

LESSON 3

CHRIST AS THE SOURCE OF LIFE

John 4:1-6:71

Introduction

Jesus described Himself as the way, the truth, and the life. He is the only way by which men are reconciled to the Father. As the truth, He reveals the nature and will of the Father. It is the Father's will for man to believe the Word who has life in Himself and can give life to all who turn to Him in faith. John emphasizes that Christ is the source of eternal life.

The Source of Spiritual Life

4:1-42

Jesus' journey through Samaria (4:1-6)

Since Jesus' hour to suffer on the cross had not come, He withdrew when He learned that the Pharisees knew He baptized more disciples than John (v. 1). Jesus' increasing popularity would bring greater opposition from the Pharisees because of jealousy. The author clarified who was baptizing by pointing out that it was not Jesus Himself but His disciples who baptized (v. 2).

The most direct route from Judea to Galilee was through Samaria (vv. 3f.). Although animosity existed between the Jews and Samaritans, Jews could pass through that land when going from Galilee to a festival in Jerusalem, and by doing so the journey could be made in three days. Both Samaria and Judea were under the same Roman rule.

King Omri of Israel purchased a hill for two talents of silver, built a city on it, and named it Samaria (1 Kings 16:24). He made the city the capital of Israel about 870 B.C., and it remained the capital until the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. The conquering Assyrians brought in many foreigners who intermarried with the Israelites in Samaria. The separation of the Jews from foreigners was required during the religious reforms under Ezra and the rebuilding of the walls under the leadership of Nehemiah about 450 B.C. Since the Samaritans had intermarried with foreign people, the Jews ceased associating with them (cf. Neh. 6, 13). This action forced the Samaritans to establish their own place of worship. According to Josephus, a Samaritan temple existed at Mount Gerizim in 332 B.C. The separation of the two peoples and the exclusion of Samaritans from Jerusalem worship resulted in hostile feelings between the Jews and Samaritans. Each claimed superiority for their place of worship.

[Empty box for student work]

*Underline the correct word.*

*John 4:1-3 implies that Jesus' popularity was (decreasing, increasing).*

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

*Because increasing opposition would come from the Pharisees, Jesus left \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Compare your answer with John 4:3)*

[Empty box for student work]

*Jews did not associate with Samaritans because the Samaritans had \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(intermarried with foreigners)*

[Empty box for student work]

Samaria became the name of the territory surrounding the city. Jacob's well was located near a village called Sychar in the district of Samaria. This name is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but the place has been identified with the modern Askar which is close to Shechem. John's interest in Jacob's well was in its symbolical relation to the Old Testament and to Judaism. Jesus and His disciples arrived at the well at noon, and He remained by the well while His disciples went into the city for food.

Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman (4:7-26)

A woman from the region of Samaria came at noontime to draw water. Ordinarily women came in the cool of the day. Jesus initiated the conversation with her by requesting a drink (v. 7). The conversation broke three traditions:

1. A respectable man would not ordinarily talk to a woman in public, especially a woman of bad reputation.
2. Jews had no dealings with Samaritans.
3. A Jew would not drink from a vessel of a Samaritan woman. She was considered unclean, and thus she would defile the vessels which she handled.

The woman reminded Jesus of the traditions which should prohibit their conversation and her giving the requested drink of water (v. 9). She concluded that Jesus was only a tired, thirsty traveller. To correct her misunderstanding, Jesus changed the subject to living water which He was able to give (v. 10). The living water had reference to the giving of the Holy Spirit (cf. 7:39). Instead of speaking to a helpless traveller, the woman of Samaria was speaking to the Son of God who could give her much more than water for physical life. The woman continued to misunderstand Jesus and equated living water with the water of Jacob's well (v. 11). In the East where water is scarce, the importance of water to life was widely recognized. The woman supposed that Jesus was speaking of running water from a spring when He spoke of living water.

The purpose of the conversation becomes apparent in verse 12 in which the greatness of Jacob, who represents Judaism, is compared to the greatness of Jesus. As far as the woman was concerned, Jacob was much greater than the man to whom she spoke. The well which Jacob gave had provided ample water to sustain life for many generations. Jesus began to clear up the misunderstanding by pointing out that the water from the well of Jacob must be drunk day by day, but that of which He spoke was not ordinary water (v. 13f.). The superiority of the water which Jesus offered was that one drink

List the traditions broken by Jesus in talking with the woman of Samaria.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your list with the text.)

To the woman, living water meant \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ from a \_\_\_\_\_.

(running water, spring)

The symbolical meaning Jesus gave to Jacob's well was \_\_\_\_\_.

(Judaism)

of it would result in a well of water springing up to eternal life (v. 14). The frequent drinking of ordinary water represented the inadequacy of Judaism. The woman continued to misunderstand, thinking only of physical thirst (v. 15). Jesus revealed Himself more fully by instructing her to call her husband (v. 16). The woman responded that she had no husband, and Jesus' reply that she had had five husbands revealed His supernatural knowledge. The woman concluded that He must be a prophet since He had to have been divinely inspired to know about her past life.

Perception of His divine inspiration turned her thoughts to the proper place for worshipping God. According to Deuteronomy 12, God would choose the right place for His name to be worshipped, and all the tribes would come to that place. The Samaritans claimed that Mount Gerizim was the chosen place while the Jews claimed that the Temple in Jerusalem was the divinely-appointed place. The woman raised the question with Jesus, anticipating that He would claim Jerusalem as the right place (v. 20). He replied that both the religion of Judaism which centred in Jerusalem and the worship of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim would be replaced (v. 21). Since Israel had been elected to a true knowledge of God, salvation was revealed through the Jews, and they knew "what we worship" (v. 22). However, even the worship of the Jews would be superseded in the approaching hour when true worshippers would worship in spirit and truth (v. 23). The worship on both Mount Moriah in Jerusalem and on Mount Gerizim in Samaria was external and legalistic. Since God is spirit, true worship of Him must be in spirit and truth (v. 24). The body of the believer which houses the Holy Spirit replaces the Temple in Jerusalem as the house of God.

The lofty teachings of Jesus caused the woman to think of the Messiah who would reveal to man all that he desires to know (v. 25). Since the Messiah was to be led supernaturally, He would declare divine truth to men. Jesus identified Himself as that person (v. 26).

The witness of the woman (4:27-30)

Since it was not customary for a rabbi to talk with a woman, the disciples were astonished to see Jesus speaking with the Samaritan woman. Neither was it the custom for disciples to question the actions of their master (v. 27). The woman left her water pot, perhaps to permit Jesus to drink, and went into the city (v. 28). After repeating to the people all that Jesus had said, she asked the question with some hesitation: "Could this be the Messiah?" (v. 29—NEB). Her witness caused many from the city to become curious and to desire to see Jesus (v. 30).

The discussion with the disciples (4:31-38)

The disciples had brought food and offered some to Jesus. Jesus used this opportunity to speak to them about higher realities (v. 32). As the woman

The frequent drinking of water from Jacob's well symbolized the \_\_\_\_\_ of Judaism.

Since Jesus indicated His knowledge of the woman's past life, she concluded He was a \_\_\_\_\_.

(inadequacy, prophet)

Draw a line from the people to their chosen place of worship.

Mount Gerizim	Jews
Temple in Jerusalem	Samaritans

(Mt. Gerizim--Samaritans, Temple--Jews)

Jesus stated that legalistic worship at both places would be replaced with worship in \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_\_.

(spirit, truth)

After the woman told of her encounter with Jesus, many people wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus.

(see)

had misunderstood Jesus' reference to living water, so the disciples misunderstood His statement about food of which they knew nothing (v. 33). While some people live to eat, Jesus lived to do the will of God (v. 34). Some people wait anxiously for an abundant harvest in order that they will have ample food to satisfy their hunger. Jesus based the satisfaction of His desires on the needs of the people which provided a ripe harvest—"white for harvest"—ready to be reaped (v. 35). The reaper's wages would not be food for physical life but fruit for eternal life (v. 36). When the harvest would be gathered, he who had sown the grain and he who had reaped it would rejoice together and share in the increase. Since the fields were white, the harvest had to begin immediately. Although the disciples had not sown, they were invited to participate in the harvest (v. 36ff.). Whether the sower was God or the Old Testament prophets, who had received and proclaimed God's revelation, is uncertain; nevertheless, the reapers and the sower would rejoice together when the harvest was gathered into storage.

The response of the Samaritans (4:39-42)

The woman joined John the Baptist as a witness who pointed people to Christ (v. 39). The response of the Samaritans to the witness of the woman illustrates that the harvest was ready to be reaped. Salvation offered in Christ was not limited to Jews but included Samaritans as well. After hearing His teachings, the Samaritans concluded that Jesus was the Saviour of the world (v. 42). After hearing the teachings of the Saviour of the world, the attitude of the Samaritans changed and they invited Jesus to remain with them.

Jesus' Power over Physical Infirmity

4:43-5:18

The restoring of the officer's son (4:43-54)

Jesus remained in Samaria only two days before continuing His journey into Galilee (v. 43). In Jerusalem, Jesus had met opposition from the leaders of Judaism, but in Galilee, as in Samaria, He was well received (v. 45). Galileans who were in Jerusalem at the time of the feast saw what Jesus had done (v. 45).

Jesus' fame was beginning to spread. When a Roman officer of Capernaum heard that He had returned to Cana, the officer sought out Jesus for his son who was at the point of death (v. 47). The faith of the Roman official was on a higher level than that of the Galileans and Samaritans because he believed without seeing a sign (vv. 48ff.). To the boy who was sick and at the point of death, Jesus became the source of life (vv. 50ff.). Although the father responded in faith to Jesus when he was assured that his son lived, the report from his servants that his son was recovering

*Jesus' satisfaction did not come from physical food but from doing the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(will, God)*

*Underline the correct word or words.*

*After hearing Jesus' teachings, the Samaritans concluded that He (was, was not) the Saviour of the world.*

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

strengthened his faith. The miracle of the boy's healing became a sign which increased the faith of the father and resulted in his entire household's believing (vv.52f.). According to John, the Samaritans had recognized Jesus as Saviour of the world. The belief of the Gentile officer and the restoration of his son to physical life supported the Samaritans' conclusion. In contrast to the Jews who did not believe in Him, Galileans, Samaritans, and Romans believed that He was the Messiah.

The healing of the lame man (5:1-9a)

Jesus returned to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. It is uncertain whether or not the feast was the Passover. John mentions it in order to explain Jesus' return to Jerusalem (v. 1). The original text is unclear whether Jesus' healing the lame man took place by a pool near the sheep gate or whether the pool was called the "Sheep Pool" and was near a gate. The location may have been an area north of the Temple on the route of sheep destined for sacrifice at the Temple and was, therefore, called the "Sheep Pool." Water from the pool may have been used in ceremonial washings.<sup>1</sup> The waters were famous for their curative powers; therefore, the borders of the pool were crowded with the sick, blind, and lame (v. 3a). In some of the earlier manuscripts, the latter part of verse 3 and all of verse 4 are missing. It appears that the stirring of the water by an angel was a later addition.

As Jesus approached the pool, His attention focused upon a man who had been sick 38 years (vv. 5f.). John's interest in recording the question of Jesus as to whether the sick man desired to get well was to reveal the despair and helplessness of the man (vv. 6f.). Miraculous healing was believed to be possible for the first person who stepped into the water after it had been stirred. The physical condition of the man made it impossible for him to get into the water first. Jesus healed him and commanded him to take up his pallet and walk. The man's faith was expressed in his obedience, and he became well (v. 9a).

The controversy resulting from the healing of the lame man (5:9b-18)

The healing of the cripple strengthened Jesus' claim that He, in association with the Father, could give life to whomever He would. The fact that the man had been afflicted for 38 years proved the gravity of his disease. His walking and carrying his bed proved the completeness of his cure. In Mark 3:1ff., Jesus came into conflict with the religious leaders as a result of His healing the man with a withered hand. The man carried his pallet in obedience to the command of Jesus and was accused by the Jewish leaders of breaking

<sup>1</sup>William E. Hull, John, Vol. IX of The Broadman Bible Commentary (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1970), p. 262.

*The Samaritans' belief that Jesus was the Saviour of the world was reinforced by the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Gentile officer whose son was restored to life.*

*(belief)*

*The lame man's faith was expressed in his \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(obedience)*

the Sabbath (v.10). He had concluded that the One who had power to heal him should be obeyed even if it meant breaking a Jewish law (v.11). John's interest in the story was that it revealed the nature of Jesus.

The Jewish leaders ignored the fact that Jesus had the power to heal. They were more interested in finding the one who had instructed the sick man to carry his pallet and thus to break the Sabbath (v.12). The identity of Jesus had not been made known to the man (v.13). Later, Jesus found him in the Temple and instructed him to sin no more (v.14). The statement may indicate that the man had responded in faith to Christ and had been forgiven of his sins. He informed the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well (v.15). John stated that the Jews persecuted Jesus because He made the man well on the Sabbath (v.16). John does not specify whether it was the act of healing or the instruction for the man to carry his pallet which caused the opposition from the Jews. The healing miracle gave evidence that the heavenly Father, who in six days had created the heavens and the earth, had authority over the Sabbath. The rabbis thought that the Father's works of divine providence continued even on the Sabbath. The statement by Jesus that He also worked was interpreted to mean that He claimed to be equal with God (v.17f.). This claim led the Jews to intensify their efforts to kill Him. Jews counted the name of God so sacred that they would not pronounce it. For one to claim to be equal with God was blasphemy worthy of death. Jesus was accused of breaking the Law on three counts: He healed on the Sabbath; He instructed the man to carry his pallet on the Sabbath; and He claimed equality with God by calling God His Father (v.18).

Evidences of Christ's Unity with God

5:19-47

The work of the Father and the Son (vv.19-30)

The Synoptics present Jesus as the son of Joseph and Mary. He was discovered, through His miracles and teachings, to be the Messiah and Son of God. In contrast, the Fourth Gospel asserts at the beginning that Jesus was the Son of God, and the miracles and teachings of Jesus were used to support that assertion.

The healing of the afflicted man revealed that Jesus was doing the work of the Father. It is natural for a son to learn the work of his father by observation and to follow that trade (v.19). The father who loves his son does not hide his work from his son but involves him in it (v.20). The Jews could not deny that the healing of the sick man was the work of God. Since the miracle was done by Jesus, it was logical to conclude that Jesus was doing the work of the heavenly Father as His Son.

The miraculous healing of the lame man was significant, but later the Son would do things which

READ ALL OF THE TOPIC THE CONTROVERSY RESULTING FROM THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN BEFORE DOING THE FOLLOWING EXERCISE.

Identify the following statements as either Mark's or John's account of the conflict over Jesus' breaking the Sabbath.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The healed man was instructed by Jesus to carry his pallet on the Sabbath.

(1. Mark's, 2. John's)

Besides the two areas of conflict listed in the previous exercise, at what other point did the Jews criticize Jesus?

\_\_\_\_\_

(The rabbis said Jesus claimed equality with God.)

Match the following:

- a. The Synoptic Gospels
- b. The Fourth Gospel

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Jesus' humanity is presented first; His miracles are used to reveal Him as the Son of God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus is presented as the Son of God; the miracles are used to support that assertion.

(a-1, b-2)

would cause greater marvel (v.20). The Jews did not question that the heavenly Father had the power to raise the dead and to give them life. The Son's giving life to whom He desired revealed that He had the power of the Father and did the work of the Father (v.21). No human representative could possibly raise the dead, a work that was the prerogative of God alone.

The theme of resurrection led to the subject of judgement. The Jews believed that God would raise the dead and judge them in the last days. It was to be expected that a conquering king would judge his enemies. Son of God is a Messianic title. When the victorious Messiah came, He would judge His enemies: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (v.22).

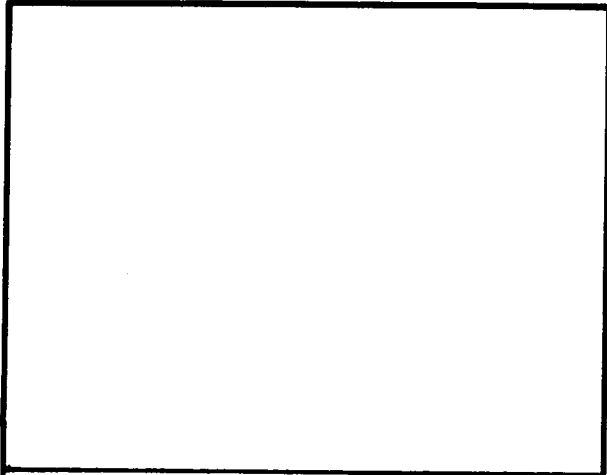
To show disrespect for a representative of a world leader is to dishonour the dignitary himself. John warned that to show disrespect for the Son is to dishonour the Father who sent Him (v.23). He who responds in faith to the Son of God is given eternal life. Although he deserves to be judged for the sins which he has committed, the believer "is passed from death unto life" because the Son has paid the penalty of death for him (v.24).

John spoke of two kinds of resurrection. The first is spiritual resurrection or redemption (v.25). Those who hear the Son of God and respond by believing His Word will live. Eternal life cannot be earned; it is a gift from the Father and the Son (v.26). As the Son of God, Jesus came to deliver man from the bondage of sin by dying on the cross (v.25). This deliverance is from death to eternal life, for the Son has life in Himself (v.26). As the heavenly Son of Man, Jesus will come again in glory with authority to execute judgement (v.27).

The deliverance of man from spiritual bondage (v.25) is not all that the Son is able to do. The hour will come when those who have experienced physical death and have been buried will hear His voice (v.28). Resurrection from the grave is a deliverance from physical death which has imprisoned man. Those whose lives are characterized by good deeds will be resurrected to eternal life, but those who have done evil deeds will be raised to an existence of condemnation (v.29). Salvation is not based on works, but judgement is. However, good deeds are evidence of a redeemed life: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt.7:18). The judgement of Christ is not prejudiced by self-interest. His judgement is just because He does not seek His own will but follows the will of the Father who sent Him (v.30).

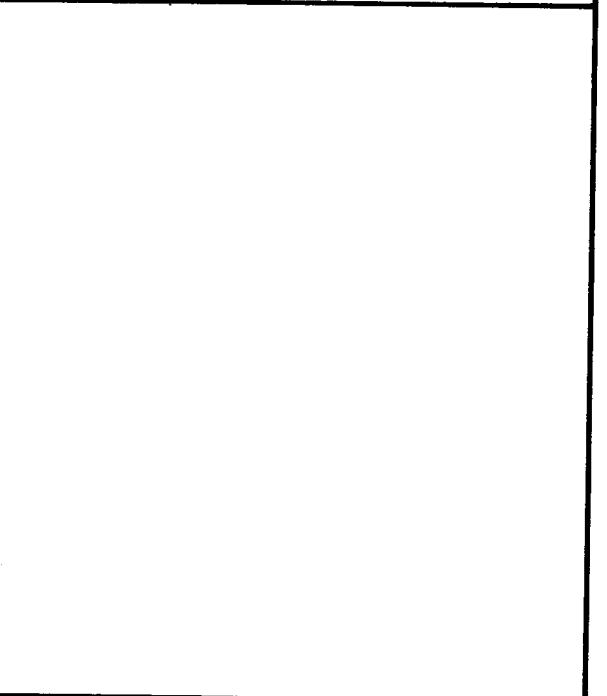
Divinely inspired witnesses (vv.31-40)

If Jesus had laid claim to being the Son of God without support beyond His own word, there would have been reason to question His testimony (v.31).



*John 5:23 shows that disrespect for the Son of God is disrespect also for \_\_\_\_\_.*  
  
*(God)*

*To which kind of resurrection do these verses refer?*  
*John 5:24 \_\_\_\_\_*  
*John 5:29 \_\_\_\_\_*  
  
*(Read the verses in your Bible to check your answers.)*



However, His claims were not unsupported. The Jews had carefully questioned John the Baptist concerning whether or not he was the Messiah. John disclaimed that honour and announced that One who would come after him and upon whom the Spirit would descend was the Messiah (v.33). Jesus did not depend only on the witness of John that He was the Son of God (v.34). He recalled John's witness because many people had confidence in John and would respond to his word by trusting in the One to whom John pointed. John's purpose was to shine as a lamp in order to manifest the coming Messiah. When the true light appeared, the lamp was needed no longer (vv.35-36a.).

The works of Jesus were also a witness that He came from God. The Father endowed Him with power to do miracles, and they were evidence that He was doing the Father's work and had been sent by Him (v.36b). In addition to the witness of John and the works which Jesus did, there is an inner witness for those who believe in Him. Even though man has never heard the voice of God nor seen His form, God's Word works in the heart of man and bears witness that Jesus is His Son (v.37). This inner witness is not available to those who do not believe (v.38). A fourth witness is the Scriptures which speak of Christ (v.39). The Jews believed that eternal life consisted of keeping the Law as well as the traditions which were their legalistic interpretations of the Scriptures. Jesus implied that the Scriptures' value resided in their speaking of Him rather than their setting forth the Law. Even though the Scriptures spoke of Jesus, Jewish leaders were unwilling to turn to Him for eternal life (v.40).

Jewish rejection of the evidences (vv.41-47)

Jesus rebuked the Jews for their unbelief in Him—not because of His desire to receive glory from men, but because He came in the Father's name (vv.41ff.). The fact that they did not believe in Jesus, whom God had sent, revealed that they did not love God (v.42). Since He came in the Father's name and had been rejected by the Jews, they were actually rejecting the Father (v.43). It is typical of sinful man to show respect, honour, and regard for others but to ignore God who has created him (v.44). Man is more interested in receiving honour from his fellow-man than in being approved by God by becoming His son.

Jesus pointed out that He would not need to accuse them before the Father, for Moses had already accused them. The Jews placed their hope in keeping the Law. The Old Testament commandments stated that man's first obligation was to worship or honour God. To reject the One whom God had sent was not only to dishonour God but to reject Him as well. If the Jews actually were keeping the Law of Moses, they would honour God by believing in the One whom He had sent and of whom the Old Testament Scriptures spoke (v.46). The five Books of Moses were accepted by the Jews as the authoritative Word of God. If they

READ THE FIRST TWO PARAGRAPHS OF THE TEXT ON THIS PAGE BEFORE DOING THE FOLLOWING EXERCISE.

Jesus based His claim to being the Son of God on:

1. The witness of \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_
2. His own miraculous \_\_\_\_\_
3. The inner witness of \_\_\_\_\_
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ which speaks of Christ

(1. John, Baptist; 2. works; 3. believers; 4. Scripture)

What does John 5:42 say was revealed by the Jews' unbelief in Jesus?

(Read John 5:42 again to check your answer.)

failed to believe what those books said, Jesus could not expect them to believe His words (v.47).

### The Bread of Life

6:1-71

#### Introduction

Since bread is essential for man's physical existence, it is appropriate as a metaphor to describe one's spiritual life. In the Lord's Supper, the breaking of bread symbolizes the sustenance of physical and spiritual life. Unleavened bread was part of the food used in the Passover celebration. Manna was a heavenly bread given to the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings. Jewish hope included the renewal of heavenly manna at the last Passover when the Messiah would come. Jesus' claim to be "the bread of life" which was superior to the heavenly manna had a great effect on those who saw His miraculous feeding of the five thousand and heard His teachings.

#### The feeding of the five thousand (6:1-15)

The feeding of the multitude is the only miracle included in all four Gospels. It precedes and introduces the discourse on "the bread of life." John's last note of time appears in 5:1 and states that Jesus went up to Jerusalem. The Sabbath controversy and the accompanying discourse took place in Jerusalem. "After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee" (6:1) implies that Jesus was already in Galilee; therefore, 6:1 seems to fit better at the end of chapter 4 where Jesus' activities were related to Galilee rather than Jerusalem. Some scholars have concluded that chapter 5 was misplaced in the transmission of the text. If the chapters are in proper order, possibly some time intervened between the Jerusalem activities recorded in chapter 5 and the miracle of feeding the multitude in Galilee.

John gave the further description of the Sea of Galilee as the Sea of Tiberias. Herod Antipas built a city to the west of the Sea of Galilee and made it his capital in A.D. 26. He named it in honour of Emperor Tiberias. John explained that the crowds followed Jesus to the other side of the sea because of the healing miracles which they had seen Him perform (v.2). This explanation implies that their relationship to Jesus was based more on curiosity than faith. John's Gospel does not include the details concerning the boat trip across the sea as the Synoptics do. It does state that Jesus and His disciples went up on a mountain where He intended to teach them (v.3). Perhaps the mentioning of the Passover season implied that Jesus was going to talk with the disciples about His death (v.4).

The multitude joined Jesus and His disciples. Again the author passed over numerous details and

List some references to bread as it was used in the life of the Jewish people and as Jesus used it.

Jewish people:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Some scholars believe chapter 5 of John was misplaced because the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ as recorded in chapter 6 seems to fit better after chapter 4.

(feeding, multitude)

John implied that crowds followed Jesus more because of \_\_\_\_\_ than \_\_\_\_\_.

(curiosity, faith)

focused on the securing of bread for the people to eat (v.5). He explained that Jesus asked Philip where sufficient bread could be bought; however, His question was not to gain information but to test Philip (v.6). Philip answered that money equivalent to 200 days' wages would not buy enough bread for everyone to have even a little (v.7). In Mark's Gospel, the disciples took the initiative in asking Jesus to dismiss the multitude because of lack of bread. It is typical of John's Gospel that Jesus took the initiative and used the event to instruct His disciples.

Andrew, whose lack of prominence caused John to identify him as Simon Peter's brother, mentioned that a lad had five barley loaves and two fishes (vv.8f.). Barley loaves were cheap bread of the poorer classes and the pickled fishes were scarcely an adequate spread for the loaves. With so many people at hand, human resources were inadequate. Nevertheless, Jesus had the people to sit on the grass. Even before asking Philip for a solution to the need for bread, Jesus knew what He had to do (v.6).

Jesus offered the usual grace said before meals (v.11). The Synoptics record that He blessed the food rather than gave thanks for it. These words and actions of Jesus recall the Last Supper. Although the loaves and fishes were far from adequate in meeting the needs of the people, they were multiplied, and all who were present were filled (vv.11f.). The fact that fragments were left reinforces the statement that all were filled. The symbolical meaning is that the Messiah who will usher in the Golden Age will make adequate provision for the people of His Kingdom.

In addition to satisfying their hunger, the people recognized the multiplying of bread as a sign of the Messianic Age. Miraculously Moses had given the people food in the wilderness. Deuteronomy 18:15ff. indicated that a prophet like Moses would appear in the last days. The people associated Jesus with that prophet (v.14). Their response was to make Jesus their king, but Jesus avoided this by withdrawing into the mountain alone (v.15). The kingship which the people wanted Jesus to assume was of this world. Jesus is a king, but His Kingdom is not of this world (see 18:36).

The storm on the sea (6:16-21)

Jesus interrupted the feeding of the five thousand and the discourse growing out of it to give the account of the storm on the sea. It appears that this account was based on Mark 6:45-52. His description is brief, explaining only how Jesus' disciples came to be in the midst of the raging sea after dark (vv.16ff.). The incident implies that they were insecure apart from Jesus. While they were struggling against the raging waves, they saw Jesus walking on the sea. John does not explain why they were frightened; perhaps, they thought He was an apparition. Jesus put their

*Jesus' question of Philip about buying bread was not for information but to \_\_\_\_\_ Philip.*

*(test)*

*The people saw the multiplying of bread as a sign of the \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_\_.*

*They associated Jesus with the prophet about whom \_\_\_\_\_ had spoken.*

*They wanted to make Jesus their earthly \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Messianic Age, Moses, king)*

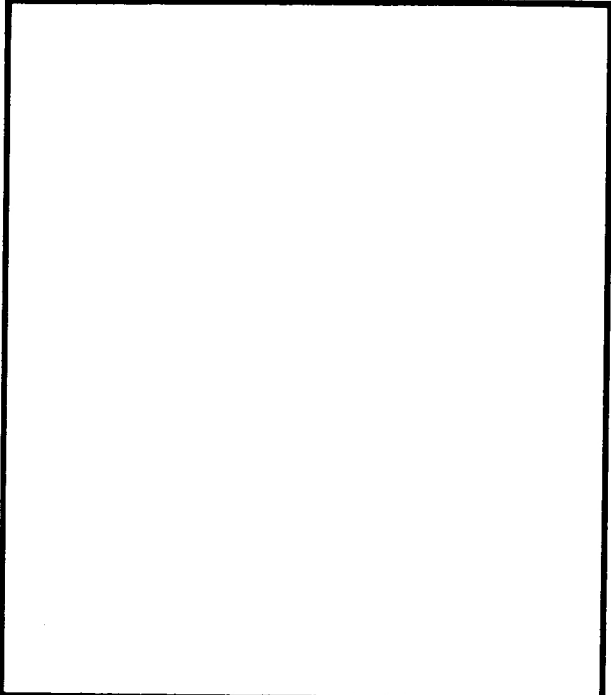
minds at ease by commanding them not to be afraid. They were then willing for Him to join them in the boat (v.21).

The bread from heaven (6:22-59)

The bread sought by the crowd (vv.22-26).—The feeding of the five thousand met their physical needs and served as an appropriate background for a discourse on "the bread of life" which would meet their spiritual needs. This section begins by noting that the multitude was concerned more with food for their bodies than with spiritual bread which gives eternal life. They waited for Jesus to return, perhaps hoping that He would feed them again (v.22). They had seen only one boat on the eastern shore where they stood, and they had seen the disciples depart in it without Jesus. Apparently the crowd eventually followed the disciples when other boats became available (vv.23f.). They found Jesus in Capernaum and addressed Him as Rabbi (v.25). This title was appropriately applied to Jesus in the light of His discussion with the woman at the well.

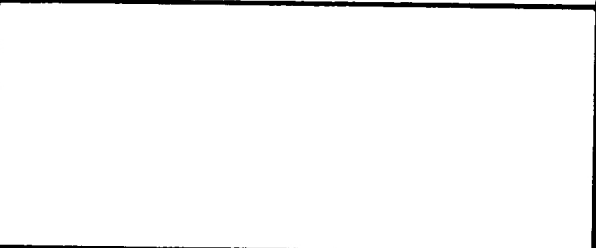
The bread which gives eternal life (vv.27-34).—In instructing the woman of Samaria, Jesus began with water which satisfies physical needs and moved to the eternal, spiritual water which is the Holy Spirit. Jesus was aware that the multitude had sought Him again at the place where they had eaten bread; therefore, He knew that they sought Him for the material benefits they could get rather than because He was the Son of God (v.26). The miraculous multiplication of the bread should have been a sign which revealed to them who He was. Jesus instructed them to work for the food which produces eternal life (v.27). This food was the Son of Man who was the heavenly Man upon earth and could therefore give heavenly food. God the Father had placed His seal of authority upon the Son of Man (v.27). Perhaps this seal of divine approval and power referred to Jesus' baptism when the Holy Spirit came upon Him and the Father spoke of Him.

Jesus instructed the multitude to work for spiritual food which is eternal. Judaism was a religion of works which required the devout to put forth every effort to keep the Law. The people asked Jesus what works God expected of them (v.28). The Law expressed the will of God which the people strove to keep. Jesus instructed them that the work which God required of them was belief in Him (v.20). They responded by asking for a sign that would prove that He spoke the truth (v.30). Signs had been given by Moses to Pharaoh in the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. Pharaoh had rejected the signs until the death of the first-born among the Egyptians and the sparing of the first-born among the Israelite families who had placed the blood of a lamb on their doorposts. Although the people had experienced the miracle of multiplied bread, they, like



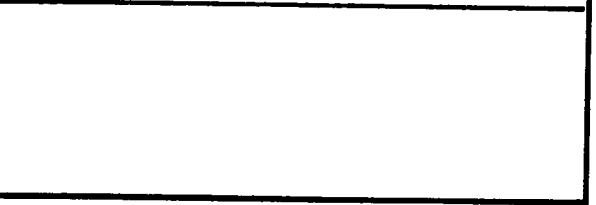
*The miracle of multiplying the bread should have revealed to the crowd that Jesus was the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Son, God)*



*In John 6:20, what did Jesus say was the work which God required of the people?*

*(belief in Him)*



Pharaoh, would not believe His word on the basis of this initial sign.

As a teacher, Jesus showed them in the Scriptures that the bread He had given them was a valid sign that He was doing the work of the Father. They did not question the account of manna's being given from heaven in the wilderness when Moses led the people. That manna was proof that Moses was doing the work of God, and his authority was respected (v.31). Jesus reminded the Jews that it was not Moses who had given the bread, but God. However, the Father's action had revealed His approval of Moses (v.32). Likewise, it was the heavenly Father who had given bread from heaven when the loaves were multiplied by Jesus—an action approving Jesus' work.

A transition was made from the bread which satisfies physical needs to the true bread from heaven. This true bread from God gives life to the world (v.33). Just as the woman of Samaria had responded to the promise of living water, the Jews requested the true heavenly bread which gives eternal life (v.34).

Jesus as the bread of life (vv.35-40).—Jesus informed them that He was the bread of life who permanently satisfies man's spiritual hunger (v.35). The true bread from heaven is God's gift through Christ. It was not given through Moses; neither was the word of the Law which came through Moses the final word. Jesus came from heaven as the incarnate Word which the Jews were to believe; however, they who saw Him did not believe in Him (v.36).

The metaphor used to refer to Jesus as the heavenly bread fits because He too came down from heaven, was given to men, and provided life for those who received Him. The fact that men rejected Him did not defeat the Father's purpose. The sovereign Father has control over men, and all who have been chosen by the Father for the Kingdom will come to Jesus (v.37). Human freedom must be understood within the limitations of divine sovereignty. Since the Father has given existence to man, man as creature can never escape dependency on and responsibility to the Creator. Divine Will controls the universe. Although man has freedom to exercise his will within the universe, his will is circumscribed by the will of God. Those who are chosen by the Father for the Kingdom will come to Jesus who follows the Father's will and will not reject any whom the Father has chosen (v.38). Even though death appears to rob Him of those given to Him, He does not lose them to death because He will raise them up on the last day (v.39). The will of the Father is to give eternal life to everyone who believes in the Son (v.40).

The reaction of the Jews to the teaching (vv.41-47).—The Jews grumbled about Jesus just as their ancestors had grumbled about the bread which was provided in the wilderness in the time of Moses (v.41). Their complaint was that Jesus could not have

Like Pharaoh, the people required additional \_\_\_\_\_ . (Compare your answer with the text.)

In reply to the request of the Jews for true heavenly bread, Jesus informed them that He was the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ .

(bread, life)

What three facts make reference to Jesus as the heavenly bread appropriate?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Man can never escape dependency on and responsibility to the \_\_\_\_\_ .

Man's will is circumscribed by the will of \_\_\_\_\_ .

(Creator, God)

come down from heaven since they knew His earthly parents, Joseph and Mary (v.42). The virgin birth is the explanation of how one can come down from heaven and be born of earthly parents; however, John did not present that doctrine.

Jesus pointed out that the problem with which the Jews came to Him was not basically an intellectual problem but a spiritual problem. If Jesus solved their intellectual problem of how one born of earthly parents comes down from heaven, they still would not believe in Him unless the Father drew them (v.44). The sins of pride and self-will keep people from coming to Christ, and these can be conquered only by the Spirit of God. Although John does not explicitly discuss the Spirit in these verses, he does imply reference to the Holy Spirit.

By referring to Jeremiah 31:34, John explains that those who come to Jesus are those who are taught of God (v.45). In later chapters, the author explains that the Spirit guides man into all truths. The reason man fails to come to Christ is not because of external problems but because he has not been drawn through the inner working of the Holy Spirit. He who hears and learns of the Father through the work of the Spirit comes to Jesus (v.45). Apart from this inner drawing, man cannot see the Father nor understand that the teachings of the Son who has seen the Father are from God (v.46). It is the inner working of the Spirit which enables him to believe in Christ and to have eternal life (v.47).

The nature of the bread of life (vv.48-59).— Since Christ had come from God to give eternal life, He was the "bread of life" (v.48). Although the manna given in the time of Moses was marvelous, the fathers who ate it died in the wilderness (v.49). The manna from Moses represented the Old Testament. What Christ had to offer was superior to it, for whoever partook of Him who had come down out of heaven would not die (vv.50f.). Jesus went a step further by asserting that it was His flesh which was the bread of life (v.51). The statement referred to Jesus' giving His flesh in death. This statement of eating His flesh came out of the background of the peace-offering and sin-offering. The sacrifice was slain, and its flesh was eaten in a shared meal which connoted fellowship between the worshipper and God. Although the peace-offering was the only sacrifice of which the offerer was permitted to partake, the priest ate the flesh of sin-offerings.

The Jews' question as to how Jesus could give His flesh to be eaten reveals their misunderstanding (v.52). Jesus repeated the teaching in a negative form and added the statement that unless they drank His blood they would not have life in themselves (v.53). Since the Jews had laws against partaking even of animal blood, the instruction that they must drink human blood was especially repulsive. Jesus introduced the title "Son of Man." The Son of Man was the

Was the basic problem which kept the Jews from believing in Jesus intellectual or spiritual? \_\_\_\_\_

Sins which keep people from coming to Jesus are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

(spiritual, pride, self-will)

According to John 6:46, man can come to Christ only by the inner working of the \_\_\_\_\_.

(Holy Spirit)

Both the manna in the time of Moses and Christ came down from heaven. Which was superior? \_\_\_\_\_

(Christ)

heavenly Man who had descended from heaven and would offer His flesh and blood as a lamb in order to take away the sins of the world. The sacrifice on the cross would not complete the work of the Son of Man. Since He was given power over death, He promised to raise up those who ate His flesh and drank His blood (v.54). The author's reference to the Lord's Supper becomes evident in verses 54 and 55. Jesus explained the metaphor of eating His flesh and drinking His blood to mean that He would dwell in the believer and the believer would dwell in Him (v.56). This union with Christ is essential for eternal life (v.57). Eternal life is not secured by eating the physical flesh of a sacrifice as in the Mosaic system, but it is provided through union with the heavenly Son of Man who was sent by the Father (v.58). Eternal life is on a higher level than that of the fathers who were sustained by manna in the wilderness. Even after eating the manna, they died, but in whomever the Son of Man dwells there will be life (v.58). John identifies the place of this discourse as the synagogue in Capernaum (v.59).

The response to the discourse (6:60-71)

As the synagogue discourse came to a close, some of the disciples joined the Jews who had already objected to what Jesus taught (v.60). His teachings sounded crude to those who did not understand that eating His flesh and drinking His blood were metaphors referring to His sacrificial death, resurrection, and sending of the Spirit. Those who had not been drawn to the Father and who had not responded by faith could not understand and were offended. Some of His disciples, other than the Twelve, commented that His teachings were unacceptable—"this is an hard saying" (v.60). Many were unwilling to listen to Him further and turned from following Him (vv.61, 66).

Recognizing that the disciples stumbled over the teaching that He must be offered as a sacrificial lamb, Jesus proceeded on to His resurrection and ascension back to the right hand of the Father (vv.61f.). The death of the heavenly Son of Man might have been offensive, but His death would be overcome in the glory of His ascension. The cross was a stumbling block to the Jews because they were unwilling to accept the death and apparent defeat of the Messiah (Christ).

The early Christians interpreted the death of the Messiah as a sacrificial sin offering which was necessary to cleanse man in preparing him for God's presence. They also saw Satan as having alienated God's creation by enticing man to sin. In opposing God, Satan distorts God's purpose for His creation by robbing man of life and fellowship with Him. In restoring sinful man to fellowship with God, it was essential for the Messiah to die and to defeat Satan whom He overcame in the resurrection. His glory and victory were manifested in the ascension back to the right hand of the Father (v.62).

*Jesus explained that eating His flesh and drinking His blood meant that He would dwell in the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ would dwell in \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(believer, believer, Him)*

*Many turned from following Jesus because they did not understand He referred to His d \_\_\_\_\_, r \_\_\_\_\_, and the sending of the S \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(death, resurrection, Spirit)*

Those who refuse to believe in Jesus as the Messiah do not receive eternal life in the Kingdom. Those who believe receive the Spirit who gives life (v.63). The Spirit is the presence of God who comes to the believer in fellowship and in the power of God by which the believer gains victory over his adversary. Jesus taught that those who looked for the victory of the Messiah in the realm of the flesh or on a physical level were misguided, for the flesh profits nothing (v.63). The eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood were not to be understood on a literal, fleshly level, but they had reference to the realm of the Spirit and eternal life.

Jesus made a distinction between the Twelve, except Judas who betrayed Him, and the disciples who turned from Him (v.64). Those who turned from Him and rejected Him did not defeat the purpose of God by their rebellion. Their freedom was limited by God's power. They could not come to Jesus apart from the divine initiative which underlies faith (v.65). Those who went away in unbelief lacked spiritual insight into the truth which only the Spirit of God could give.

Jesus used the turning away of the disciples to challenge the Twelve (v.67). When He asked if they would go away also, Peter answered as their spokesman. According to the Synoptics, Peter recognized and acknowledged Jesus as the Christ at Caesarea Philippi. His response to the question at the end of the discourse on the bread of life is similar. Peter recognized Jesus as the One who has the words of eternal life (v.68). The Twelve, except Judas, had responded in faith to the divine initiative and had come to know the truth that Jesus is the Holy One of God (v.69).

Jesus' reply to Peter reveals both His knowledge of the divine purpose of God and His insight into man (v.70). Although Jesus personally had invited the Twelve to follow Him, thereby choosing them, He knew that one of them had not believed and had not been delivered by the power of God from the power of the devil. Judas was under the control of Satan who worked through him in the betrayal; therefore, Judas was referred to as the devil.

*John 6:65 means that one cannot come to Jesus apart from the \_\_\_\_\_ initiative which underlies \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(divine, faith)*

*How did Jesus use the turning away of some? (See v. 67) \_\_\_\_\_*

*(To challenge the disciples)*

*Judas was under \_\_\_\_\_ control.*

*(Satan's)*

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. Why was it necessary for Jesus to depart from Jerusalem after baptizing numerous disciples?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What caused the animosity between the Jews and Samaritans?  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What traditions were broken by Jesus in talking with the woman of Samaria? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did the woman first interpret living water to mean? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What symbolical meaning did Jesus give to Jacob's well and the water from it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the issue on the discussion of the proper place of worship and what was Jesus' answer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What response did Jesus give to the disciples' request for Him to eat? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How did the faith of the Gentile officer support the conclusion of the Samaritans regarding Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How do the accounts of the conflict over Jesus' breaking the Sabbath differ in Mark and John? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Name three stages of the conflict between Jesus and the Jews with regard to breaking the Sabbath. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. State briefly the different approaches to the presentation and description of Jesus in the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What are two kinds of resurrection set forth in John 5:24-29? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Name four witnesses supporting Jesus' claim to being the Son of God. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. What did Jesus claim the Jews' unbelief in Him revealed? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Why do some scholars believe chapter 5 is misplaced? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. Why did the people seek to make Jesus a king after He multiplied the bread? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. What should the miracle of multiplying the bread have revealed to the crowd? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. How did the attitude of the people towards Jesus resemble that of Pharaoh towards Moses? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. In what ways is the metaphor which was used to refer to Jesus as the heavenly bread appropriate? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. What determines the limits of human freedom? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
21. What was the actual problem which kept the Jews from believing in Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
22. How is Christ as the bread superior to manna from Moses? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. What did Jesus mean by the eating of the flesh and drinking of the blood of the heavenly Son of Man? \_\_\_\_\_
24. Why did many disciples turn from following Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
25. Interpret 6:65. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3). Read pages 49-69 in Filson and answer the following questions.

1. Why does Filson give the heading "Jesus the Savior of the World" to 4:1-54?
2. How does Filson account for the "stirring of the water" of the pool?
3. What sins did the Jews see Jesus guilty of in connexion with the healing of the sick man?
4. What five witnesses attest Jesus' divine mission?
5. List the teachings which grew out of the miracle of feeding the 5,000.

Alternate supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3). Read pages 74-100 in Tasker and answer the following questions.

1. Explain why Jesus claimed Jewish worship to be superior to that of the Samaritans.
2. How is the healing of the nobleman's son similar to and different from the healing of the centurion's son or servant? (See Luke 7:2-10 and Matthew 8:5-13.)
3. What caused the Jews to conclude that Jesus claimed to be one with God in John 5:10-18?
4. What was John's purpose in including the miracle of feeding the 5,000?

Advanced activity (Level 3).

John stated at the close of the Fourth Gospel that there were many other activities of Jesus which were not included in his Gospel. Why do you think he included the encounter with the Samaritan woman, the healing of the man born blind, and the feeding of the 5,000?

#### Seminar Discussion

1. What caused Jesus to go through Samaria?
2. What can be learned about witnessing from Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman?
3. What does the healing of the officer's son reveal about Jesus' nature?
4. Why did the Jewish leaders oppose Jesus for healing the lame man?
5. What witnesses supported Jesus' claim to being the Son of God?
6. What is the symbolic meaning of the feeding of the 5,000?
7. How did John explain the turning away of followers from Jesus?