

Seeking Jesus (John 6:22–59)

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Introduction

After Jesus fed the multitude, they concluded that He was the Prophet spoken of by Moses in Deuteronomy 18: “*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen*” (v. 15). The problem was that God’s kingdom cannot come on earth until the Suffering Servant of Isaiah is put to death for the sins of His people (Isaiah 53:6, 10).

Only after His passion will the Son of Man wear His crown and be seated on His throne. However, the Jews, not understanding the Scripture, believed that their Messiah would come and bring in the kingdom without the cross. Thus, John informs us, “*When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, ‘This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!’ 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*” (John 6:14, 15).

The principal issue is the failure of sinful humans, both saved and unsaved, to understand that the kingdom of God is primarily a spiritual issue and that the spiritual realm must take precedence over everything else. The crowd wanted Jesus to be king so that they could always eat their fill—have all their physical and emotional needs met, like their forefathers in the wilderness. Sadly, even His disciples were blind to spiritual reality and could not understand Jesus, confusing His comments with issues in the natural world.

Jesus did not come to meet our supposed needs. *Jesus* is our need, and He came to fulfill that need in the elect given to Him by the Father.

I. Laboring for Eternal Life

1. The error of seeking something from Jesus and not Jesus Himself.
 - a. Concerning this first error, Jesus issued a stern rebuke (vv.26, 27).
 - b. Their second error was presuming they must do something to earn God’s favor so that they might get Him to act favorably for them. Jesus corrected them, informing them that their favorability with God was the sole work of God (v. 28). It is not the sinner who works to believe; believing is the work of God in the sinner via regeneration.
2. What connection do signs have with believing (v. 30)? The Jews argued that their fathers ate the manna Moses gave them in the wilderness, and if Jesus was that Prophet Moses promised, He would also give them bread to eat. They even quoted the Scriptures (Nehemiah 9:15).

II. The Bread of Life

1. Jesus is the true eternal Bread that sustains true eternal life pictured in the bread that sustains natural life.
 - a. The will of God was not to send more mana but to send Jesus (vv. 35, 36). Observe carefully what Jesus said: “*You have seen me and yet do not believe.*” This is in response to their request, “*What sign do you do, that we may see and believe you?*” The signs point to Jesus.

- b. God sent Jesus as Savior, and His saving His people is a sovereign work. Only those who are given by God to the Son will believe (v. 37).
2. The Jews could only grumble in unbelief, just like their fathers.
 - a. They could not *hear* Jesus, and thus, drew wrong conclusions based on their limited knowledge. Instead, they grumbled about Him, believing that they knew all about Him (vv. 41, 42).
 - b. Their only hope, however, was Jesus' saving them (vv. 43, 44).
3. The Jews needed to be corrected by their own Scripture; thus, Jesus cited Isaiah 54:13 and Jeremiah 31:34.
 - a. Only those who have been taught by the Father will come to Jesus (vv. 45–48).
 - b. The miracle in the wilderness did not provide eternal life (vv. 49–51).

III. Feeding on Jesus

1. Instead of receiving the truth, these unbelievers simply descended into foolish disputing: “*How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*” (v. 52).
2. In response, Jesus couched spiritual truth in hard words that cannot be understood by the natural man (vv. 53–56).
3. What the natural man sees as *mystery* will be regarded by the spiritual man as *reality* (vv. 57–59).

Conclusion

1. Salvation is the sovereign work of God. Jesus did not try to persuade these Jews to believe. He only informed them that they did not see Him (spiritually); thus, they could not believe Him.
2. The Father teaches by insight and illumination in the heart of the individual. *Regeneration* must precede faith, which is the fruit of regeneration (John 3:5; 1 Corinthians 2:14). Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 27; Joel 2:28) and was promised in the OT (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:24–26).
3. Have you had your spiritual eyes and ears opened to the truth (reality)? Have you been born from above? If so, you will have no trouble perceiving spiritual reality.