

Introduction

I. Jesus' Ministry in the Gospel of John

A. Now in Full Force

1. Jesus' ministry started with Him saying to His mother that His hour is not yet come (2:4c)
2. Yet, now Jesus is not only openly healing people, as with the lame man and the official's son (4:46-5:17), but He is also proclaiming His authority as the Son of God and His relationship to the Father, both claiming to be like God and yet to be a distinct agent the Father has sent (5:18-47).
3. Jesus will now be shown to do two more signs, adding to the three we have already received:
 - a) The Wedding at Cana
 - b) The Healing of the Official's Son
 - c) The Healing at the Pool at Bethesda
 - d) The Healing of the Five Thousand
 - e) The Scene of Walking on Water

II. Context is Always King

- A. We must remember that we have 5 chapters behind us in both the narrative and the overall mission of John the Apostle in what he intends to communicate through this Gospel.
- B. John's themes and narratives go like this:
 1. Jesus is God (Prologue)
 2. Jesus is light and life (Prologue)
 3. Jesus takes away the sins of the world (John the Baptist to Jesus)
 4. Jesus is the wine of blessing (The wedding at Cana)
 5. Jesus is the water of life (Jesus and Nicodemus)
 6. Jesus baptizes with the Spirit
 7. Jesus is the food of life (Jesus to His disciples)
 8. Jesus is the unifier (the woman at the well and the Samaritans)
 9. Jesus is the healer (The official's son and the lame man)
 10. Jesus is equal with God and is distinct in person and mission
- C. All of these sort of themes, and more, give us the stage for the all important chapter of John 6.
 1. In John 6, we receive much theology and great narratives regarding the life and ministry of Jesus.

Exegesis of John 6:1-21

I. The Fourth Sign: The Feeding of the Five Thousand

A. The Large Crowd (vv. 1-2)

1. Jesus clearly changes locations and this is indicated both by the mentioning of the Sea of Galilee and “after this” or “after these things,”
 - a) The these things refers to both the the conversation Jesus just had with the Jews (5:19-47) but also some ongoing miracles that the crowds had observed.
 - b) We do not know if these are the miracles via the healings or something other.
 - c) We just know that this is what people saw and that, because of these signs, they followed him.

B. The Mountain and the Passover (vv. 3-4)

1. Little note here:
 - a) This recalls us to Exodus 19 when Moses went up to the mountain to talk to God.
 - b) The significance of that event was God speaking, and here, the Son is speaking.
2. Equally, what is present here is the recalling of the Passover and the miracle Jesus will do in lieu of this significant event in Jewish celebrations.

C. Jesus Lifts His Eyes and Tests Phillip (vv. 5-9)

1. Jesus not only looks at the crowd at large but, Spiritually, He looks out to them.
 - a) The action of Jesus lifting His eyes is the initiation of His eventual actions in providing food.
2. Jesus’ question, before reading v. 6 seems odd, but clearly, the text is cueing us to Jesus’ omniscience as God.
3. The rest of the text is straight forward:
 - a) Phillip realizes that they do not have enough money to pay for the food for all of the people, let alone where all the food could even be gathered.
 - b) Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother notices the boy with the five loaves of bread and two fish. One commentator notes an interesting insight from the Philosopher Philo, “a foodstuff...of somewhat doubtful merit, suited for irrational animals and men in unhappy circumstances.”¹
 - c) Phillip is essentially saying there is not enough both to buy or even provide if it could be bought; Andrew notes that there is food, but it is not very desirable nor is it nearly enough.

¹ Edward Klink III, *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: John* (Zondervan Academic: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2017), 977-978. MBTS OverDrive Read EBook

D. Jesus' Miracle (vv. 10-13)

1. Jesus does not address any of the mild rebukes or bewilderment from the disciples.
2. Rather, as He knew would happen, He directs His disciples to bring the child to Him and had the people sit down.
3. He took the loaves and the fish and multiplied them to the point where people not only had enough to eat but they had their fill with twelve baskets of leftovers.
4. Here's what we see at the end of this miracle:
 - a) Jesus takes great care of His works that the Father has given Him.
 - (1) to the point where He loses none of what food He has provided.
 - b) Equally, there is left overs.
 - (1) twelve baskets.
 - (2) This is not insignificant because each disciple, presumably, would carry a basket, thus a rebuke to their bewilderment and mild disbelief in the works of Jesus.

5. **A Suggested Connection:**

- a) I don't want to reach too far from the context and the immediate wording of the Gospel of John, but there are some interesting elements in this miracle that are worth connecting in the overall message of scripture.
 - b) In Revelation, we see over and over again how the number 7 is completeness and perfection.
 - (1) There 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish = perfection for Jesus not only doing His miracle but providing the food of life for the people, even though they miss it.
 - c) There are twelve baskets of leftovers and Jesus commanded that these be picked up so that none may be lost.
 - (1) the suggestion here is that Jesus saves His people perfectly and utterly.
 - (2) Revelation speaks of the 144,000 of God's people.
 - (3) That number, in my estimation, represents the whole of God's church and people of faith in Jesus.
 - (4) We see some connection with Jesus' miracle, hinting to us the mission of Jesus completed in wholeness and Him tipping us off to that through John's narration.
 - d) This is not perfect but it is a thought that came to my mind (Gabriel's mind).
- E. The Response of the People (v. 14-15)
1. The people proclaimed that Jesus is a great prophet that has come into the world.
 2. They even might have tried to make Him king.

3. Is this the heart response we ought to have toward Jesus?

II. Jesus Walks On Water (vv. 16-21)

A. Connection to Job

1. Job 9:8, “Who alone stretches out the heavens, and tramples down the waves of the sea...”
 - a) To feel the weight of this verse, it is best to read from the first verse of chapter 9.
2. The Septuagint (LXX, the Greek version of the Old Testament) says that God alone “treads on the waves of the sea.”

B. Jesus’ Self-Designation

1. Jesus, when He calls out to the disciples who had fear of the stirring sea uses a crucial identification, *Ἐγώ εἰμι* (I AM).
2. Our modern translations take the simpler meaning of “it is I.”
3. Yet, the *Ἐγώ εἰμι* is the same self-designation Jesus gives when speaking of Abraham in John 8:58, “Truly truly I say to you, before Abraham was, *I AM* (*Ἐγώ εἰμι*).
4. Jesus, in this very short story and very familiar story cues us into Him being God.

> In essence, what we see in these two short but very important stories is this:

1. Jesus is the bread of life—the food that He told His disciples that they do not even know about.
2. Jesus is God and commands all of creation—from the crumbs of bread to the raging seas.
3. Do we merely believe in Jesus because He did some amazing things or do we see what He provides as God on earth via the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world?