

## ***Commentary on John 6:22-35***

***International Bible Lessons***

**Sunday, May 6, 2012**

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **Sunday, May 6, 2012**, is from **John 6:22-35**. Five **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse by verse **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** below. The **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, which are also available on the **[Bible Lesson Forum](#)**, will aid teachers in class preparation and in conducting class discussion. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **[International Bible Lessons Commentary Index](#)**. The weekly **[International Bible Lesson](#)** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at **<http://InternationalBibleLessons.org>** and in **[The Oklahoman](#)** newspaper.

### ***International Bible Lesson Commentary*** **John 6:22-35**

**(John 6:22) The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there. They also saw that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone.**

The Sea of Galilee was the same as the Sea of Tiberius. Jesus worked a miracle and fed a crowd in Tiberius, and He had food left over for His disciples; therefore, the crowd wanted to make Him a king by force. Jesus sent His disciples on the head of Him by boat to Capernaum in Galilee. Then, unseen by the crowd, Jesus walked on water, got into their boat, and travelled with them to the other side of the sea. The crowd did not know where Jesus had gone.

**(John 6:23) Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks.**

News travels fast, even overnight. Many learned that Jesus had fed a crowd after saying a prayer; John described Jesus' prayer as giving thanks. The people who were fed by Jesus wanted to make Him king for selfish reasons. The news about Jesus and their desires motivated others to come by boat to the place where Jesus had fed the crowd (many hoping to find Him still there). Since the crowd had not seen Jesus get into the only boat available with His disciples, they assumed He was still nearby.

**(John 6:24) So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.**

After searching diligently for Jesus, the crowd got into the newly arrived boats and went to Capernaum in Galilee (where Jesus had made His home). They were probably motivated to find Jesus because of the free food that He had given them. The free food that He gave them was easier to get than food from fishing, from harvesting grain, or from baking bread. With Jesus' abilities, they knew they would not need to work again, so they wanted to make Him their king.

**(John 6:25) When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?”**

When they found Jesus, they addressed Him as Rabbi, which means Teacher. John shows that the crowd knew Jesus had no boat available to Him, and He had not left with His disciples to go to Capernaum. They had no explanation for His appearing in Capernaum (other than a miracle). It was highly improbable that He could have gotten there when He did other than by a miracle.

**(John 6:26) Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.**

For various reasons, Jesus did not answer them directly by saying, “I walked on water, and met My disciples in the boat.” They probably would not have believed Him. They might have wanted Him to prove He could walk on water by walking on the water in their presence. He ignored their question (a possible example for us at times), and told them what they needed to hear. The crowd did not recognize His deeds as signs that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. Rather, they wanted free food.

**(John 6:27) Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”**

Too many people want something for nothing. Others work with a single-minded focus on acquiring more and more material possessions and money. Jesus warns against this single-minded ambition or attitude. “The food that endures for eternal life” is Jesus himself. Jesus will give us an eternal relationship with Him if we believe in Him. Jesus’ signs proved that God the Father set His seal endorsement on Him.

**(John 6:28) Then they said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?”**

Because they believe Jesus is a teacher, they question Him as though He were a traditional rabbi. They keep their focus on themselves, “What must we do” (perhaps in order to get from God the things they want, because they are pleasing God by doing God’s works). They are looking for rules by which to live or good works they can do that will make them right or keep them right with God, so they will deserve His blessings. Jesus wants them to turn their focus from themselves and what they can do, and instead turn their focus on Him, to Who He is as the Messiah that God the Father promised to send them, to receiving the cleansing from sin and forgiveness of sin that He came to give believers in Him, to receiving the gift of eternal life through faith in Him, and eventually to what He can do through them in order to do the works of God in His strength and wisdom.

**(John 6:29) Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”**

God the Father sent Jesus, but Jesus does not tell them directly that they need to believe in Him in order to do the work of God (He says this indirectly). Jesus speaks with humility and He wants them to seek the truth and discover the truth; the truth that the way of eternal life is to turn from selfishly focusing on ourselves and turning our focus on Jesus, because of Who He is (Son of God and the Messiah). If they believe in Him, they will do what He says.

**(John 6:30) So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?”**

Jesus told them to “believe in” the One God sent. The crowd did not recognize His feeding them as the sign that God the Father sent Him, directed Him, and empowered Jesus’ ministry as the Son of Man (a humble title and claim with Messianic meaning that Jesus used for himself). They wanted Him to work miracles and then directly claim that His miracles proved they could believe what He taught. When God sent Moses to Egypt to free His people from slavery, Moses worked miracles to prove to the Hebrews and to Pharaoh that God had sent Him; still, the people complained against Moses during his working of miracles in Egypt and in the wilderness. These people wanted Jesus to do the same things (or similar miracles) as Moses, but Jesus was greater than Moses and He would be and do greater things than Moses.

**(John 6:31) Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”**

The crowd wanted free food daily that they did not need to work to acquire or save. They believed Moses had led their ancestors out of Egypt. Moses had enriched them from the possessions the Egyptians gave them before they left Egypt. Moses gave them manna and quail six days a week (they only needed to save enough for the Sabbath, so they would not collect food on the Sabbath, but keep it holy). They wanted Jesus to do the same and even more than Moses had done. They wanted free food and freedom from the Romans, who enslaved them physically. Jesus came to free them spiritually from their slavery to sin and Satan so they could serve God out of loving and joyful hearts, and do the works of God that would bless many because they loved their neighbors.

**(John 6:32) Then Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.**

Jesus corrected their misunderstanding. Moses had not given their ancestors what they thought; rather, God the Father had given them all these blessings through Moses, a servant of God. Jesus, the Son of God, wanted them to keep their focus on God the Father, because He sent Jesus from heaven and Jesus is the true bread Who gives eternal life. The manna that God the Father gave them through Moses, His servant, would never last longer than two days (over the Sabbath) and the manna gave them physical life and sustenance only. Jesus is the true spiritual bread that a person can take into themselves spiritually through faith in Jesus; then, they can live forever with Jesus in loving, joyful service of God and others forever.

**(John 6:33) For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”**

Jesus came down from heaven (from a higher place literally and spiritually) into the world. Jesus gives life to the world, so anyone who comes to Him and believes in Him can have life. The life that Jesus gives involves moral and spiritual transformation and growth; just as physical bread sustains physical life and physical growth.

**(John 6:34) They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”**

Continuing to misunderstand Jesus, the crowd wanted blessings, food, “things” from Jesus. The crowd focused on the material and physical (which Jesus also gives as the Word of God that created and creates all things). The crowd wanted Jesus to feed them, and so much the better if Jesus met all their needs now and also gave them a life that would never end.

**(John 6:35) Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”**

Jesus told them that their focus should not be on the bread or drink or “things” He can give them; instead, their focus should be on Him, for He is the bread of life. He gives himself to them, not something other than himself. The question remains, “Will they receive Him?” Jesus is the Gift of God. Jesus is the Bread of Life. Nothing that God has ever sent or given to the world is more important than Jesus, the Son of God. Knowing Jesus, believing in Jesus, having an eternal relationship with Jesus and God the Father should be our focus; not “earthly things” or “spiritual things,” but Jesus our Lord and Savior and God our Father.

### **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. What are some things Jesus did (or refused to do) when showing and telling the truth about himself so He would not appear arrogant, egotistical, or self-centered?
2. Why did Jesus allow His disciples see Him walk on water, but did not walk on water in front of a crowd for them to see Him walk on water?
3. How did Jesus give God the Father the glory and honor for feeding the crowd?
4. What did Jesus say that the crowd was seeking when they came to Him? What are some people seeking when they come to Jesus today?
5. Who does Jesus tell the crowd to believe in? Who does Jesus want people to believe in today? What are some of the results of believing in this person?

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