

## 55. The Gospel of John—6:22-71 (Intro)

---

### *“The Bread of Life” Pt.1*

(12/23/18)

John’s gospel is highly organized—he built it around seven miracles, that led to seven discourses, that culminated in seven ‘I Am’ statements.

The phrase “I Am” is the name of God as first expressed in the book of Exodus 3:13-14.  
(Explain)

And so, for the first time in Scripture God revealed Himself as the Great “I Am”—not the Great “*I was*” or the great “*I will be*”.

Inherent in His name is the idea of God being eternal and that He dwells in the eternal present tense. (Explain)

This sacred name of God is known as the *tetragrammaton* (“four letters”)—‘YHWH’.

No one knows for sure the true pronunciation of *YHWH* because the ancient Hebrew language used no actual vowels in its alphabet.

On top of that the Jewish people would never say the name of God since they believed it was too holy for their lips to utter—so in time they forgot the correct pronunciation.

However, “Yahweh” is probably correct—although most Gentile Christians usually pronounce it “Jehovah”.

The word is actually a verb meaning “to be” or “to become”—the idea being that God wants *to be* or *to become* to us whatever we need—which is why the word ‘Jehovah’ is often coupled with a noun.

And so, we read in the O.T.—

“Jehovah-Shalom” (*I Am-Peace*)

“Jehovah-Jireh” (*I Am-Provision*)

“Jehovah-Nissi” (*I Am-Victory*)

“Jehovah-Rohi” (*I Am-Shepherd*)

But the greatest of all is “Jehovah-Shua” (*I Am-Salvation*).

The Greek name “Jesus” comes from Jehovah-Shua—“Yahoshua” or “Y’shua” for short.

God wants to become to us whatever we need—well, our greatest need was for salvation.

So, God the Son, Second Person of the Trinity, came down from heaven, became a Man and died in our place in the Person of Jesus—our Y’shua (“the Lord has become our salvation”).

In John’s gospel Jesus called Himself “I Am” (name of God) coupled with 7 different nouns expressing what He desires to become to people (starting with the desire to be their Savior as expressed in His very name).

Think of it as a name coupled with a description—like, “*Phil Ballmaier—the pastor*”.

*“I Am—the Bread of Life” (John 6:35)*

*“I Am—the Light of the World” (John 8:12)*

*“I Am—the Door” (John 10:9)*

*“I Am—the Good Shepherd” (John 10:11)*

*“I Am—the Resurrection and the Life” (John 11:25)*

*“I Am—the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6)*

*“I Am—the Vine” (John 15:5)*

Each of these statements is a declaration of divinity—and don’t think that was lost on Jesus’ enemies.

They understood He was claiming to be God in human form—which is why they tried to stone Him on several occasions.

**John 10:31-33 (NKJV)**

<sup>31</sup> Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. <sup>32</sup> Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" <sup>33</sup> The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, [constantly, continually] make Yourself God."

And so, as we study John 6 understand that the whole chapter is built around the feeding of the five-thousand (men plus women and children) miracle and contains a very important discourse—culminating and climaxing with His declaration of divinity, “I AM—the Bread of Life.”

Now, from a chronological standpoint—in John chapter six, we have a small glimpse of the middle part of the ministry of Jesus.

Actually, chapter six encompasses about two years of Jesus' life—which is *all* that John gives us in his gospel with regard to these two middle years of Jesus' ministry.

The other gospel writers give us a much more detailed look at the events surrounding these middle years—but you remember that John is very selective in his gospel presentation.

And this is especially true with the miracles of Jesus he chose to include in his gospel.

**John 20:30-31 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup> And truly Jesus did many other signs [miracles] in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

As we have already said, John's gospel is organized in such a way that he skips over large chunks of Jesus' ministry to focus on only the events that are germane to the theme of his gospel—to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God so that people might put their faith in Him and receive eternal life.

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle Jesus did that is recorded in all four gospels—which tells us that there is a larger lesson the Holy Spirit is seeking to teach us thru this miracle than just the compassion of Jesus that day to feed a bunch of hungry people with physical food.

And fortunately, we are not left guessing about this—because later in the chapter the Lord Jesus *tells* us the larger spiritual lesson He was communicating thru this miracle.

You see, the next day, in the synagogue of Capernaum (John 6:26-59), He gave a sermon where He stated clearly the purpose of the miracle (besides feeding a bunch of hungry people).

The theme of that sermon was “*Jesus, the Bread of Life*”—and the message of that sermon was clear—that Jesus is the true Manna, the spiritual Bread Who came down from heaven, which if a person “eats” (believes in) they will live forever.

This message wasn't received as enthusiastically by the multitudes as was the bread Jesus provided for them the day before that filled their stomachs.

Predictably, the people were willing to receive the *physical* bread, but they were reluctant to receive the *spiritual* Bread (Jesus Himself) Who came down from heaven to satisfy their spiritual hunger—including and especially their need for salvation.

People today are only too willing to let God meet their physical needs, but not their spiritual needs—especially if it means having to repent and change the way they're living. (Elaborate)

Jesus is the Bread of Life, and only He can satisfy the spiritual hunger in a person's heart.

I have divided verses 22 thru 71 of John 6 this way:

- I. The Physical Preoccupation of the Multitudes**
- II. The Divine Declaration of the Savior**
- III. The Carnal Condemnation of the Jewish Leaders**
- IV. The Strategic Separation of the True Disciples from the False**

### **I. The Physical Preoccupation of the Multitudes—v.22-34**

And by saying this I mean that—this great multitude of people (twenty-thousand) were more interested in their physical stomachs than they were in their eternal souls.

This is true of the vast majority of unbelievers—but also of a good number of believers in Christ as well.

This is what the Bible calls being—‘*carnally minded*’.

### The carnally minded unbeliever

#### Romans 8:5-9 (NLT2)

<sup>5</sup> Those who are dominated by the sinful [fallen] nature [‘the flesh’] think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will. <sup>8</sup> That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. <sup>9</sup> But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.)

From verses 5 thru 8 of Romans 8, Paul is comparing believers with unbelievers—not talking about carnal Christians.

The **mind** is different from the **brain** in that the *brain* is part of our physical man whereas the *mind* is the soul or consciousness (non-physical) of a person.

When Paul talks about the *mind*, he’s not talking about the ability of the brain to think or reason—he is talking about the mind in the sense of—the ‘focus or pre-occupation’ of one’s life.

To be ‘**carnally minded**’ speaks of someone who is dominated by and pre-occupied with the things that pertain to their body appetites under the control of their fallen nature—what Paul called “*the lusts of the flesh*.”

This person is controlled by their fallen nature because they are unsaved.

To be ‘**spiritually minded**’ speaks of someone who is dominated by and pre-occupied with the things of the Spirit of God.

This speaks of a person who is born again and has the nature of God and the Spirit of God within them—and as such they are controlled by the Holy Spirit working thru their new nature.

Unbelievers continually set their minds of the things of the flesh (material possessions, physical pleasures like partying, recreation, entertainment and sex etc.).

That doesn't mean that they never go to church or volunteer in their local soup kitchen—it simply means their *soul* (consciousness) is basically under the control of their *flesh* (fallen sinful nature).

One author—

*“These people are completely consumed and dominated in their thinking by the things that gratify their fleshly desires. There is no desire or thought of future rewards or future glory, they live for the moment and for the pleasure they can get **now**. They are hedonists and materialists, who have no desire for spiritual things except to give God lip service at the appropriate times.”*

And many of them *call* themselves Christians and even attend church—and yet they still reason from a very fleshly standpoint—

- *“I can be a Christian and still live with my boyfriend or girlfriend.”*
- *“I can read the Bible and still get high.”*
- *“I can love God and go to church and still cheat on my exams or lie about the product I'm selling because God understands I need to do that to get a head.”*

The reason Paul is drawing a comparison between believers and unbelievers in Romans 8 is because it is the conclusion of a section that runs from chapter 1 thru chapter 8, which deals with the questions—*“how to get saved; how does a person know they're saved; and once they are saved, is that salvation permanent or can it be lost?”*

In Romans 8 he is presenting some criteria by which a person can test the legitimacy of their salvation.

The bottom line being—you'll know you're genuinely saved if there is a change in the way you think about life which has produced a change in the way you live your life.

**Galatians 6:7-8 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

<sup>8</sup> For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

**1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

As Spurgeon said: "*The grace that does not change my life will not save my soul.*"

However, it is possible to be a Christian and still be carnal.

**The carnally minded believer**

Paul divided the world up into these three categories in 1Corinthians 2:14-3:1.

- *The natural man*
- *The spiritual man*
- *The carnal man*

The **natural man** is a term that speaks of someone born into this world through the natural process—but not born-again supernaturally through the Holy Spirit. (John 3)

**1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him;



The word “**natural**” in v.14 is *psuchikos*, and speaks of the ‘soulish’ man, a person who lives to satisfy the body’s appetites—just like an animal (hunger, thirst, sex etc.).

The natural man is contrasted by Paul with the *spiritual man* (pneumatikos) in 1Cor.2:15.

The **spiritual man** is someone who is born of the Spirit—someone who is *spiritually minded*, whose mind is dominated with the Word of God, the will of God and the work of God.

This is what Paul calls having the—“*mind of Christ*” in 1Cor. 2:16.

This person lives on an entirely different level of existence than does the natural man. (Explain)

And then in 1Corinthians 3:1 Paul talks about the “**carnal man**” which refers to a ‘*carnal Christian*’.

Many believe that so-called “**carnal Christians**” are really not Christians at all—but Paul addresses them as “brethren” and calls them “babies in Christ”.

The word “carnal” is the Greek word *sarkikos* and means, “*to be dominated by the inclinations of the old fallen nature*”.

Paul tells them that after 4 or 5 years of being Christians they have barely come through the door of salvation and that they have settled for Christians living on the ‘*lowest rung of the ladder*’.

He is saying in effect, “*You have put yourself in a position where your relationship with God is literally profiting you nothing* (outside of salvation)”.

Alan Redpath—*"The carnal Christian is a child of God, born again and on his way to heaven but—he is travelling third class."*

Paul had ministered 18 months there in Corinth and yet when he left, he considered them still babies in their faith—and then at the time of this epistle he says, *"even now you...are still carnal."* (v.3)

They had no excuse—Paul planted the church and fed them with good spiritual food (not the junk food of man's wisdom) but they chose not to grow up.

Let me compare physical babies with spiritual babies—

- *Babies can't feed themselves (especially with solid food)—Paul told the Corinthians, "I fed you with milk..."v.2*
- *Babies are totally self-centered—they don't care about anyone else and if they can't have what they want they scream and throw a tantrum—just like many babies in Christ.*
- *Babies constantly make messes (of various kinds) that others have to clean up—welcome to my world!*

As I said when you're talking about a physical baby these things are expected—but you would not tolerate this behavior from your 15 or 20 year-old (unless they were mentally challenged in some way).

**James 1:2-4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

Right up-front, James presents the difference between spiritual and carnal believers—it comes down to how they *see* trials and how they *receive* trials.

At the core is how each sees this life—carnal Christians look at life from earth’s perspective and view their Christianity as a vehicle for God to bless them.

For these people God exists to make them happy and bless them with all kinds of material treasures—as they are all about laying up for themselves treasures on earth.

In contrast, mature, Spirit-filled Christians see life from an eternal perspective and view their Christian life as a way to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven by taking up their cross, denying themselves and living for the glory of God while on this earth.

The first group tends to see trials as a satanic plot to destroy their earthly happiness—and therefore believes that the devil needs to be ‘rebuked’ when he attacks with trials so that they can once again enjoy God’s blessings in this life.

Whereas the second group sees trials as being necessary for growth and spiritual development—a part of God’s plan to better equip them for the work the Lord has for them in this life.

James, who wants to replace carnality with maturity in the lives of his readers, is trying to get them to see their difficult circumstances as a positive thing—a blessing from God to grow their faith and to better prepare them for the rigors of ministry.

Getting back to John 6—this multitude that Jesus had fed with physical food the day before was primarily made up of unbelievers.

However, there might have been a few that were truly saved sprinkled in—but the whole lot of them were carnally minded.

We know this because of how the Lord addresses their desire to be near Him—

**John 6:26 (NKJV)**

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.

He is going to use this 'interactive' sermon to try to elevate their thinking and perception of life from the physical to the spiritual.

Let me just set-up the next section in John 6:22-40 by saying that it is built around three questions the multitudes asked Jesus:

- A. *"Rabbi, when did You come here?"* (v.25)
- B. *"What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"* (v.28)
- C. *"What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?"* (v.30)

Let me just end by saying, if your thinking that you might be saved but more carnally minded than spiritually minded—keep these Scriptures in mind and pray that God will give you the grace to put them into practice in your daily life.

- *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."* (James 4:8)
- *"Set your mind on things above and not on things on the earth."* (Colossians 3:2)
- *"Seek first the Kingdom of God..."* (Matthew 6:33)
- *"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven..."* (Matthew 6:20)

May our precious Lord give us grace to be spiritually minded in all we do in the coming new year and beyond!