close and He was about to enter into a different phase where He discipled His true followers.

What followed (vs' 30 - 34) was typical Jewish rationalism, once again run amuck. Their response for Jesus to give them this "Bread" shows that they completely missed the point. Jesus condemns the Galileans also:

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. [36] But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. John 6:35, 36.

Right after that many of the followers left Jesus in their unbelief receiving the same tragic loss their Jerusalem inhabitants received. Loss of any spiritual insight they might have received by the Holy Spirit and abandonment by the Call of the Gospel. The response of the disciples was strong and clear as we will see next.

The Disciples: "Thou Art That Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? [68] Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. [69] And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. John 6:67 - 69.

The true confession of a true follower of Christ. Peter's first "confession." Interesting that he uses the demonstrative pronoun "That Christ" indicating that Jesus teaching ministry along with the illumination ministry of the Holy Spirit was taking hold in the heart of Peter.

So we come to the close of the longest chapter in the gospel of John. We see that even the Galileans do not "get it." The popular phase of Jesus ministry comes to a close and the true issue of discipleship becomes the focus.

Next time we will see this sharp demarcation between belief and unbelief. The "plot thickens" so to speak as the drama of our Salvation develops.