

John 6:1-15

The Feeding of the Multitude

In Chapter 5 of John's Gospel, Jesus made some pretty extreme claims about Himself ("I have come in my Father's name" (5:43); "These are the Scriptures that testify about me," (5:39); "For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me" (5:36); "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life" (5:24); and others!). In the first 15 verses of Chapter 6, Jesus performs a miracle that verifies the claims He made about Himself.

Notice that at the beginning of the chapter, a large crowd is following Jesus. This will change by the end of the chapter. Jesus is at the height of His popularity in the beginning of Chapter 6. The people follow Jesus as long as He is performing miracles. They leave Jesus when His testimony about Himself becomes troubling.

Today's passage, the Feeding of the Multitude is both uplifting to the disciple of Jesus to read and also tragic, as the crowd He feeds misunderstands the meaning behind the "sign" of their being fed.

Why did the crowd follow Jesus? Is this a good reason to follow Him?

What were the signs Jesus had performed up to this point? (See: 5:8-9, 4:48-50, 2:11.) *John says that the people following Jesus to the mountain were following Him only because of the signs He performed on the sick.

Why do you think John includes the detail that the Jewish Passover feast was near (6:4)?

Notice that Philip does not answer the question Jesus asks Him. Jesus asks: "where shall we buy," but Philip answers that it cannot be bought, not the location of a bakery. What would be the RIGHT answer for a disciple of Christ to give to this question?

Why do you think Andrew mentions the boy who was carrying the modest amount of food as an answer to Jesus' question: "where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"

Sitting down, in Jewish culture, was the position of people who were about to be taught something. What is it Jesus is about to teach them?

John includes the detail that more food was collected than was given to Jesus to bless to drive home the point that a miracle took place. For if the people did nothing but pass the original 5 loaves and 2 fish on down the line and no one took anything, there would still be far less than the 12 baskets full of barley loaves that were collected. What is the significance of Jesus feeding the multitude miraculously?

Judge the peoples' reaction to the miracle. Was it a good reaction, a well-intentioned but missing-the-mark reaction, or was it a bad reaction? (6:14)

In the Gospel of John, who was the Prophet who was to come into the world? (1:23)

Premillennial Dispensationism and Historic Premillennialism are gaining in popularity in American Evangelical circles. Both teach that Jesus will one day rule the world as a literal king. Premillennial Dispensationism claims that Jesus' original goal when he was on earth in the 1st Century was to become a human king over physical territory but failed in His mission. How does John 6:15 address both Premillennial Dispensationism and Historic Premillennialism?