CLASS 4: John 6 & the Bread of Life

The Bible has several titles: the **Holy Scriptures** (1 Timothy 5:18) The **Word of God** (1 Peter 1:23). One of the more mysterious names for the Bible is **Bread of Life**. John 6 is the source of that unique application, and for us to understand what it means for the Bible to be the Bread of Life, we need to understand how Jesus is the Word of God and the Bible is the Word of God.

First we must understand that Jesus is the Word of God. This is part of the theme of the Gospel of John, introduced in the opening chapter (John 1:1,14 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God…. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*.). Word of God is an expression of God's revelation to man used throughout the Bible (1 Chronicles 17:3, Luke 3:2). It would aptly apply to Jesus as He is the ultimate revelation from God (Romans 16:25).

A parallel idea to this is that Jesus Christ is revealed today only in the Bible, the Word of God; the record of His words were the commission given to the Apostles (Matthew 28:18-20). Hebrews 1:1-2 speaks to this by telling us that all communication from God today (which is the New Testament) is a direct communication from Jesus. The New Testament, passed from Jesus to His Apostles and Prophets became the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:19) and the pillar of the church (1 Timothy 3:15).

To understand how Scriptures are the Bread of Life we need to inspect the sermon Jesus gave us in John 6. It begins with a miracle, when Jesus feeds 5000 people. When He did this people realized He was THE prophet, since He fulfilled prophecy (Isaiah 55:1-3).When they returned for more, this opened up a great dialogue on being filled by bread. Jesus began to discuss the spiritual significance of this miracle. He tells them that there is a bread from heaven that will fill us completely. The Jews thought about Manna; it was a bread from heaven, and it sustained their fathers in the wilderness. Its name meant “what is it”. Jesus uses this to tell them about the Bread from Heaven that sustains them now

In the Gospel of John an unusual idea is proposed which, if not put together in the Gospel, would be confusing. It is the idea of being “*drawn by God*” to salvation. That term is found in the middle of John 6 and the bread of life sermon. Jesus says in verse 44 that "*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day*”. Many believe that this is speaking of a supernatural personal drawing. But in fact, this is the second part of a three part discourse. In John 3:11-15 Jesus was teaching Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel. He described how the Son of Man would be “*lifted up*” and how that would save all men. Then in John 12:32-33 Jesus brings these two thoughts together. He says that being lifted up IS how God will draw all men to Him. Thus what Jesus told Nicodemus about being lifted up and what Jesus said in John 6 about God drawing all men is accomplished by His death. When Jesus said that God would save those whom He drew, He tells us that this drawing

was His death on the cross. Only by His death could men come to Him.

The Bible says that Jesus was the mystery of the fathers (Romans 16:25, Ephesians 3:3-5; Colossians 1:26; etc.). The name for Manna, "*what is it*", indicates that it too was a mystery. Manna was of such importance that it was placed into the Ark of the Covenant, with Aaron's rod and the Decalogue. Manna sustained men in the wilderness, between the time they passed through the water and until they reached the Promised Land. Even then it revealed that Manna was a metaphor for something greater (Deuteronomy 8:3-4).

Manna was the Word of God, and Jesus was the Word of God. Manna was a bread of life, and Jesus was the Bread of Life. Jesus clarifies this in John 6:63; it is His words that are the Manna revealed, the words that the Apostles and Prophets were told to pass down to us. Jesus words are the teachings of the New Testament, the Spirit and the Truth.

Today, God's Word, the Bible, the Apostolically delivered Words of Christ, sustain us from the time we pass through the water until we reach the true spiritual Promised Land (Hebrews 4:1-11). Many in Israel despised Manna, because it was too common and unvaried (Numbers 11). Today many complain the same about the Word of God. Yet this Bread of Life is the only sustenance given to us in our wandering, and it will bring us to our promised land.