



lêtehia
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
August 21, 2022
“God Provides”

SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

News:

Church **Camp** Aug 22-24

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JOHN 6:1-15 ~ 1After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). 2A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. 3Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. 4Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. 5Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?” 6This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. 7Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.” 8One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, 9“There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?” 10Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. 12When they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost.” 13So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. 14Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” 15So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

In asking His Disciples what should be done in a seemingly impossible situation, Jesus showed that none of them had a clue Who they were following.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

1) Just Who do you think Jesus is? Was He ever the leader of a physical rebellion? (Matthew 26:55, Mark 14:48, Luke 23:13-15). Would He lead a physical insurrection today?

2) When Jesus tests you by asking what should be done in a seemingly impossible situation, what solution are you going to offer?

3) What, or Whom, do you seek? When you pursue Jesus and even obey Him, what is it you're looking for and what is it that you truly desire?

4) Do you believe that God is the one providing everything you have, regardless of the mechanism of that provision?

5) How do you approach Jesus – Almighty God made flesh for you? Do you ask what He can do for you, or do you ask what you can do for Him?

6) Don't you know that Jesus sees you?

7) How do you answer when you are in a tough spot and Jesus asks you "how should we handle this one?"

8) Do you ever face a challenging situation and make a physical assumption about it and then doubt that the Lord can do anything miraculous?

9) They assumed Jesus was there to be Who they wanted Him to be. Do we ever do that to Jesus?

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____



Lêtheia

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP




the gospel of

JOHN

ΕΝΑΡΧΗ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ
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John 6:1–15, 1After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). 2A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. 3Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. 4Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. 5Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?” 6This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. 7Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive

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All of chapter 5 served to demonstrate that we humans craft our own self-serving religions based upon our own twisted ideas about the creator that resonates with us.

Materialists – that’s those atheistic science types who worship at the altar of macro-evolution. For them the religion is science fact mixed with science fiction and the creator is the mindlessness of coincidence. Why? Because it works for them – it fits their personality – it resonates – it makes them feel superior.

Humanists – that’s those who see mankind as the pinnacle of either a nebulous force, or unintelligent

chance, and openly worship a future idealized version of themselves. Why? It suits them.

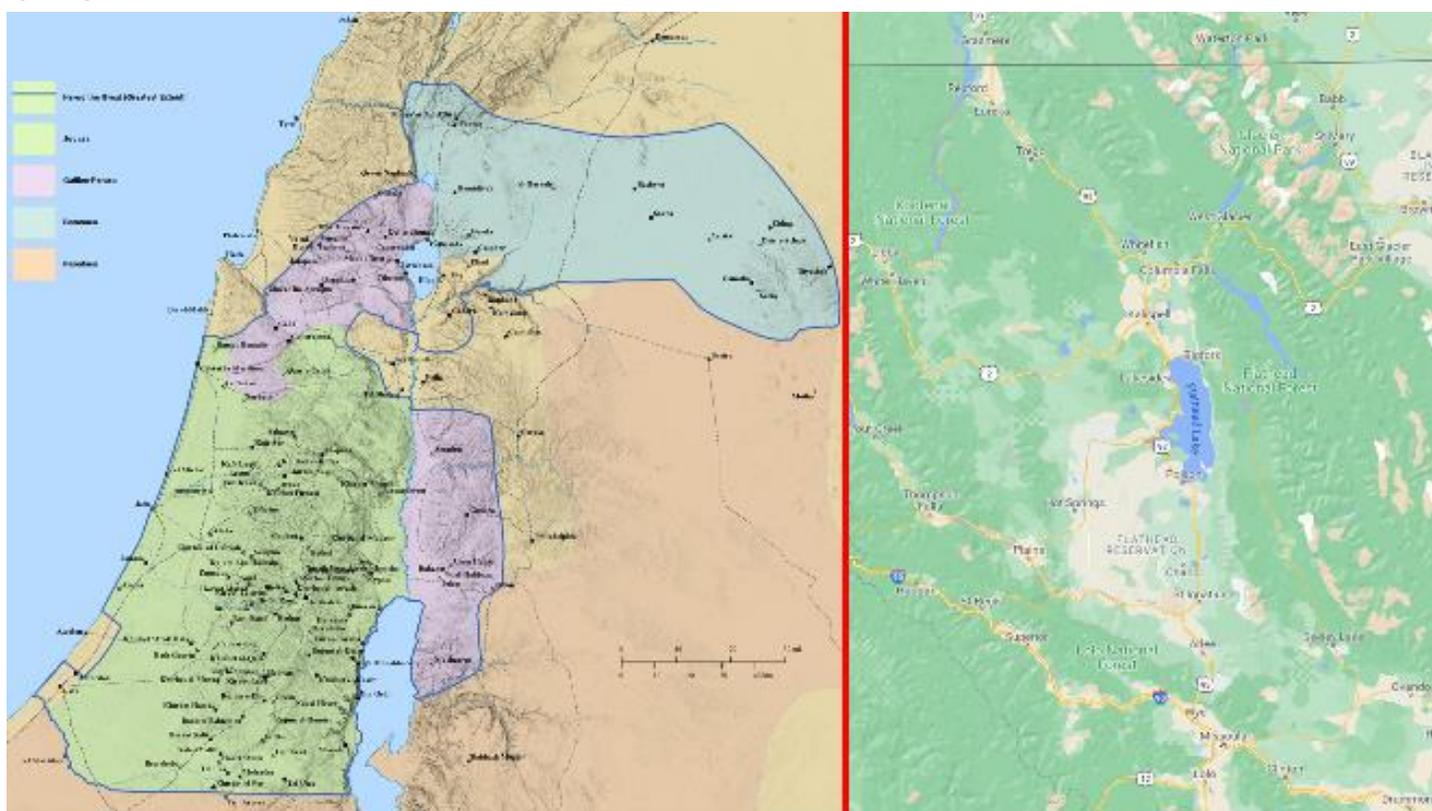
Agnostics – that’s those people who are arrogant about their inability to decide what it’s all about, and you guessed it, they do that because it resonates with their personality – with their lazy lack of commitment and effort.

I could keep going, but what’s salient for us is our own personal distortion of Biblical Christianity and the God Who founded it. All of chapter 5 dealt with people’s misunderstanding and misrepresenting of God and, more to the point, of Jesus.

The same theme is continued in chapter 6. Jesus asked His closest Disciples – guys who had already confessed their belief in Him – guys who had been direct witnesses to all manner of supernatural miracles wrought by Jesus – what should be done in a seemingly impossible situation. The only thing that any of them could come up with was thoroughly human solutions to what they saw as a purely physical problem.

They didn't have a clue Who they were following – and afterwards – no one in the vast crowd had any better idea than Philip did at the beginning.

Just Who do you think Jesus is? When Jesus tests you by asking what should be done in a seemingly impossible situation, what solution are you going to offer?



Let's break it down a bit. Jesus was back in His hometown province of Galilee, no doubt, in the vicinity of His homebase of Capernaum. He was ministering to the people around there and word of Him, especially of His healing ministry, was getting around.

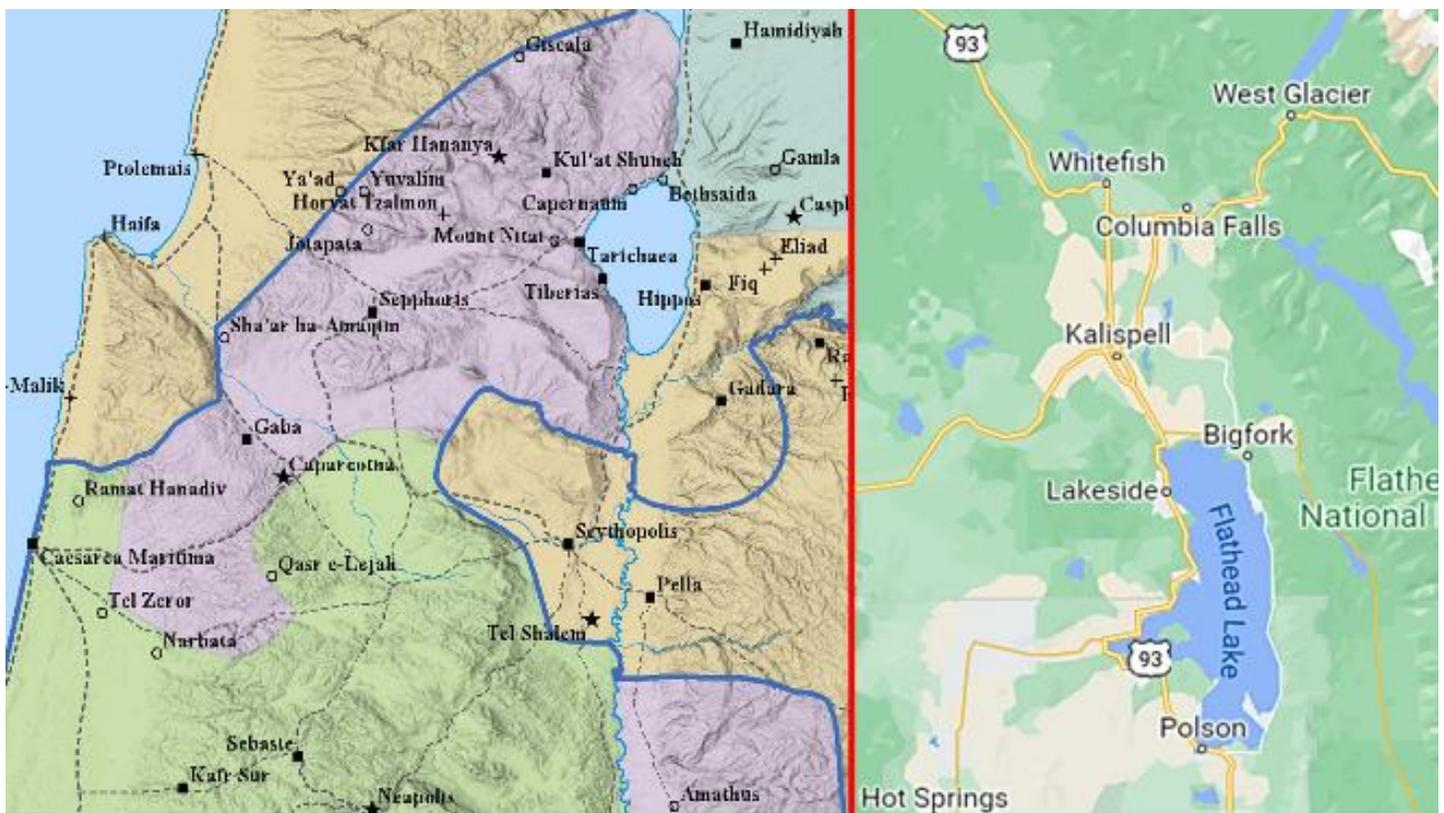
That meant bigger and bigger crowds clamoring for what they personally wanted from Jesus. Whether it was health, wealth, and happiness – give us the gifts on our wish list. Whether it was pure entertainment – put on an amazing show for us with an ever-escalating finale. Whether it was something more seditious – prove to us that you’re our guy to lead us in a coup d’état, an insurrection, a civil war, so that we can make Israel great again.

There was beginning to be more and more of that later sentiment. The people wanted Israel to be great again, but Jesus was never the leader of a physical rebellion. He rebuked the people who arrested Him for coming armed. Pontius Pilate and Herod Antipas both found Jesus to be innocent of the charge of sedition. Why would we think that Jesus would lead a physical revolution today? (Matthew 26:55, Mark 14:48, Luke 23:13-15). Ask yourself, Would the Jesus of the Bible lead a physical insurrection today?

Even so, Jesus was already on the radar of Herod Antipas the ruler of Galilee and Perea as a potential threat to his rule.

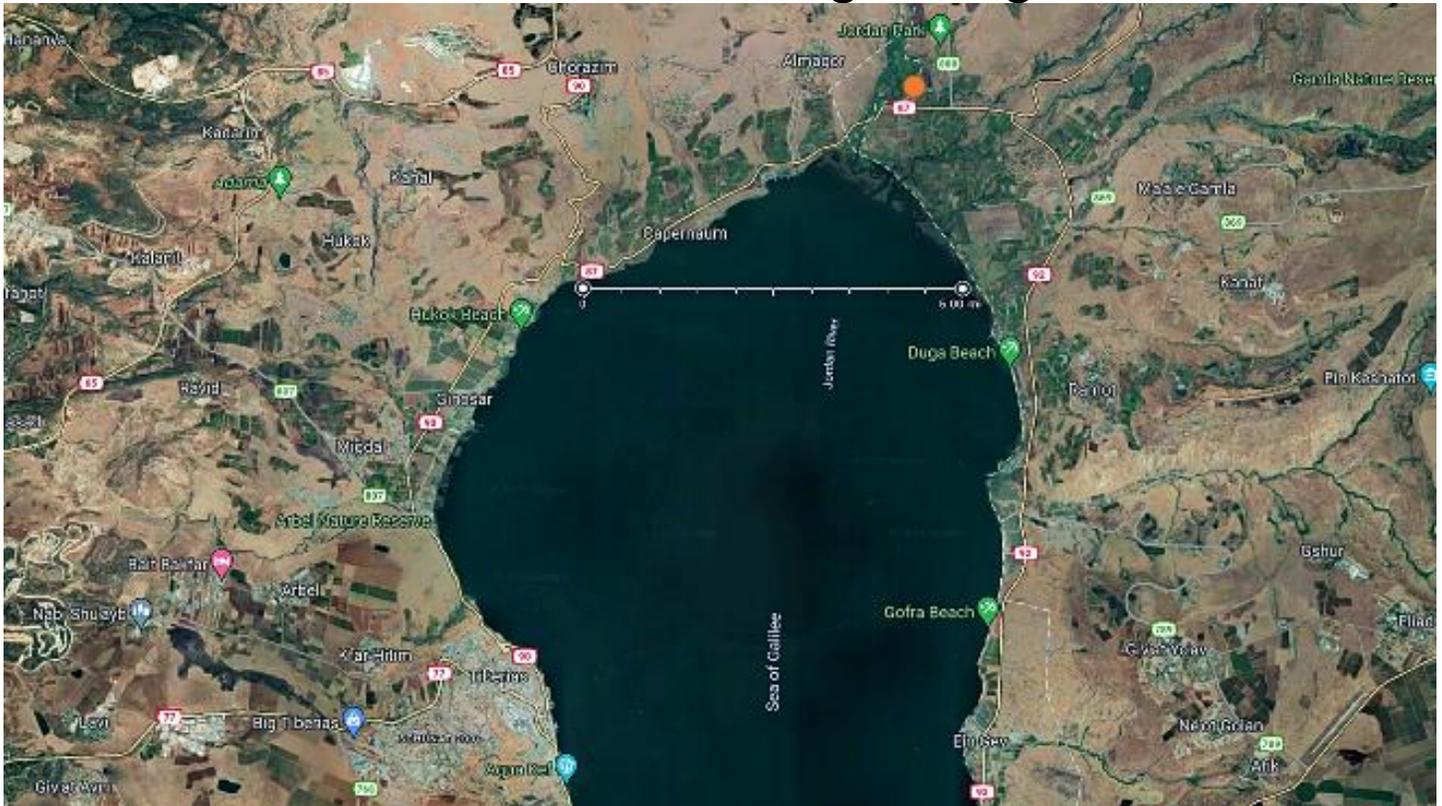
Since “the Passover was near,” we know that it was almost a year since Jesus’ cleansing of the Temple. Much had happened in the interim and Herod was aware. We also know that John was pointing that out for a reason.

Taking the second point, Herod Antipas was down at his winter palace, the fortress Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea.



He and his vast entourage would be making their way to the summer residence in the city of Tiberius just 8 or

9 miles south of Capernaum by road. That's putting the authorities a little close for a burgeoning rebellion.

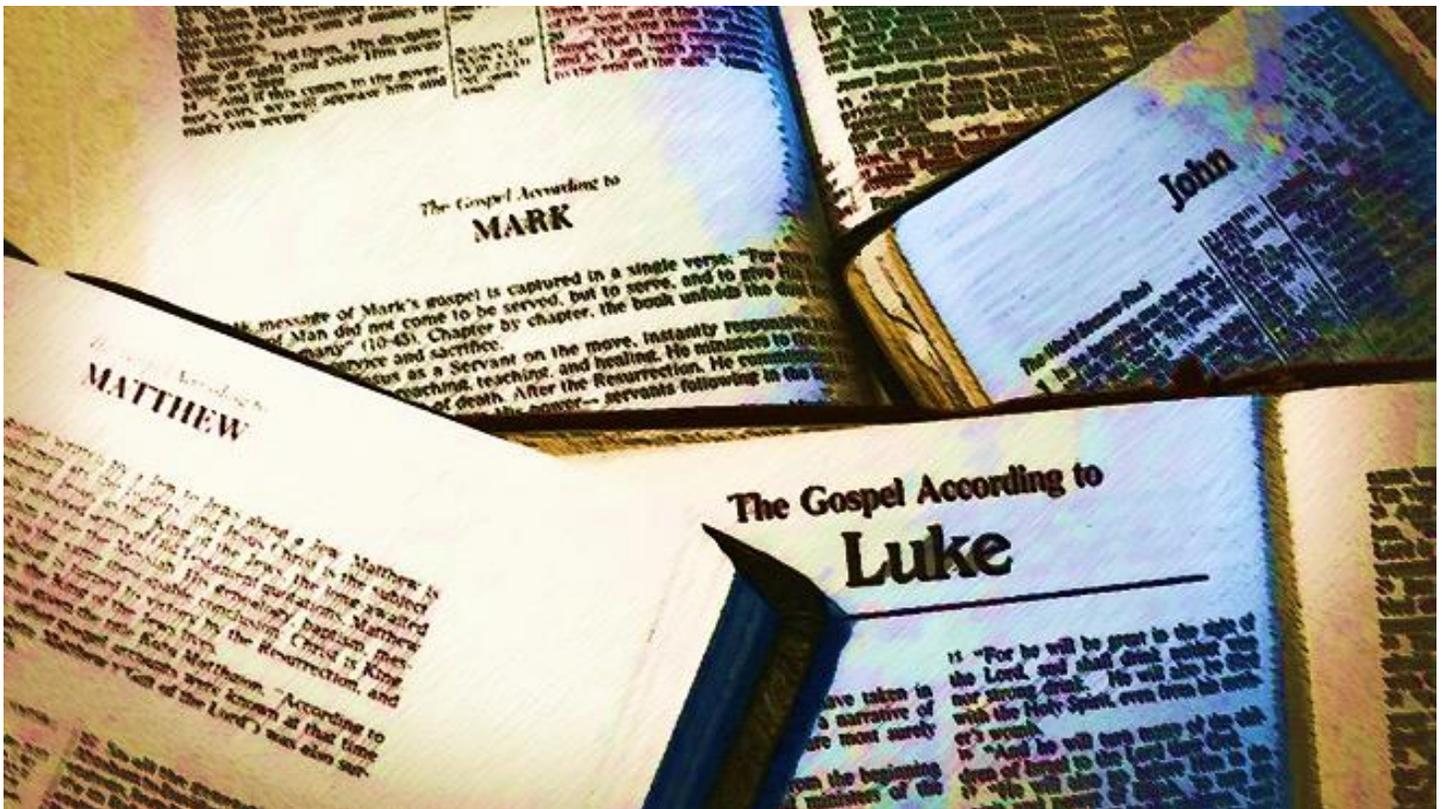


Jesus responded by sailing across the lake to Gaulanitis, the territory of Herod Philip II. The lake in ancient times was called Kinneret. By the time of the Roman occupation, it was eponymously called the Sea of Galilee after the province. In 20 A.D. Herod Antipas finished building a new capital city complete with a majestic summer palace on the western shore of the lake and named both it, and the lake, Tiberius, after his patron, the Emperor of Rome.

John gives us both names because, while he and Jesus knew it as the Sea of Galilee, or even Kinneret, his European readers would have known it as the Sea of Tiberias.



Once on the other side, Jesus went up on a slope overlooking the lake and rested with His Disciples. It didn't take long for the massive crowd to make their way around the northern end of the lake, picking up more people along the way, and locating Jesus.



This is the only miracle of Jesus told in all four Gospels. From those other accounts we get some extra details. This took place right after two major events told in the other Gospels. The first was the beheading of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas at his winter palace. The second was the return of the Disciples after Jesus had sent them out to minister under His authority (Matthew 14, Mark 6, Luke 9). All of that plus the press of the crowds and the return of Antipas to Galilee pushed Jesus to take a break.

It was a short one. When Jesus saw the huge crowd of people who had travelled all the way around the lake,

probably 8 miles by road, Jesus “felt compassion for them” (Matthew 14:14, Mark 6:34), and so He taught them, and He healed those who were ill.



When it got late the issue of food naturally came up – what to do? John highlights the fact that Jesus initiated the discussion, where Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all focus on the conclusion. The Disciples, the 12 Apostles, implied in all four accounts and noted as such specifically in Luke, were all in one accord, they all concluded that Jesus to “send the crowds away” to fend for themselves.



Why mention the Passover here? There are many theories from the plausible to the ridiculous. To answer questions like this, 1) take a step back and ask yourself what is the pericope about – what is God trying to teach us about Jesus, as He relates to us, in this context? 2) Then take the specific question, in this case why bring up the Passover, and ask what about it helps answer the bigger question?

In general, this pericope is about human solutions. More specifically, it is about people, of all stripes, failing to comprehend Jesus. People making assumptions about what He can and can't do, about Who He is and

Who He's not. The Passover was instituted by God in concert with the Tenth Plague on Egypt and the subsequent rush to get out of town and on the road.

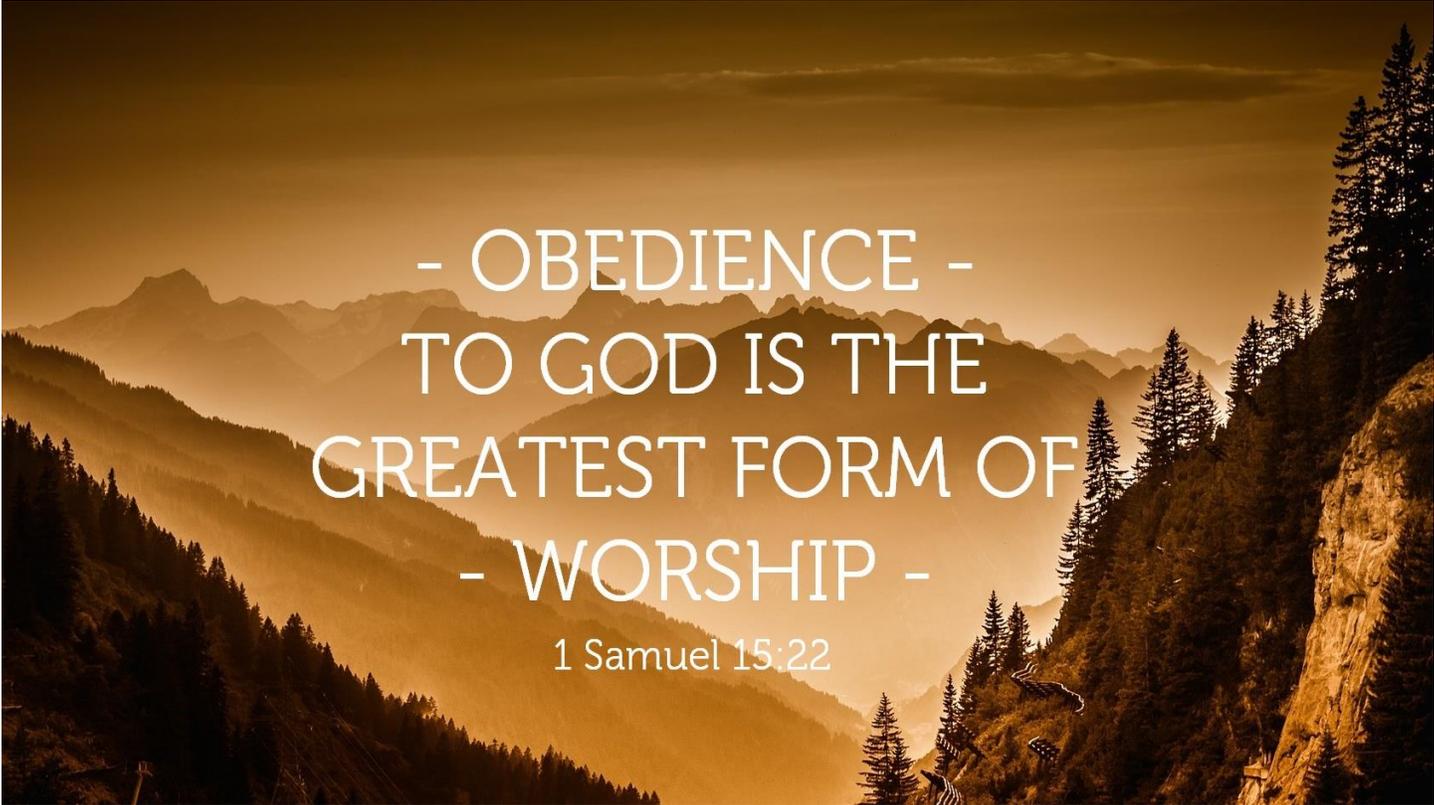
The Passover, more than anything else, points to God's deliverance. Deliverance includes both provision and protection. The immediate protection against the Angel of Death and the long-term provision of deliverance from slavery. It means that God cares.

People think of it as a reminder about the Manna from Heaven given to the Jews while they wandered in the wilderness and tie that to how Jesus is the ultimate Manna from Heaven and the true Bread of Life. They then extrapolate those ideas to Jesus showing the people that He was the Spiritual bread by giving them physical food – fish and bread. They then further extrapolate that to be an image and precursor to the institution of Holy Communion. That's nice and those elements can be seen in the event, but that's not what Passover was about.

Passover was all about the orderly assembling of the people into extended-family groups. It was about trusting in God enough to sacrifice a lamb without

blemish and then painting the doorposts and lintel of your home with the blood. It was about eliminating yeast and eating a special meal of unleavened bread and lamb, all in the sure and certain hope, that Yahweh would Save, because “Salvation belongs to Yahweh” (Psalm 3:8, Revelation 19:1).

What was going on in the feeding of the 5,000 men that agrees with the context, points to Jesus, and properly incorporates the Passover? It must be the broad strokes of God choosing to provide deliverance – salvation – to the people. We should note that many of the people delivered on that first Passover were not God’s people. They proved that to be true, time and time again, but God delivered them along with those who were truly His so long as they obeyed.



- OBEDIENCE -
TO GOD IS THE
GREATEST FORM OF
- WORSHIP -

1 Samuel 15:22

Obedience comes in flavors. There's the compliance out of fear flavor, there's the go along to get along flavor, there's the ever popular, I'll test the waters and minimally obey with reservations and see if I like where it leads flavor. The actual goal of Biblical obedience is the, I whole heartedly trust in Him and will therefore follow wherever He leads flavor.

A lot of people start off with a lesser flavor that ultimately leads them to the pinnacle flavor of pure trust. Obedience out of entire trust is relational. Can you see that? By very definition, trust so great that it results in you being completely obedient is only

possible if you have experienced God's faithfulness over time – that is relational. Relationship between God and you.



*What you seek is
seeking you.*

Oftentimes a person tastes of the goodness of God and is unimpressed. Their obedience never matures to that which is born out of pure trust, frankly because they don't have a relationship with God, or their relationship is too dysfunctional. If you obey God for any reason other than entire trust, your relationship with Him is less than it can be, perhaps less than it needs to be.

The people on the grassy slope 2,000 years ago pursued Jesus for about 8 miles, slogging their way in an ever-growing crush of humanity to get to Him. What's fascinating in this incident, and in all others like them, including the first Passover, is that anytime a person pursues Jesus, obeys Jesus, Jesus provides deliverance to them. Then, in every case, the person reveals their true character, their actual desire, their genuine motivation for seeking Jesus in the first place.

So many people receive deliverance and reject it as undesirable to them because they were looking for something else.

The people who were fed by Jesus, just like the people who were delivered by Him from the Angel of Death and slavery in Egypt, had the chance to be eternally Saved and most of them chose to reject that eternal Salvation because it wasn't what they were seeking. The obvious question, is what or Whom do you seek? When you pursue Jesus and even obey Him, what is it that you're looking for – what is it that you truly desire?



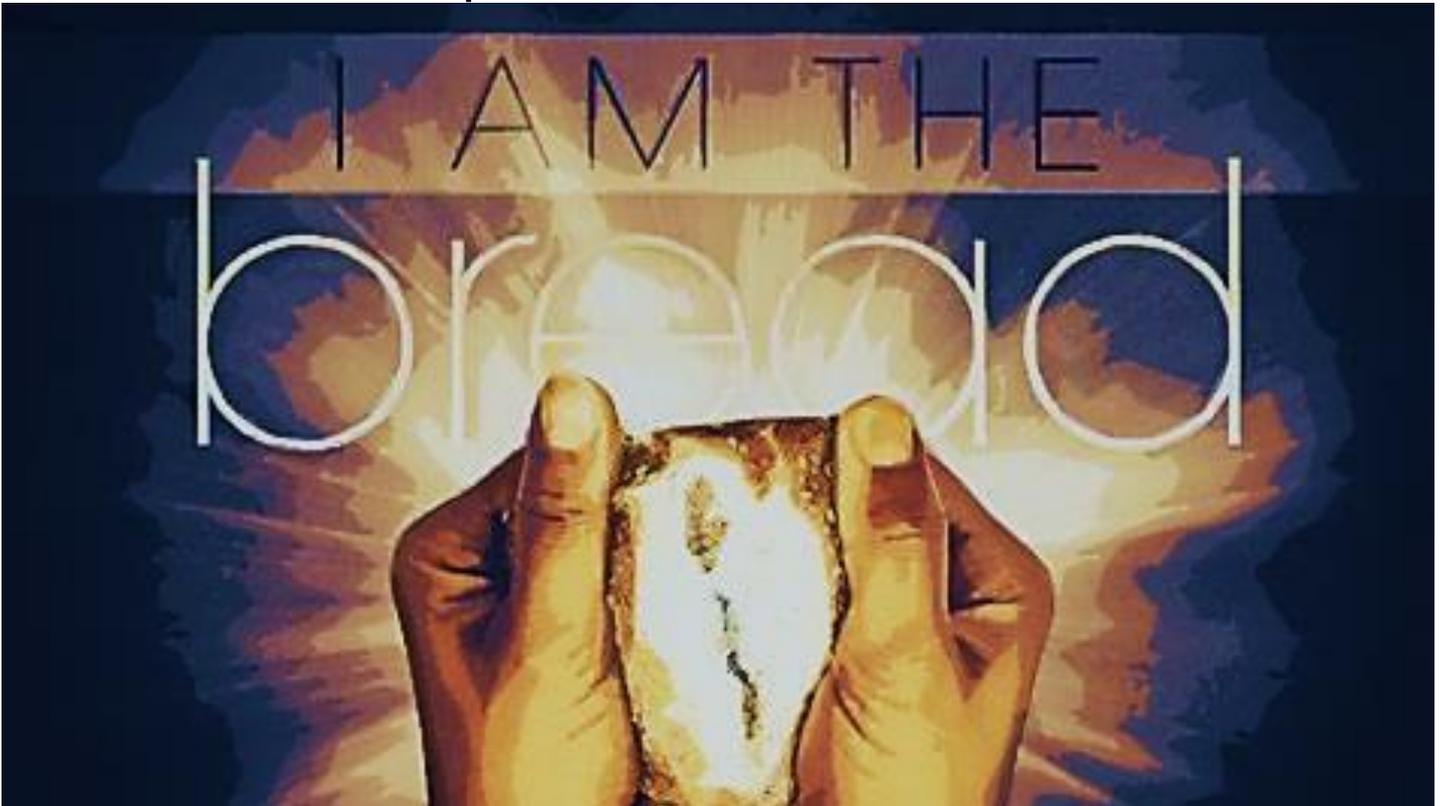
God is the One Who provides. He, and only He, provides us with physical life and everything that sustains it. He, and only He, provides spiritual life and everything that sustains it. In regard to the people God delivered through the Passover, the Bible tells us that for 40 years the Lord God led them and sustained them through many difficulties, challenges, and hardships. In Deuteronomy chapter 8, God, through Moses, told the people that He had done that in order to test them. To see if they would trust Him enough to obey Him when it was challenging to do so. In verse 3 of that chapter, we see that God allowed them to become hungry.

God led them to a place in the wilderness where there was not enough food. In Exodus 16:3 the people grumbled against Moses and Aaron saying, “You have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Why? Specifically, God did it to humble the people with hunger in order to supernaturally provide them with food from heaven – with manna. Okay fine, why? Again, specifically, so that the people would fully comprehend that “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4).

The point was for God’s people to realize that God was the one providing everything all along, regardless of the mechanism of that provision. You think that you are going to eat lunch after church because you have the vittles in the fridge, or the chow in the pantry, or the necessary cash or credit to buy grub in a restaurant. The Jews taking laps around Mount Sinai learned that all their provision was a gift from God whether it was obvious or not. Grabbing a Twinkie, however you are able to do that, is only possible because of God’s benevolence.

Once you recognize that – recognize that even the beating of your heart, and the breath in your lungs, moment, by moment, is the active gift from God, it becomes easier to trust Him with everything and trusting Him with everything enables an obedience that is based solely on that experiential and relational confidence in His provision.



As a minor spoiler alert, I will tell you that the massive crowd of around 10,000 people ate their fill and later on they chased Jesus down again. They were surprised that He beat them Capernaum because they didn't know that He had walked on water to catch up with His

disciples' boat. Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled" (John 6:26). You see the people wanted what they wanted – they wanted their heart's desire and completely missed the significance of the miraculous things that Jesus was doing.

They equated their miraculous meal with supernatural power from God but saw it as confirming that Jesus was Who they wanted Jesus to be, instead of understanding that the miraculous meal was a sign indicating that the God Who provides was walking among them.

Instead of approaching Jesus like a celebrity Who would perform for them again, they should have humbly fallen at His feet and worshipped Him. Then when He told them to rise the only thing on their mind should have been what do You want us to do? They were all about, "Jesus, this is what we want You to do," and not at all about, "Jesus, we are here to pour out our lives as living sacrifices to You – what do you want us to do?"

Nothing has changed my friends. How do you approach Jesus, God with us, the only Lord and Savior of the world?



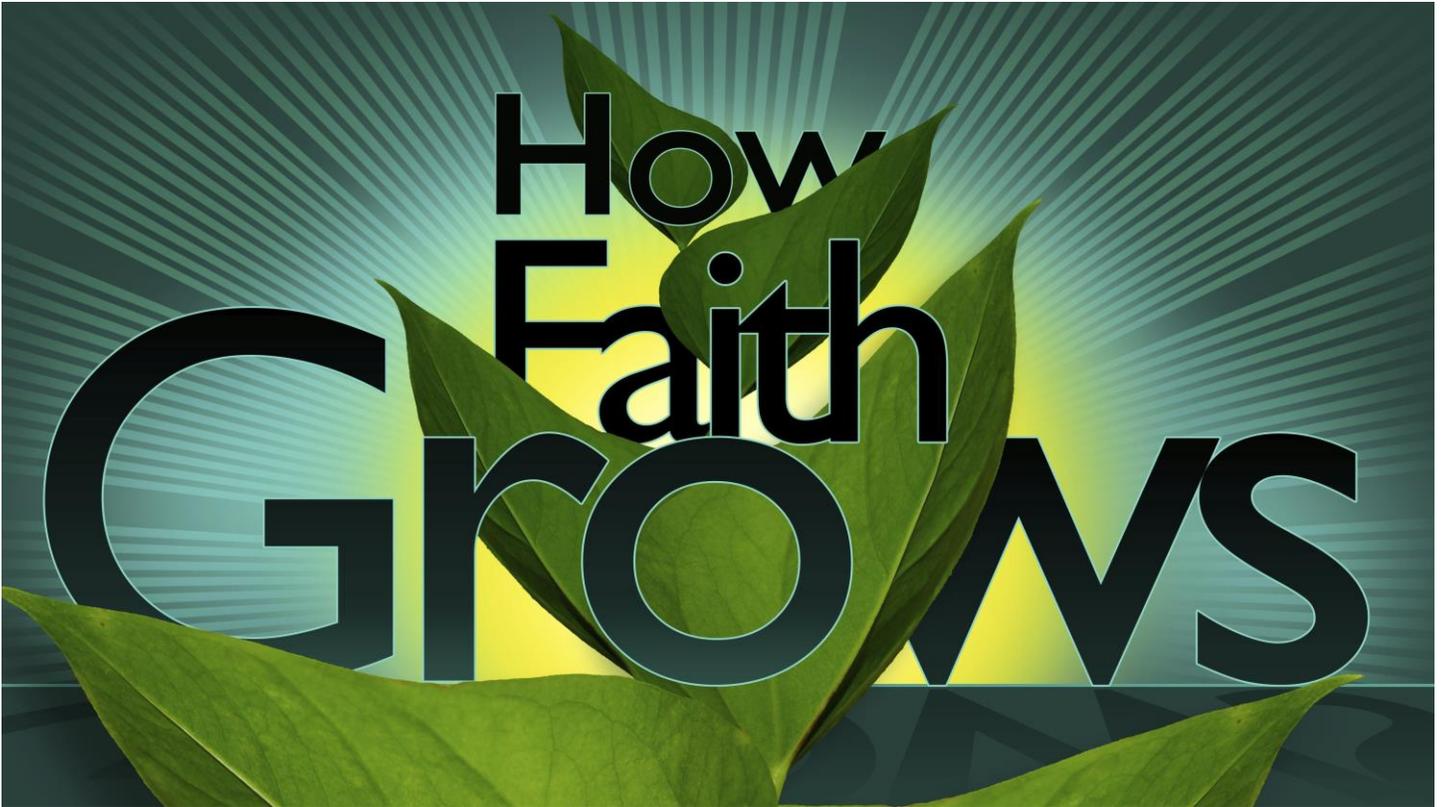
In verse 5 we have a tidbit that is easily overlooked in English. “Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing.” It is strikingly emphatic in the Greek construction and calls attention to the fact that God made man was highly interested in the plight of man. God is concerned about us.

In our modern American Christianity, we tend to make it about us far too much – so much, in fact, that I’m always reluctant to add weight to it. There’s a lyric in a

song that always bugs me. It is, “God, You didn’t want Heaven without us.” I allow it here, because it is actually true, but I always cringe, because it plays right into the heresy that it’s all about us.

Anyway, bottom line, the God who literally speaks galaxies into existence and actively holds the subatomic particles of your body together, is deeply interested in you. God is Love and He really does love you. Now, before your head gets too big, He loves you because He is Love, not because you are so lovable.

Let’s keep that straight, while also acknowledging that Jesus felt compassion and “lifted up His eyes to see” the people in need. Nothing has changed my friends. Don’t you know that Jesus sees you?



Well, Jesus used the situation as an opportunity to test His disciples in order to grow their understanding, and so, their faith. He asked Philip. Why poor Philip? There may be reasons that were not revealed, but the obvious reason was that Philip grew up in the area and would have known better than any of them where to get food. Luke tells us that they were very close to Philip's hometown of Bethsaida.

Philip's answer was entirely human and exclusively physical. What should he have said? How about, "Lord, You know all things, and through You all things have come into being, and through You all things are

sustained. I believe that You can do anything – that there is nothing too difficult for You. Call down manna from Heaven, supernaturally satisfy everyone’s need, turn these stones into bread, fill our purse with money and I’ll go buy the necessary food. Whatever You choose to do, give me the faith to understand how it points to Your divinity and give me the strength do whatever You ask.”

The purpose of this entire pericope can be summed up by saying that God is hoping we answer Jesus’ question the way Philip should have answered it. In other words, how do you answer when you are in a tough spot and Jesus asks you “How should we handle this one?”



Andrew interjected. It makes sense because Andrew and his brother Peter were also from Bethsaida. It's conceivable that Andrew knew the young dude with some extra food.

While Andrew seemingly presents this as a solution, he is actually using the small quantity to affirm Philip's take on the situation. He said, "But what are these for so many people?"

We know from this and the other accounts that all the disciples settled on the idea, as I noted at the outset, that Jesus should dismiss the crowd and let them

figure it out on their own. Within that, there is a rebuke for Jesus.

See that? Don't we do that as well? Don't we see a challenging situation and make a physical assumption about it and then doubt that the Lord can do anything about it? In doing so aren't we denying both His willingness and His power?

Instead of taking the census option, Jesus ordered His guys to organize the people into groups and prepare them to eat a meal. I sincerely doubt that there was instant obedience to His command. I'm fairly sure that the disciples were perplexed as to how this was going to turn out.

They complied. Jesus took the two very small salted dried out fish – basically two pieces of fish jerky, along with the five extremely small barley loaves – more like biscuits really, and He gave thanks.

Think about the scene. The word for fish means a small fish – about the size of a local sunfish, or small perch. Barley was the cheapest type of bread. Philo Judaeus describes barley cakes as being “a foodstuff

of somewhat doubtful merit, suited for irrational animals and men in unhappy circumstances.”

The “lad” was either a young boy, or more likely a slave. The term can be used for either. It’s more probable that someone sent their slave out into the crowd to sell the snacks. Jesus probably paid him for the fish and biscuits. This was the food that God provided for the group of “about 5,000 men,” and so reasonably 10,000 or so men, women, and children. Before you get on your high horse about only the men being mentioned by number, I’ll explain the reason in a bit.

Jesus thanked the Father for the food. Remember that Jews understood that all provision was a gift from God? Well, the Blessing before the meal was never a blessing of the food, nor of the hands that prepared the food, nor even of the people eating the food. The Jewish blessing before eating and drinking is a blessing of God for being so gracious. That’s why it’s called “saying grace.”



Every one of the 10,000 or so people ate their fill, and the leftovers were easily 100 times more than the original food they started with. Many people try to explain this great miraculous sign in less supernatural terms, but it is a fool's errand. You cannot fill 12 baskets with the actual leftovers of two fish and five little cakes.

Why 12 baskets? It has nothing to do with the 12 Tribes of Israel directly, it is simple math. 12 disciples, specifically mentioned as such in Luke's account, doubted and even lightly rebuked Jesus. Now, each

one of them will carry the evidence of the sign pointing to the One and Only Anointed Son of God.

Seemingly, the people get it. “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” That is a reference to Deuteronomy 18:18, where God said to Moses, “I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.” God delivered the Jews from Egyptian slavery through the Prophet Moses and the implication for the Jews with Jesus 2,000 years ago was that God would deliver the Jews from Roman occupation through the Prophet like Moses. Well, to them, Jesus just proved to be that guy.



What's next then? "Come and take Him by force to make Him king." That's why 5,000 men. It's an army of potential warriors ready to follow Jesus in an insurrection. They missed God's compassion and His hospitality. They missed the sign that pointed to Who Jesus was. They assumed Jesus was there to be Who they wanted Him to be, and they would make Him be that person even if they had to do it against His Will.



Do we ever do that to Jesus?