



Walking With the Savior

Through An Eyewitness Account of John

John, one of the sons of Zebedee, stood as an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He began his journey as a fisherman, leaving behind his nets and the future he had planned for himself to follow a teacher, a prophet, and a miracle worker. At the outset, John did not fully understand who Jesus was or what lay ahead. In faith, he aligned himself with Jesus, drawn by His words and deeds.

As John walked alongside Jesus, witnessing His teachings and miracles, he gradually realized that Jesus was far more than a prophet or a remarkable teacher. John came to understand that Jesus was God in the flesh. This revelation was not just a turning point for John personally, but a moment of eternal significance. By choosing to follow Jesus, John's future was forever changed, and his decision would go on to impact the world—not only in his own time but throughout every generation to come. **Let's embark on an inspiring journey with John as we walk alongside Jesus.**

Background Matters

6:1–2. Though **some time after this** is indefinite, it can be learned from the Synoptics that Herod Antipas had killed John the Baptist (Mark 6:14–29; cf. John 3:24), the disciples had preached throughout Galilee (Mark 6:7–13, 30–31), multitudes of people were curious about Jesus, and Herod Antipas was seeking Jesus (Luke 9:7–9). So the time between the events in John 5 and 6 was probably six months. From verses 1–2 it seems that Jesus had gone to the northeast side of **the Sea of Galilee** with His disciples for rest. This lake was also called **the Sea of Tiberias** (cf. 21:1), named for a town on the lake's west shore built by Herod Antipas. But a **crowd** gathered even in this "solitary" (cf. Matt. 14:13; Mark 6:32) and "remote place" (Matt. 14:15).

6:3–4. The mention of **the hillside** or "the mountain" (NASB) may indicate an intended parallel to Moses' experience on Mount Sinai (cf. vv. 31–32). The notice that **the Jewish Passover feast was near** is theological and only secondarily chronological. The people were thinking in terms of blood, flesh, lambs, and unleavened bread. They longed for a new Moses who would deliver them from Roman bondage.



Since this was the second Passover John mentioned (cf. 2:13, 23), and since he mentioned at least one other Passover (13:1 [5:1 refers to an unnamed feast of the Jews]), Jesus' ministry extended for about three years. The events in chapter 6, then, took place about one year before He was crucified.

6:5–6. Jesus' question **to Philip—Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?**—was not for information but was part of His program of educating the disciples. Philip was from Bethsaida (1:44) which was the closest town, and he would know the local resources. The answer to Jesus' question was that it was impossible, humanly speaking, for thousands of people to get bread late in the day from the little neighboring villages. John wrote, as he thought back on the incident, that Jesus was asking this **to test** Philip. God tests people to refine their faith, never to tempt them to do evil (cf. Gen. 22:1–18; James 1:2, 13–15; 1 Peter 1:7).

6:7. The amount needed was a large sum of money: literally, “200 denarii.” One denarius was the wage for a day's work; this would have been **eight months' wages**. Even if the bread had been available, the disciples did not have nearly that much money. The disciples were supported by people who responded to Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

6:8–9. **Andrew**, in contrast with Philip, had gone into the crowd to determine its resources (cf. Jesus' command, “Go and see”; Mark 6:38). All he could come up with was a little boy's lunch. Man's inability set the stage for a manifestation of Jesus' compassion and power. The **barley loaves** recall the Prophet Elisha's feeding of 100 men with 20 barley loaves (2 Kings 4:42–44). But here was One far greater than Elisha.

6:10–11. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus made the “sheep” (Mark 6:34) **sit down** in green pastures (cf. Ps. 23:2). According to Mark 6:40, the people were seated in groups of 50 and 100. This made the crowd easy to count and the food easy to distribute. **Five thousand** men were there, plus women and children (Matt. 14:21). Thus probably more than 10,000 people were fed.

Since the area was desolate and the time was Passover, **Jesus** was like Moses with the people in the wilderness who needed a miraculous feeding. The miracle itself was not described by John. **Jesus ... gave thanks**, but no eucharistic implications are obvious as many argue in this chapter. Among devout Jews the giving of thanks was the norm before and after meals. As Jesus **distributed** the food (with the aid of the disciples [Mark 6:41]), the miraculous multiplication took place.

6:12–13. The words, **when they had all had enough to eat**, show that John intended to stress that a miracle took place. Some scholars try to explain away the miracle by saying that this was merely a sacramental or symbolic meal. Others say the “miracle” was in the people's sharing. But these rationalizations are far from the clear meaning of John's words.

The disciples' gathering of the **12 baskets** of fragments was part of their education, to show them that He is more than adequate for their needs. Later He appealed to their spiritual stupidity (cf. Mark 8:17–21). Even though the disciples were closer to Jesus than the crowds, they too were in spiritual blindness (Mark 6:52).

6:14–15. Seeing this **miraculous sign (sēmeion)**, the people recalled Moses' prediction that a **Prophet** like him would arise (Deut. 18:15). Moses had fed the people. Moses had led them out of bondage. Jesus had fed the people. Jesus could lead the people out of the hated Roman bondage.



The people saw His sign, but they did not perceive its meaning. They wanted to seize Him **and make Him King**. This marks the highpoint of Jesus' popularity and a great temptation for Him. Could He have the kingdom without the Cross? No. Jesus' kingdom would be given to Him by the Father (Ps. 2:7–12; Dan. 7:13–14). It will not come from this world (John 18:36).¹

This week in "Walking With the Savior" John presents

several contrasts between the new way of Jesus and the traditional practices of Judaism. For example, the new wine that Jesus creates from the water used for ritual purification is significantly superior to the old wine (2:10). Furthermore, Jesus' body symbolizes the new temple, which renders the old temple obsolete (2:19–21). To enter the kingdom, a Pharisee must experience a new birth, as relying solely on traditional law-keeping will not suffice (3:3). In addition, the old forms of worship are being transformed into worship "in Spirit and truth" (4:23). Another prominent theme introduced by John is the life-giving nature of Jesus. The living water that Jesus offers the Samaritan woman replaces the stagnant water she has been drinking (4:13–14); the royal official's son is rescued from the brink of death (4:50); and the paralytic is granted a renewed life (5:8)—indeed, the Son is the source of life (1:4; 5:21, 24–26).

Both themes of newness and life are further explored in chapter 6. This chapter tells the remarkable story of how Jesus fed a crowd of five thousand men with only five loaves of bread and two small fish. This miracle holds a unique significance as it is the only event from Jesus' life documented by all four Gospel writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Interestingly, John, who generally avoids repeating accounts captured by earlier evangelists, felt it was essential to include this narrative due to its relevance to the discussion that follows. This extraordinary event not only showcases Christ's miraculous power but also lays the groundwork for deeper teachings about faith and sustenance. Let's prepare to see Jesus as our bread of life in this week's study.

Study Guide 17

This study guide presents daily assignments that are specifically crafted to enhance your growth in the Word. Embrace each moment to meditate and reflect, and watch as your spiritual maturity flourishes through your dedicated efforts.

¹ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 293–294.



"Hand Over Your Limits to the Unlimited!"

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

John 6:1–15

Open It, Mondays. Open your heart and mind to the truth of the Word.

1. *What is the most difficult situation in which you have ever found yourself?

Explore It, Tuesdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

2. Where did Jesus go? (6:1)

3. Why did the crowd of people follow Jesus? (6:2)

4. Where did Jesus and His disciples go? (6:3)

5. What Jewish feast was near? (6:4)

6. *What question did Jesus ask Philip? (6:5)

7. Why did Jesus ask Philip a question? (6:6)

8. How did Philip respond to Jesus' question? (6:7)



9. Who was Andrew? (6:8)

Push on Wednesday, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

10. What role did Andrew play in feeding the five thousand? (6:8–9)

11. What solution did Andrew propose to Jesus' question? (6:8–9)

12. *What miracle did Jesus perform? (6:10–11)

13. How much bread was left over? (6:12–13)

14. *How did the crowd of people respond to Jesus' miracle? (6:14)

15. What did the crowd of people intend to do? (6:15)

16. What was Jesus' reaction to the crowd's intention? (6:15)

Get It Thursdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

17. For what reasons do people follow Jesus today?

18. What is your typical reaction to situations that seem to present no readily available solution?



19. *With what situations in life do you have a difficult time trusting God?

20. What does God provide for us on a daily basis?

21. In what ways do people attempt to use Jesus or His name inappropriately?

22. *How and when has God miraculously provided for your needs?

23. How can we trust God with our needs?

Drive it Home, Fridays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

24. What things do you need to thank God for providing?

25. *What tough situation do you need to trust God to work out in your life this week?

A Journey Through The Gospel of John **2026**

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