

CHAPTER 6

Multiplication of the Loaves of Passover.

17 Later on, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee [to the shore] of Tiberias; \* 2a vast crowd kept following him because they saw the signs he was performing for the sick. 3 Jesus then went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. 4 The Jewish feast of Passover was near; 5 \* when Jesus looked up and caught sight of a vast crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" 6 (He knew well what he intended to do but he asked this to test Philip's response.) 7 Philip replied, "Not even with two hundred days' wages could we buy loaves enough to give each of them a mouthful!"

8 One of Jesus' disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, remarked to him, 9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and a couple of dried fish, but what good is that for so many?" 10 Jesus said, "Get the people to recline." Even though the men numbered about five thousand, there was plenty of grass for them to find a place on the ground. 11 Jesus then took the loaves of bread, gave thanks, and passed them around to those reclining there; he did the same with the dried fish, as much as they wanted. 12 When they had had enough, he told his disciples, "Gather up the crumbs that are left over so that nothing will go to waste." 13 At this, they gathered twelve baskets full of pieces left over by those who had been fed with the five barley loaves. \*\*

14 When the people saw the sign he had performed they began to say, "This is undoubtedly the Prophet \* who is to come into the world." 15 At that, Jesus realized that they would come and carry him off to make him king, so he fled back to the mountain alone. \*\*

Walking on the Sea. 16 As evening drew on, his disciples came down to the lake. 17 They embarked, intending to cross the lake toward Capernaum. By this time it was dark, and Jesus had still not joined them; 18 moreover, with a strong wind blowing, the sea was becoming rough. 19 Finally, when they had rowed three or four miles, they sighted Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water. \* They were frightened, 20 but he told them, "It is I; \* do not be afraid." 21 They wanted

Walking on the Sea

to take him into the boat, but suddenly it came aground on the shore they had been approaching. \*

22 \* The crowd remained on the other side of the lake. The next day, they realized that there had been only one boat there and that Jesus had not left in it with his disciples; rather, they had set out by themselves. 23 Then some boats came out from Tiberias near the place \* where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 Once the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they too embarked in the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

Discourse on the Bread of Life. 25 When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 26 Jesus answered them:

"I assure you, you are not looking for me because you have seen signs but because you have eaten your fill of the loaves. 27 You should not be working for perishable food but for food that remains unto life eternal, food which the Son of Man will give you; it is on him that God the Father has set his seal."

1-13: Mt 14, 13-21; Mk 6, 32-44; Lk 9, 10-17.— Jn 2, 13; 11, 55.— Jn 21, 13.—m 2 Kgs 4, 42ff.— Jn 18, 36.— 16-21: Mt 14, 22-33; Mk 6, 45-52.

6, 1: Of Tiberias: if the bracketed clause is omitted, "Tiberias" stands in awkward apposition as another name of the lake. It was only considerably later that Jesus' time of the lake was completed only just before Jesus' ministry. If the clause is left in, then the multiplication took place near Tiberias. 6, 5ff: The Gospels of John and Luke have only one account of a multiplication of loaves and fish; Mark and Matthew have two accounts. 6, 14: The Prophet, probably the prophet like Moses (see note on Jn 1, 21). Jesus, like Moses, had fed the people miraculously.

6, 19: Walking on the water: the Greek word permit a translation "on the seashore" or "by the sea." This would eliminate the miraculous from the story and leave it pointless. In Mt 14, 24-25, it is quite clear that Jesus walked upon the sea. 6, 20: It is I: literally, "I am"—perhaps the expression intended to connote divinity; see note on Jn 8, 24. 6, 21: It is not clear whether Jesus got into the boat, or whether the sudden arrival at the shore is presented as miraculous. Possibly both are intended.

6, 22ff: These verses have many variants; in the manuscripts and are awkward and somewhat illogical. Were all five thousand transported? There may be several forms of the account combined in our present readings. 6, 23: From Tiberias: near the place: it is not clear whether Tiberias is near the place or the boats came near to the place; cf v. 1 and the note there.

Discourse on Bread of Life

28 At this they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" 29 Jesus replied:

"This is the work of God: have faith in the One whom he sent." 30 "So that we can put faith in you," they asked him, "what sign are you going to perform for us to see? What is the work you do?" 31 Our ancestors had manna to eat in the desert; according to Scripture, \* He gave them bread from the heavens to eat." 32 Jesus said to them:

"I solemnly assure you, it was not Moses who gave you bread from the heavens; it is my Father who gives you the real heavenly bread. 33 God's bread comes down \* from heaven and gives life to the world."

34 "Sir, give us this bread always," they besought him.

35 Jesus explained to them: "I myself am the bread of life. \* No one who comes to me shall ever be hungry, no one who believes in me shall ever thirst. \*

36 But as I told you— though you have seen me, you still do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives me shall come to me; no one who comes will I ever reject, because it is not to do my own will that I have come down from heaven, but to do the will of him who sent me. \*

6, 19: Mt 16, 1-4; Lk 11, 29f.— 9: Ex 16, 4ff; Ps 78, 24.— Jn 6, 9; Jn 10, 28f.— 12: 10, 4; 34: Mt 26, 39; Heb 10, 9.— Mk 6, 1, 4.— x: 15, 54, 13.— y: Jn 7, 29; Ex 33, 20.— Mt 16, 28f.; Lk 22, 19.

6, 31: There is evidence that the Jews believed the miracle of the manna would be repeated in the last days; hence their challenge to discover whether these were the last days. 6, 33: God's bread comes down: the Greek is ambiguous for it literally reads, "God's bread is that which [or he who] comes down," etc.

6, 35: What does Jesus mean by "the bread of life"? Because of the emphasis on believing and teaching in vv 35-50, most scholars today think of the bread in these verses as primarily a figurative reference to Jesus' revelation or teaching. There may well be a secondary reference to the Eucharist. In vv 51-56, however, the eucharistic theme comes to the fore. Many, then, place a break in the discourse between vv 50 and 51. 6, 37-39: All that... nothing: for a reason not totally clear, the evangelist uses the neuter in these verses. Some think it is a grammatical peculiarity with no special significance; others see it as a reading indicative of authenticity. 6, 51: The last two lines of 51 may be compared to the Lucan eucharistic formula (22, 19): "This [bread] is my body which is given for you."

39 It is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing \* of what he has given me; rather, that I should raise it up on the last day. \*

40 Indeed, this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks upon the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life. Him I will raise up on the last day. \*

41 At this the Jews started to murmur in protest because he claimed, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They kept saying: "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? How can he claim to have come down from heaven?" \*\*

43 "Stop your murmuring," Jesus told them. 44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets: 'Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. \*'

45 Not that anyone has seen the Father— only the one who is from God has seen the Father. \*

46 Let me firmly assure you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. 47 Your ancestors ate manna in the desert, but they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven for a man to eat and never die. I myself am the living bread. \*

48 If anyone eats this bread he shall live forever; the bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world. \*

49 At this the Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can he give his flesh to eat?" 53 Thereupon Jesus said to them:

"Let me solemnly assure you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

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54 He who feeds \* on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up on the last day.

55 For my flesh is real food and my blood real drink.

56 The man who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.

57 Just as the Father who has life sent me \* and I have life because of the Father, so the man who feeds on me \* will have life because of me. \* This is the bread that came down from heaven.

58 Unlike your ancestors who ate and died nonetheless, the man who feeds on this bread shall live forever.

59 He said this in a synagogue instruction at Capernaum.

Effect of the Discourse. \* 60 After hearing his words, many of his disciples remarked, "This sort of talk is hard to endure! How can anyone take it seriously?" 61 Jesus was fully aware that his disciples were murmuring in protest at what he had said. "Does it shake your faith?" he asked them.

62 "What, then, if you were to see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before...? \* It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh \* is useless.

63 The words I spoke to you are spirit and life. Yet among you there are some who do not believe."

64 (Jesus knew from the start, of course, the ones who refused to believe, and the one who would hand him over.)

65 He went on to say: "This is why I have told \* you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

66 From this time on, many of his disciples broke away and would not remain in his company any longer. 67 Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you want to leave me too?" 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come

to believe; we are convinced that you are God's holy one."<sup>b</sup>

70 Jesus replied, "Did I not choose the Twelve of you myself? Yet one of you is a devil."<sup>c</sup> 71 (He was talking about Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, \* who, though one of the Twelve, was going to hand Jesus over.)<sup>c</sup>

CHAPTER 7

Feast of Booths. 1 After this, Jesus moved about within Galilee. He had decided not to travel in Judea because some of the Jews were looking for a chance to kill him. 2 However, as the Jewish feast of Booths \* drew near, 3 his brothers \* had this to say: "You ought to leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples there may see the works you are performing. 4 No one who wishes to be known publicly keeps his actions hidden. If you are going to do things like these, you may as well display yourself to the world at large." 5 (As a matter of fact, not even his brothers had much confidence in him.) 6 Jesus answered them: "It is not yet the right time \* for me, whereas the time is always right for you. 7 The world is incapable of hating you, but it does hate me

8 <sup>a</sup> Jn 5: 28-9 Jn 11: 27; Mt 16: 18-c Jn 13: 2-27-d Lk 23: 34; Nm 29: 12; Zec 14: 16-19.

6, 64-68: Feeds: the verb that John uses in these verses is not the usual "eat" but a very realistic verb which rather emphatically emphasizes the reality of the flesh and blood of Jesus: of v 55.

6, 67f: Because of me: this can mean either "from me" (as the source) or "for my sake" (as the reason).

6, 67f: These verses seem to refer more to the theme of v 35-50, than to those of v 51-55.

6, 67: This unqualified conditional sentence is obscure. Probably there is a reference to v 49-51. Jesus claims to be the bread that comes down from heaven; this claim provokes incredulity (v 60); and so Jesus asks what will be said when he goes up to heaven.

6, 63: Spirit: "flesh" probably not a supernatural and the eschatological flesh of Jesus but to the supernatural and the natural, as in Jn 3: 5.

6, 71: Here and in Jn 13: 2-25, it is not entirely clear whether Iscariot (man from Kerith?) modifies Judas or Simon.

7 2: Booths: the autumn harvest feast lasting eight days, during which the people lived in huts. This was looked on as a reminiscence of their ancestors' life in tents in the desert after the Exodus. The Hebrew name for this festival and its booths is Sukkoth.

7 3: Brothers: these relatives are never portrayed as disciples until after the resurrection (Acts 1: 14). Mt 13: 55 and Mk 6: 3 give the names of four of them.

7 6: Time: a synonym for "hour" (see Jn 2: 4), the period of Jesus' death and resurrection. The Christian reader of the gospel understands the theological play on words: this feast does not yet mark the time of Jesus' glorification; he will not die at this time.

because of the evidence I bring against it that what it does is evil.

8 Go up yourselves to the festival. I am not going up \* to this festival because the time is not yet ripe for me."<sup>9</sup> 9 Having said this, he stayed on in Galilee. 10 However, once his brothers had gone up to the festival he too went up, but as if in secret and not for all to see.

11 During the festival, naturally, the Jews were looking for him, asking, "Where is that troublemaker?" 12 Among the crowds there was much guarded debate about him. Some maintained, "He is a good man, while others kept saying, "Not at all—he is only misleading the crowd!" 13 No one dared talk openly about him, however, for fear of the Jews."

First Episode. 14 The feast was half over by the time Jesus went into the temple area and began to teach. 15 The Jews were filled with amazement and said, "How did this man get his education \* when he had no teacher?" 16 This was Jesus' answer: "My doctrine is not my own; it comes from him who sent me. 17 Any man who chooses to do his will will know about this doctrine—namely, whether it comes from God or is simply spoken on my own. 18 Whoever speaks on his own is bent on self-glorification. The man who seeks glory for him who sent him is truthful. there is no dishonesty in his heart. 19 Moses has given you the law, has he not? Yet not one of you keeps it. Why do you look for a chance to kill me?"

20 "You are mad!" \* the crowd retorted. "Who wants to kill you?" 21 Jesus answered:

10 <sup>a</sup> Jn 6: 22-12: 42 <sup>b</sup> Lk 2: 47 <sup>c</sup> Jn 10: 20 <sup>d</sup> Jn 6: 17 <sup>e</sup> Jn 6: 2-9 <sup>f</sup> Mt 12: 11 <sup>g</sup> Lk 14: 5 <sup>h</sup> Jn 7: 3 <sup>i</sup> Jn 8: 9 <sup>j</sup> Jn 8: 46 <sup>k</sup> Jn 7: 44 <sup>l</sup> Jn 8: 20 <sup>m</sup> Lk 4: 29 <sup>n</sup> Jn 8: 11 <sup>o</sup> Jn 10: 42 <sup>p</sup> Jn 11: 48 <sup>q</sup> Jn 15: 31 <sup>r</sup> Jn 8: 21 <sup>s</sup> Jn 8: 26 <sup>t</sup> Jn 8: 26

7 8: I am not going up: another play on words. "Go up" refers to his return to Jericho, "resurrection" and ascension; of Jn 20: 17.

7 15: Edification: Literally, "How does he know letters?" Children were taught to read and write by means of the Scriptures, but here more figuratively. Literacy is being discussed; the people are wondering if Jesus is being like a rabbi. Rabbinic study was a rigorous and loved to quote their teachers.

7 20: Mad: Literally, "You have a demon." The insane were thought to possess, or be possessed by a demonic spirit. One has to determine from the context whether the charge in our terms is one of insanity or of possession.

7 26: Authorities: the Sanhedrin members; the same term is used to describe Nicodemus (Jn 3: 1).

22 "I have performed a single work and you profess astonishment over it. Moses gave you circumcision (though it did not originate with Moses but with the patriarchs). And so, even on a sabbath you circumcise a man. 23 If a man can be circumcised on the sabbath to prevent a violation of Mosaic law, how is it you are angry with me for curing a whole man on the sabbath?"

24 Stop judging by appearances and make an honest judgment. 25 This led some of the people of Jerusalem to remark: "Is this not the one they want to kill? 26 Here he is speaking in public and they don't say a word to him! Perhaps even the authorities \* have decided that this is the Messiah. 27 Still, we know where this man is from. When the Messiah comes, no one is supposed to know his origins."

28 At this, Jesus, who was teaching in the temple area, cried out: "So you know me, and you know my origins? The truth is, I have not come of myself. I was sent by One who has the right to send, and him you do not know. 29 I know him because it is from him I come: he sent me."<sup>1</sup>

30 At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a finger on him because his hour had not yet come. 31 Many in the crowd came to believe in him. They kept saying, "When the Messiah comes, can he be expected to perform more signs than this man?" 32 The Pharisees overheard this debate about him among the crowd, and the chief priests and Pharisees together sent temple guard to arrest him.

33 Jesus then said to them: "Only a little while longer am I to be with you, then I am going away to him who sent me. 34 You will look for me, but you will not find me; where I am you cannot come."<sup>2</sup>

35 This caused the Jews to exclaim among themselves: "Where does he intend to go

10 <sup>a</sup> Jn 6: 22-12: 42 <sup>b</sup> Lk 2: 47 <sup>c</sup> Jn 10: 20 <sup>d</sup> Jn 6: 17 <sup>e</sup> Jn 6: 2-9 <sup>f</sup> Mt 12: 11 <sup>g</sup> Lk 14: 5 <sup>h</sup> Jn 7: 3 <sup>i</sup> Jn 8: 9 <sup>j</sup> Jn 8: 46 <sup>k</sup> Jn 7: 44 <sup>l</sup> Jn 8: 20 <sup>m</sup> Lk 4: 29 <sup>n</sup> Jn 8: 11 <sup>o</sup> Jn 10: 42 <sup>p</sup> Jn 11: 48 <sup>q</sup> Jn 15: 31 <sup>r</sup> Jn 8: 21 <sup>s</sup> Jn 8: 26 <sup>t</sup> Jn 8: 26