

## 59. The Gospel of John—6:35-40

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### *“The Bread of Life” Pt.5*

(1/27/19)

In our study in John’s gospel, we are currently looking at one of the greatest teachings Jesus ever gave during His earthly ministry—the Bread of Life discourse.

This was a teaching that resulted from the miracle He had performed the day before where He fed 15 to 20 thousand people with 5 barley crackers and a couple of small pickled fish. (Finish)

What makes the Bread of Life discourse one of the greatest in the Bible is found in its core message—eternal life, which Jesus mentions 8 times in this discourse.

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

- I. The Physical Preoccupation of the Multitudes—v.22-34**
- II. The Divine Declaration of the Savior—v.35-40, 44-50**
- III. The Carnal Condemnation of the Jewish Leaders—v.51-59**
- IV. The Strategic Separation of the True Disciples from the False—v.60-71**

We are currently looking at the second main point in our outline—

## II. The Divine Declaration of the Savior—v.35-40, 44-50

**John 6:35a (NKJV)**

**<sup>35</sup> And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life..."**

As I've already said, this is the first of 7 "I Am" statements that John built his gospel around.

The phrase "I Am" is the name of God as first expressed in the book of Exodus 3:13-14.

Each of these 7 statements is a declaration of divinity since they each begin with Jesus declaring Himself to be the Great 'I Am' in human form.

### A. The Source of Eternal Life—v.35

When the multitudes came to Jesus on the morning after He fed them to the full with bread, looking to be fed again, it led the Lord to say to them—

*"You only seek Me because I fed your stomachs with physical food. Don't put so much emphasis on your physical needs when your greatest need is spiritual—the need for eternal life!"*

**John 6:35 (NKJV)**

**<sup>35</sup> And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of [eternal] life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst [shall never hunger and thirst in their soul—will be satisfied]. (Explain)**

Once again, the emphasis of the 'Bread of Life' discourse is *eternal life*.

### B. The Skeptics of Eternal Life—v.36

**John 6:36 (NKJV)**

**<sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.**

A biblical skeptic is a person who has the facts presented to them—but can't bring themselves to accept and embrace the truth those facts are pointing to.

The Lord Jesus was saying to them that they had seen Him perform enough miracles to understand that He was the Messiah and Savior who had come down from heaven (as did the manna)—so that they were without excuse.

### **C. The Security of Eternal Life—v.37-40, 44-50**

#### **John 6:37-40 (NKJV)**

**<sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. <sup>39</sup> This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."**

These verses contain a lot of truth that we need to understand—let's break it down.

#### **“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me...” (v.37a)**

Jesus is saying that everyone who would get saved during the Church Age (Pentecost to the Rapture) were foreknown and chosen by the Father Who will someday present all of them (the 'Body of Christ') as a love gift to the Son as His Bride.

Notice He makes it a point to say that all of those that the Father gives to the Son—will come to Him (Jesus) for salvation.

This means that no one's salvation depends on you or me—even if we mess up our presentation of the gospel, or chicken out altogether and not witness to someone. (Elaborate)

Jesus is clear that their salvation depends solely upon the ability of the sovereign God of the universe to save, sustain (hold on to) and complete the work He began in each of their lives by bringing them from predestination to glorification (Romans 8:29-30).

**“...and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” (v.37b)**

First of all, Jesus is telling us that anyone can come to Him for salvation regardless of how sinful or wicked a life they have lived.

He assures them that they won’t be turned away—they will not be refused eternal life if they come to Jesus and ask for it by faith.

*“But what if I’m not one the ones the Father has chosen to be saved—what if I’m not predestined to be a part of Christ’s Bride?”*

**John 3:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

**Romans 10:11-13 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup>For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup>For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

<sup>13</sup>For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Someone else has put it like this—

*“On the door to heaven, from our side, it says, ‘Whosoever will may enter’. Jesus said, ‘I am the door, anyone who desires may enter and find eternal life’. When you get on the other side of the door someday in heaven, you’re going to look back, and on the other side of that door you will find written, “Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.”*

But secondly, when Jesus said, **“...and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” (v.37b)**

I believe that not only was Jesus saying that no one who comes to Him for salvation will be turned away but that—once they are saved, they will never be cast out of God’s family and lose their salvation.

And so, verse 37 not only deals with the *scope* of salvation (anyone can be saved), but it also deals with the *security* of salvation (those who are saved are never lost).

And this He goes on to state in some of the strongest terms in all the New Testament regarding the eternal security of the believer in Christ.

However, this morning we need to deal with the questions we raised last week about who and how many can be saved—before we look at the eternal security of those who are saved.

As I just said a moment ago, the Bible says that all who would come to Jesus during the Church Age were chosen by the Father to be the Bride of Christ—

**Ephesians 1:3-4a (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, <sup>4</sup> just as He chose us [for salvation] in Him before the foundation of the world...

So, the Bible is clear that those who wind up being saved were chosen by the Father to be saved in eternity past—but the question is “*on the basis of what did the Father choose us?*”

Did the Father choose us because we were better (more moral) than other unbelievers or sweeter or was His choosing based on some other inward quality or outward attribute?

The Bible makes it crystal clear that we were NOT saved based on any outward works or inward morality on our part.

Some say that we were chosen by the Father based solely on His sovereign will wherein He simply said in eternity past to all who would eventually be born, *“I’m going to save you, and you, and you—but the rest of you I’m sending to hell.”*

I don’t believe that—so then on the basis of what did the Father choose those who would eventually come to Christ for salvation?

Well, we are not left to guess because Peter, in his first epistle tells us—

**1 Peter 1:1-2 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Peter...to the pilgrims of the Dispersion...<sup>2</sup> **elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...**

The word ‘**elect**’ can also be translated ‘*chosen*’—which is how Paul used it in Eph.1:4—

**Ephesians 1:4 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> just as He chose us [*for eternal life*] in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

On what basis did God choose or elect us for eternal life?

It wasn’t on the basis of our internal goodness or external good works—Peter tells us God chose (elected) us **“according to His foreknowledge”**.

**“Foreknowledge”** is a Greek word that means ‘*knowledge known in advance*’.

God knows all things before they happen—including and especially the things pertaining to redemption as we see clearly from Revelation 13:8 which tells us that Jesus was the Lamb *“slain before the world was made”*. (Explain)

The Greek word for ‘**foreknowledge**’ is *prognosin* (the word we get the word *prognostication* from) and means—“*the action of foretelling or prophesying future events.*”

Now, those who are Calvinists say that this Greek word actually means ‘*foreordination*’—in other words, God knows the future because He has foreordained the future.

Or to put it another way—He knows the future because He has *predetermined* the future—including all those who would be saved.

You see it wasn’t that God just knew in advance (foreknowledge) those who would get saved and those who wouldn’t—He *predestined* (predetermined) some to be saved and the others to be damned.

A lot of Christians have a problem with the doctrine of predestination—however, it is taught in the Bible, so it is biblical—

**Ephesians 1:4-5 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, <sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself...

Again, the whole idea of predestination troubles a lot of people—but much of it comes from not properly understanding what predestination means.

The word ‘**predestination**’ comes from a Greek word that means “*to predetermine or plan beforehand a person’s destiny.*”

Okay, the strict definition isn’t hard to understand, the problem comes when we try to figure out upon what basis did God predetermine someone’s destiny—was it based on His sovereignty or our free will?

Calvinists believe that in eternity past God chose some to be predestined to eternal life in heaven and the others He predestined to spend eternity in hell (doctrine of reprobation).

All of this was decided before any of us were born and without any free will or choice on our part where we would spend eternity.

In other words, we are nothing but puppets and God is the puppet Master—Who makes us behave in certain ways and believe or not believe what He has determined and we have no choice in the matter.

Calvinists have such an extreme view of God's sovereignty and man's depravity that they don't believe unbelievers even have the *capacity* to believe on their own—they believe that God has to *give* them the faith to believe if they're going to be saved—

**Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,  
<sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Calvinists interpret Ephesians 2:8-9 to mean the *gift* Paul is referring to here is not *salvation* but the *faith* needed to believe in Christ *for* salvation—and that the faith to believe is not something that any of us (fallen sinners) can possess but is something that can only come from God as a gift.

They reason that if we had free-will and could choose to believe in Jesus—that would be a work and we can't be saved by our works!

I agree with that last part, God only saves us by His grace apart from any works we could do to try to earn it.

However, the problem I have is with the first part of that argument that places believing or the exercising of faith into the category of works—which it clearly is not:



**Romans 4:2-5 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God.

<sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? "*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*" <sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. <sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

Here Paul separates faith *from* works and doesn't include it in the category *of* works.

Let's think about this for a moment—how can simply receiving God's gift of salvation by *our* faith be considered a work?

Since when is receiving a gift a *meritorious* act?

Say that I am destitute and very sick, so sick that I am going to die if I don't get an operation soon—but I have no money for an operation.

And then one day a wealthy man hears of my plight and hands me a check that is enough to cover everything.

In a very real sense he is offering me salvation from death by giving me a gift of life.

Now, is my reaching out and receiving that check a meritorious act?

Will people applaud the one who receives the check or the one who gives it by his grace?

I disagree with Calvinists who believe that receiving (by faith) God's gracious gift of eternal life thru free-will is a meritorious act and therefore a work which would somehow negate God's grace.

And furthermore, if God had to give a person the faith to believe and then forced them to come to Christ to be saved (doctrine of Irresistible Grace)—that would make all of the invitations in the N.T. nothing more than hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy in the sense that it gives the appearance that God is letting *us* choose whether or not we're going to receive Jesus and be saved—when in reality He isn't *inviting* people to come and be saved (implying free will to accept or reject His offer)—He's *dragging* them irresistibly and *forcing* them to be saved.

And yet the N.T. contains many *invitations* for sinners to come to Christ for salvation:

*“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”* (Matt.11:28);

*“...let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him (come and) take the water of life freely”* (Rev.22:17)

Now, with regard to the doctrine of reprobation—not all Calvinists hold to it.

Moderate Calvinists teach that although God did elect and predestine some for eternal life in heaven—that doesn't mean He predestined others to eternal damnation in hell.

This is simply trying to get around the obvious implications of Calvinist theology.

Whether you believe that God reprobates a person to hell or simply withholds from them the faith needed to believe is really the same thing.

If God commanded that a person had to fly to be saved but then only gave a select few people (the elect) wings so they could fly—that would be tantamount to condemning (reprobating) the others to hell without any hope of ever being saved.

*“Yes, but God isn’t telling them not to fly, so it’s their fault for not flying (being saved) not God’s.”*

I’ve heard Calvinists use that logic with God giving some the faith to believe while withholding saving faith from the non-elect—*“they can believe if they want to, God isn’t commanding them not to believe.”*

That is so disingenuous it’s hard to take it seriously. (Explain)

And besides that, if God can force the elect to be saved (Irresistible Grace)—then why not just force *everyone* to be saved?

How can God, who is all-love, only save a few when He could save all—how does that even harmonize with His nature.

I mean, what if you were passing by a pond on a hot summer’s day and you saw 5 young boys who were drowning and you could save all of them but you only chose to save 1 of them—do you think people would call you a hero or a heartless villain?

Calvinism turns God into a heartless villain!

The Calvinist responds—*“But God is under no obligation to save anyone!”* – That’s not the point!

Of course, God is under no obligation to do anything for us—including and especially to save any of us.

But if He chooses (by force) to save sinners *at all*—then He must choose to save *all sinners*—or else He can’t be an all-loving God.

*“Well then Phil, how do you explain predestination?”*

Peter said that we were elected through the *foreknowledge* of God.

I explain it this way—that God in eternity past looked down into the future through His foreknowledge and He knew everyone who, through His grace, would respond in faith to His offer of salvation when the gospel was presented to them.

And therefore, based on that foreknowledge He elected (chose) us to be His children and predetermined our destiny—that we would spend eternity with Him in heaven.

Predestination only applies to heaven and those who receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior—nowhere in Scripture are we taught that God predestines anyone to hell.

If a person winds up going to hell—it’s because they refused God’s invitation for salvation and rejected Christ as their Savior—pure and simple!

Now our Calvinist brothers and sisters would immediately jump all over that idea by saying that if God chose us based on us choosing Jesus—then that would make God a responder and not the initiator of salvation.

This, they say, would violate what Jesus Himself clearly said on the subject—*“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...”* (John 6:44)

And I totally agree with that—*God* is the initiator of salvation—the Father, thru the Holy Spirit, draws sinners to His Son.

If He didn’t fallen sinners would never go looking for God and salvation on their own—

**Romans 3:10-11 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> As it is written: "*There is none righteous, no, not one;* <sup>11</sup> *There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.*

The difference between Calvinists and non-Calvinists (like me) is that—the Calvinist claims that God only draws the *elect* to Christ, whereas I believe, as Jesus said in John 12:32, "*If I am lifted up from the earth (the cross) I will draw all men and women to Myself.*"

Now listen, just because God draws a person to Jesus (thru the ministry of the Holy Spirit) doesn't mean they *have* to be saved—they can resist the grace of God if they choose to.

God is calling (and drawing) all men and women to be saved—but His grace and mercy to be saved isn't forced on anyone and can be resisted and rejected. (Matt. 23:37; Acts 7:51)

God however, being omniscient and possessing foreknowledge, knew those who would believe the gospel and receive Christ—He knew them in eternity past, chose them to be His children and predestined them (predetermined their destiny) to spend eternity with Him in heaven.

However, that doesn't mean He withholds the ability or the opportunity to be saved from anyone—He gives all a fair chance to receive Jesus and eternal life by their faith.

He *calls all* to be saved, but only those He knew would accept His invitation did He *choose* to be His children—"***many are called but few are chosen.***" (Matt.22:14)

But once again, let's be crystal clear on this point—just because God chose some for heaven, the Bible never teaches that He chose others for hell.

That's where rebels go who refuse to choose Jesus as their Lord and Savior—of their own free will! (no one can blame God if they wind up in hell—He did everything possible to keep them from going to hell except forcing them into heaven which He will not do!)