

“Jesus’ Power Over Nature”

John 6:1-21

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Teaching Aim: To examine the fourth and fifth signs in the Gospel of John that demonstrate Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. To recognize the creative power of Jesus as He multiplied a few loaves and fish to feed approximately 15,000 people. To realize, Jesus demonstrated not only His creative powers with the fourth sign, but also His sovereignty over nature by walking on the water in the fifth. To understand, Jesus presented Himself as the Lord God with these signs!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Jesus points out a massive dilemma to His disciples near Bethsaida (John 6:1-7)

1. Many scholars believe that about 6 months had passed between chapters 5 and 6 in the Gospel of John. Herod Antipas had brutally murdered John the Baptist (**Mark 6:14-29**) during this time and was now seeking to meet Jesus after hearing about the miracles. Word traveled quickly and multitudes of people wanted to meet Jesus. What are the four names of the sea that Jesus crossed over with His disciples (**vs. 1**)? (Hint: Search online)
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

2. The Sea of Galilee is the lowest freshwater lake in the world. What is its elevation? How long, how wide and how deep is the Sea of Galilee? (Hint: Search online) What unusual archeological find took place in the Sea of Galilee in 1986 during a severe drought? What makes this find so significant? (Hint: Search “*Jesus Boat - Magdala*”)

3. Where was Jesus traveling to when He crossed the Sea of Galilee with His disciples (**vs. 1**)? (See **Luke 9:10-11**)

4. According to **verse 2**, why did the multitudes follow Him? Did they follow Him or the right reason? Did they have true faith or were they just impressed by His miracles? Do you know of people today who follow Jesus for what they can get instead of what they can give? In what ways are you serving the Lord in ministry today?

5. Thus far in the Gospel of John, only one healing has been recorded. (See **John 4:46-54**) What can we learn from **John 21:25** about the number of miracles Jesus performed?

6. Where did Jesus take His disciples to teach them (**vs. 3**)? Where is this located? Note: Today we know this region as "*The Golan Heights.*" What major feast of the Jews was near (**vs. 4**)? Why is the identification of this feast so important? (See **John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55**) How do we know how old Jesus was and the length of His ministry? (See **Luke 3:23**)

7. What can we learn about the compassion of Jesus from **verse 5**? Why did Jesus single out Philip when the need arose to find food in the area? (See **John 1:44**) What other apostles were from this tiny fishing village?

8. In **verse 6** we learn that Jesus was testing Philip to see how he would respond to this crisis. Jesus asked Philip for a human solution knowing there was none. Has God ever brought you to the end of your own capabilities so that you would depend on Him? If so, how?

9. As noted earlier, Jesus was testing Philip. According to **verse 7**, did Philip pass the test, or did he fail it? Have you ever failed to trust Jesus in a seemingly impossible situation? How did Philip respond to the test (**vs. 7**)? How did the disciples receive financial support in those days as they traveled with Jesus in ministry? (See **Luke 8:1-3; 9:1-6**)

Part II: The miracle feeding of the 5,000 men plus women and children (John 6:8-14)

1. According to **verses 8 and 9**, how did Andrew respond to the challenge? What did he find? How do the unbelieving disciples contrast with the child who gave Jesus his all? Isn't this what every believer should be doing? Giving everything to Jesus?

2. Every time we see Andrew in the Bible, he is doing the same thing. What is it? (See **John 1:40-42; 6:8-9; 12:20-22**) Do you find it easy to tell people about Jesus or is it difficult for you to do? What are some ways that the church can better equip you to share the gospel?

3. How did Jesus choose to distribute the food (**vs. 10**)? (See **Mark 6:40**) Why do you think Jesus did it this way? Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 men, but there were also woman and children to feed as well. How many people do you think Jesus fed that day?

4. What did Jesus do before He distributed the food? (See **Mark 6:41-42**) Why is it important for us to stop and give thanks to God before eating our meals? What did Jesus signify by looking up to heaven? How many miracles of Jesus are recorded in all four gospels? (See Commentaries) What aspect of Jesus's power is demonstrated in this particular miracle?

5. According to **verse 12**, how much food did Jesus create? Did Jesus waste any of the leftovers? Note: It is important that we not waste the blessings of God. Are you wasting your spiritual gifts by not using them? Are you wasting your finances by misusing them?

6. Did the disciples grasp the significance of this miracle after witnessing it (**vs. 13**)? (See **Mark 6:52**) What were the masses thinking about after witnessing this miracle (**vs. 14**)? (See **Deut. 18:15, 18-19**) Note: The Jews expected the coming Prophet to provide food as (they thought) Moses had provided the manna. Note: Actually, God provided the manna.

Part III: Jesus walks on the water and then performs second miracle (John 6:15-21)

1. How did Jesus react to the people's desire to make Him king over Israel (**vs. 15**)? How did Jesus respond to Satan's attempt to do the same in **Matt. 4:8-9**? What were the Jewish people looking for in their Messiah? It is important to note that Jesus was at the zenith of His popularity at this moment. Things would quickly go downhill with "*The Bread of Life Discourse*" later in this chapter. (See **John 6:64-66**)

2. Jesus didn't come to conquer the Romans; He came to conquer the much bigger problems of sin and death. There would be no kingdom without the cross! What two things did Jesus do to protect His disciples in **verses 15 & 16**? How did the disciples respond to this unusual command from Jesus? (See **Matt. 14:21-23**) Where did Jesus send His disciples? (See **Mark 6:45-46**) Do you understand everything that God tells you to do?

3. The disciples had already been tested once. What test were they now to face (**vs. 18**)? What can we learn about that night from the fact that the disciples were seasoned fisherman who made their living on this lake? What can we learn about Jesus from **Mark 6:47-48**?

4. The disciples were somewhere near the middle of the lake as the wind and waves roared; they were terribly afraid. What terrified them even more in the darkness (**vs. 19**)? What additional detail does Matthew add to this story? (See **Matt. 14:25-26**) The disciples had spent hours fishing in the darkness on this lake before but they had never experienced anything like this. Jesus suspended the law of gravity and was demonstrating His sovereign power over nature before their eyes.

5. The words "*It is I*" can be translated in the Greek "*ego eimi*." What makes this same Greek phrase so important as it is used in **Exod. 3:14; John 6:48; 10:9, 11; 14:6; 15:5**? Note: In reality, Jesus was saying to His disciples, "*Don't be afraid. It is I AM WHO I AM.*"

6. There is another interesting detail to this story that Matthew reveals in **Matt. 14:28-31**. What is it? Why do you think Peter began to sink? Have you ever cried out to the Lord, "*Lord, save me?*" or "*Lord, help me?*" If so, when? How did God answer your prayer?

7. Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught Peter. What did He say to him? (See **Matt. 14:31-32**) What ceased the moment Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat?

8. Many people believe that a second miracle took place the moment they got into the boat (vs. 21). What was the miracle? How does this picture our salvation today? Note: Sometimes we need the storms of life to see that Jesus really does walk on the water! How about you, have you arrived safely at heaven's shore by grace through faith in Jesus Christ? If not, why not repent of your sin and receive Christ in prayer right now?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The miracle feeding of 5,000 men plus women and children occurred close to the second of three Passovers in Jesus' public ministry, just one year before His crucifixion.
- God is not limited by human impossibilities; He is sovereign over nature.
- When we give Jesus what little we have, He will bless us beyond our greatest expectations.
- Don't waste the blessings God has given you, use them to the best of your ability.
- Many people follow Jesus for what they can get, not what they can give.
- It is during the storms of life that we learn to trust Jesus and grow in our faith.
- Sometimes it takes the storms of life to realize that Jesus really does walk on the water.