

Rom. 14:19
So then let
us follow
after things
which make
for peace,
and things
whereby we
may edify
one another.



John 8:32
And ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

**December
16
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JESUS, THE BREAD OF LIFE

by Jim Stauffer

Jesus spends a great deal of time teaching the lesson about the bread of life as recorded in **John Chapter 6**. As is His teaching method He relates the model of His covenant through the prism of the covenant they understood best, that of the Law of Moses.

With that method He uses the manna delivered to the people in the wilderness as a shadow of His own message as He speaks to them in the present.

Jesus precipitated this discussion by accusing them in **verse 26** of a failure to respect His authority which was demonstrated in signs such as feeding 5000 of them with five loaves and two fishes. He told them they were following Him simply to benefit from the physical food He delivered. His desire was to teach them not to *work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give to you... (vs. 27).*

After making the comparison and saying to them, *I am the bread of life, and he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst, (vs. 35)* He observes them grumbling about His claim to have come from heaven.

It is in this setting he makes the remarks we have seen in **verses 44,45**. Here He explains the process of access to this bread of life. His first comment is the Father, who sent Him to earth, draws those who come to Him, the Son of God. The prophet Jeremiah explains God's method of drawing men to Him as coming from *loving kindness (Jer. 31:3)*. The promise Jesus makes to those who are drawn to Him by the *loving kindness* of God is they will be raised up on the last day. That day, He says, will be the fulfillment of His promise that the bread of life He offers, endures to eternal life. Obviously the *loving kindness* of God was demonstrated in the Old Testament by His deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage and then blessing them in their faithfulness to Him. Jesus, then, represents the deliverance to all mankind by His sacrifice of Himself on the cross to offer

redemption to man, deliverance from his sin that separates him from God. It is in this sense Jesus is the bread of life, the bread that endures to eternal life.

Jesus says Himself, **John 12:32** *“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”*

In **verse 45**, He provides further explanation of the process by which one is drawn by the *loving kindness* of God. It will be those who have heard and learned from the Father who will come to Christ and receive this bread of life. He refers to the prophet Jeremiah who spoke of this new covenant to be mediated by Christ as one where its adherents will all be taught of God. **Jer. 31:34** *“They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”*

There is a constant theme in the teaching of Jesus and that is to hear what the Lord has to say. To consider the word of God as authoritative, if indeed, you hope to receive the inheritance that is the promise given in the bread of life.

Jesus warned there would be many who would not hear His words but would prefer to follow their own designs on how to serve. **Mat. 7:21-23**, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.”* Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’” Immediately after saying that He illustrated it with the well known, often repeated story of the two men, one wise and the other foolish. He says the wise man built his house upon the rock by hearing the words of Jesus and those who do not hear His words are like the foolish man who built his house upon

the sand. Jesus further says, *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”* (John 8:24)

Jesus offers a similar warning to hear the message of God as Ezekiel the prophet was commanded to send to the people of his day. He was the authorized watchman for the people and it was his responsibility to warn them of God’s message. If they heeded the message they would live and if they rejected it they would die (**Ezek. 3**).

We learn later in **John Chapter 6** that many no longer followed Jesus because they would not adhere to the message of God sent through His Son, Jesus. It is a sad state of affairs when men will devote much of their time with the impression they are serving the Lord when in reality they are not hearing His word. They are as Jesus, says, doing things supposedly in His name but since it is not by His authority, His word, they will not receive the inheritance of eternal life that comes with the bread of life, which is the word of Jesus as sent from God. Friends, the Lord has indeed practiced *loving kindness* toward us all, *for all sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* (**Rom. 3:23**) What say you? Will you hear the word of the Lord and be drawn by His *loving kindness*?

EXHORTATIONS:

Prayer, Salvation, Jesus

“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth (**1 Timothy 2:1-7**).

When we pray to our heavenly Father, we indicate a sense of need on our part. When praying (general way), interceding (asking for others), or giving thanks (expressing appreciation), our prayers say that we *need* to talk to our heavenly Father; our prayers say that we want to live within heaven’s will. In prayer for others, we turn our personal desires and needs toward others who need to be prayed for. If we start falling short in our prayer life, we can remember that Jesus prayed often. He gave thanks for food; He prayed for sinners; He spent all night in prayer; Jesus *“in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him*

who was able to save Him from death and was heard because of His godly fear” (**Hebrews 5:7**).

Paul told Timothy that prayer should be offered for kings and those who have authority in this world, with the end result being a life of peace and quietness—a life that can be dedicated solely to God. Peace, godliness, and reverence are goals we must strive for. When we pray for peace in our world, the good result can be the free course of the gospel. God wants all to be saved; we must be spreading the gospel; all need that knowledge; all must act in faith and respond to God’s offer of forgiveness. Lives that are not disturbed by outside forces can focus on the gospel. Yes, governments have responsibility in this world (**Romans 13; 1 Peter 2**). Even so, Christians in the 1st c. faced persecutions and oppositions as they served the Lord. Remember Paul in Ephesus, the very city Timothy was in when Paul wrote to him.

Jesus Christ is our mediator. Jesus Christ, the man, the very one who left heaven and came to this earth is our mediator. Here is Jesus, the Word, who was with God, who was God; yet, the Word became flesh, being *“found in fashion as a man,”* taking on the likeness of men (**Philippians 2:7-8**). Jesus became *“God with us.”* Why did Jesus become flesh? The incarnation meant that Jesus, Himself God, became God in the flesh. He had a physical body (**Hebrews 10:5**). The incarnation meant that He would offer Himself on the cross for the world’s sins. He suffered and tasted death; He humbled Himself to the point of death; He sacrificed Himself. He paid the price; He is our ransom.

Can mere words do justice to the sublime thought that God sent His Son, that His Son became one with us, and that God’s Son died on a cross? It is doubtful. At least, though, can we endeavor to think more seriously about Jesus, about who He is, about what He has done for us? As we think more deeply about God’s desire for the salvation of all, then maybe our prayers can be better. Maybe our prayers can be more focused on the matter at hand, namely, the salvation of the souls of men and women, including our own. Paul told Timothy: You have great work to do; don’t forget to pray.

Randy Harshbarger

You Don’t Do It All at Once!

There are a number of metaphors in the New Testament for the way people change, for good or for ill. There is the image of *“leaven”* in **1 Corinthians 5:6-8**. There is the image of “child to man” in **1 Corinthians 13:11**. Peter tells us in **2 Peter 3:18**, *“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”* I am sure there are others but

there is great comfort in each one of these images. Did you notice it?

Each of the images I mentioned was change taking place over time. You're not baptized into Christ one day and a fully developed Christian when you come up out of the waters of baptism! Nope! You're just a babe in Christ and your journey is just beginning. Unlike the newborn infant who does not but do what comes naturally you as a newly re-born Christian must intentionally seek to grow. It does not happen naturally. You are re-born with an enemy, Satan, who sees to that. Fortunately, as the Lord points out, you don't have to do it all at once! And that's good because as the old saying goes: "Yard by yard is much too hard but inch by inch it's a cinch!"

James Clear, in his book "Atomic Habits", points out that all you need to do is consistently become just one percent better and over time you will see amazing results. He calls it the "compound interest of self-improvement". If you get better by only 1% each day then over the course of a year (365 days) you're going to be 37 times as good as you started out! Small changes, consistently engaged in, bring big results! Start today and enjoy the results!

Cleveland Reddinger

One Spirit Baptized

Terry W. Benton

1 Corinthians 12:13 mentions "*by one Spirit*" we were all baptized into one body. What does this mean? It means that Christians came to be baptized into Christ **by** the influence of the Holy Spirit. In other words, none of us would have been immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ except that we listened to what the Spirit commanded. It was not **by** my own wisdom or desire. I never would have been baptized in the name of the Lord except I came under the teaching and directing influence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit tells us the truth about how to come into the body of Christ. The Law of Moses did not tell me to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. The faith of Jesus Christ as revealed and directed by the Holy Spirit is the **only** reason anyone was ever baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The 3,000 Jews that repented and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (**Acts 2:38-41**) would never have done so except that the Spirit through Peter urged them to. The Ethiopian Eunuch would never have been baptized in **Acts 8:33** except that the Spirit through Philip had taught and urged him to. Cornelius and his household would never have been baptized in water in the name of the Lord in **Acts 10:47-48** except the Spirit through Peter taught and commanded them to. You see it is **by** one Spirit, the same Holy Spirit teaching, that we are **all** baptized into one body.

Here is what happens when we are baptized in the name of the Lord. 1) We are immersed in water by the authority of Jesus Christ (**Acts 8:33f; Acts 10:47-48**). 2) Going into this baptism in water we repent of sins (**Acts 2:38** or "*die to sin*" (**Romans 6:3-5**)). As we are doing this **by** the Spirit's influence, God is also doing the most important part. He is cutting our sins away (**Colossians 2:12**), remitting our sins (**Acts 2:38; 22:16**), and adding us to His church (**Acts 2:47**) or placing us in the spiritual body of Christ, the church (**1 Cor. 12:13; Gal.3:26-27**). This all happens when we are immersed in water in the name of the Lord. When we are immersed in Jesus' name, we have "faith in the operation of God" (**Colossians 2:12f**) that He will do the work of circumcision without hands. What does He cut away? He cuts away our sins. We do not cut our own sins away. God does this. But, God does this when we are immersed as the Ethiopian Eunuch, as the 3,000 Jews on Pentecost, and as Cornelius. We are **all** baptized into one body, the church of Christ, by the direction of **one Spirit**.

This is what Jesus said in the great commission. Go preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved (**Mark 16:15-16**). This is carried out by the disciples teaching all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (**Matthew 28:19**). Remember, this is in the element of **water** (**Acts 10:47-48**). It is done "*in the name of the Lord*" and it is done "**by**" the influence of One Spirit. This one baptism began to be preached and practiced by direction of the Spirit in Jerusalem, and was to keep going to "*all nations*". It did not cease short of "*every creature*." It is the one baptism of **Ephesians 4:5**. Do you hear what the Spirit says about the baptism Jesus commanded?

Via Gardendale Bulletin; Gardendale, Alabama; Taken from the Market Street Messenger

Signs Seen On Church Properties

"No God-No Peace. Know God-Know Peace"

"Free trip to heaven. Details Inside!"

"Try our Sundays. Better than Baskin-Robbins"

"Searching for a new look? Have your faith lifted here"

"How will you spend eternity?
Smoking or non-smoking?"

"If you are headed in the wrong direction, God allows U-turns."

Let us be reminded to pray for those we support who are preaching in other areas of this country and also of the world. Remember to pray for Kyle Bennett in Boston Ma., Matt Hodge in Marshfield, Mo. and Cleveland Reddinger in El Dorado, Ks. Overseas we need to remember, Wilfredo Pelino and Jonathan Sapitula in the Philippines as well as Arao Uchaio, Francisco Vascob in Mozambique.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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PLEASE REMEMBER JAN
PATRICK, STEPHEN KIMKER,
STEVE AND SUZANNE WIMP,
ALMA BAUMGARTNER, AND
GEORGE ROOT.

BIBLE CLASSES

SUNDAY MORNING - FOLLOWING
THE MESSIAH - RON PECK -
TEACHER

WEDNESDAY EVENING
CHRIST IN YOU
JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER

SUNDAY SERMON:

GOD'S VIEW OF GENDER



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10