Jesus Faces Objections from His Enemies

John 6:41-59

Introduction:

We had compared Jesus’ feeding of the 5/8,000 (as we thought the Jews were doing) to Moses’ feeding 3 million people for 40 years in the wilderness.

Last week, I laid out a math problem: 40 yrs. X 365 days = 14,600 days. X 3 (meals a day) X 3m. Answer? 13 trillion, 140 billion meals.

Jesus’ first answer in v.32 was “It was not Moses, but God. He is going to add one more answer in this section.

I. Their Complaining – 6:41-51

A. Their Basic Reason – 6:41-42

“The Jews then ﻿﻿complained about Him, because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.”

They complained the same way their ancestors did. They were not satisfied with anything. (Ex. 15:24 (leadership); 16:2, 7(bread), 12(meat), 17:3 (water); Num. 11:1(leadership); 14: 2, (return to Egypt) 27).

Building on His miracle of physical bread, Jesus now is speaking about spiritual bread. All they understood was “physical bread”

“And they said, ﻿﻿“Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” (6:42)

The reasoning here is: If we know his parents, He did not come from heaven. He got here the same way we did.

Their logic: There is no other possible way to get here than the way we know.

In Isaiah 55.9 God said,

“For ﻿﻿*as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

B. Their Broader Reasons – 6:43-51

“Jesus therefore answered and said to them, ﻿﻿“Do not murmur among yourselves.”

1. About His Father – 6:44-46

a. His Will – 44

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“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me ﻿﻿draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Outside the New Testament, “ἑλκύσῃ, draw” can mean “drag” Hermas Vision. This “drawing” is not just a few “elect” but all people (12:32). Those thus drawn, must believe, in order to be saved and they shall be resurrected.

Jesus adds, “I will raise him up in the last day.”

b. His Word – 6:45-46

“It is written in the prophets, ﻿﻿*‘And they shall all be taught by God.’* ﻿﻿Therefore everyone who ﻿﻿has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.”

“All shall be taught by God” is a probably reference to Isaiah 53:13 and/or Jer. 31:34. It anticipates the millennial reign of Christ. And from the New Covenant Jer. 31:34, “﻿they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord.”

It did not happen at the return to the land from Babylon. It had not happened in Jesus day or the Kingdom would have come, then. It will happen when Jesus returns after the Tribulation. In the meantime, everyone who listens to and learns from God will come to and believe in Jesus.

“﻿﻿Not that anyone has seen the Father, ﻿﻿except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.” (6:46)

This learning is not from a visible God, the father, but by God’s Word and Spirit.

2. About His Facts – 6:47-50

a. The Basic Fact – 6:47

“Most assuredly, I say to you, ﻿﻿he who believes ﻿﻿in Me has everlasting life.”

Believing in Jesus” brings this about.

b. The Broader Facts – 6:48-50﻿

“I am the bread of life.”

The key difference between the wilderness bread and Jesus’ bread is the word LIFE. It is not physical bread but spiritual bread.

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“﻿﻿Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.” (6:49)

Moses’ bread did not have life in it. It kept them alive for a while, then they died.

﻿“This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.” (6:50)

That is a big difference. It kept them alive for up to 40 years. But there comes a “last day” then you die!

Like: “each drop of blood bought me a million years.” (Charles Fitzgerald) How many years would that be? 140,000,000,000,000.

But there comes a last day. The gift of God is eternal life.

3. About His Flesh – 6:51

“I am the living bread ﻿﻿which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and ﻿﻿the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

“Eating” the living Bread is a figure of speech meaning to believe on Him, like the figures of coming to Him (v. 35), listening to Him, (v. 45), and seeing Him (v. 40)[[1]](#footnote-1) receiving Him

“Giving His flesh for the world” refers to His death on the cross.

II. Their Confusion – 6:52-59

A. The Difficulty – 6:52

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“The Jews therefore ﻿﻿quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?”

They are still thinking on the physical level.

They know Him.

They knew Him as a boy.

They knew Him in school.

They knew His brothers and sisters.

They knew him as the carpenter.

Yet He is without honor to them. ﻿

“A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” His family thought He was out of His mind.” (Mark 3:21)

B. The Declaration – 6:53-58

1. The Negative Statement – 6:53

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“Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless ﻿﻿you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.”

Note: Jesus is speaking to people under the law (until the cross – a year from now). He would not tell them to drink blood, “You must not eat . . . any blood” (Lev. 3:17; cf. Lev. 17:10-14).

Some groups take this literally even today. They teach that a person has to take communion on a regular basis or he does not have God’s life in Him.

We observe the communion as a picture of our having believed on Him. We are reminded of His giving His body and blood on the cross. There is no saving value in the act.

Note: Jesus did not begin the Communion service until a year after this teaching.

2. The Positive Statement – 6:54

“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood (has eternal life), and (I will raise him up at the last day.)

Compare 6:54 with 6:40 -- “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, ﻿﻿that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him have (everlasting life); and (I will raise him up at the last day).”

3. The Explanation – 6:55-56

﻿“For My flesh is ﻿﻿food indeed, and My blood is ﻿﻿drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood ﻿﻿abides in Me, and I in him.”

4. The Comparison – 6:57

“As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.

Feeds on Me = believes on me.﻿

5. The Contrast – 6:58

﻿﻿“This is the bread which came down from heaven—not ﻿﻿as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

Again, eats this bread = believing on Him.

C. His location – 6:59

“These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.”

Jesus often taught in the synagogue. It was not formal. There was often give and take discussion as we have here.

1. Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:297). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)