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John 6:1 - 6:21



Gospel of John - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg explains the events of John 6:1-21, where Jesus performs the miracle of feeding the 5,000 with only two loaves of bread and two fish. Gregg notes that this miracle took place after a discourse where Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and that the crowd's expectations of Jesus as the messiah were at their peak. He also describes the historical context of the zealot movement and its relationship to messianic expectations, which likely influenced the crowd's responses to Jesus. Finally, Gregg points out how the surplus of food left over after the miracle served as evidence to the crowd that Jesus was indeed a prophetic figure.

Transcript

When we come to chapter 6, it's going to be a little bit like chapter 5 was, in that it begins with the record of a miracle of Jesus, followed by a long discourse. And, of course, John is different than the Synoptic Gospels in this respect, that he wants to focus more on what Jesus said about theological issues, than really focusing on the specific, well, at least not a very extensive catalog of Jesus' activities. Also, the teachings of Jesus and John are different than those in the Synoptics, in that the Synoptic Gospels record mainly his moral teachings in parables.

Moral teachings and parables. That's kind of two different things you find in the Synoptics. He taught about the kingdom of God in parables, and he taught, of course, in places like the Sermon on the Mount, about how to be righteous, how to live morally.

You don't really have that kind of teaching in the Gospel of John. The record of Jesus' sermons in John don't contain any parables, unless one would take the Good Shepherd or the Vine as a parable. But they're not really, strictly speaking, parables, because they start with, I am the.

And the parables of Jesus in the other Gospels are always, a certain man did this, a certain person did that, more generic. So he doesn't have any of his normal types of parables here. In chapter 5, there might have been something like a short bit of a parable in what we call the parable of the apprentice's son.

We said the son doesn't know how to do anything except what he sees his father do, and so forth. That is kind of a parable. It runs for about a verse and a half, and then he makes an application.

So it's a very different style of teaching here in John. And the discourses are long and theological in John. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the discourses are not usually long, and when they are, they're not usually very theological.

They're usually, as I said, moral teaching, practical teaching. So John has filled in gaps that the other Gospels have left out. But one thing that John has included that the other Gospels include is the story of the feeding of the 5,000, and that's what we encounter here at the beginning of chapter 6. It is the only miracle that is recorded in all four Gospels.

And that's really amazing, since John was present at almost all the miracles recorded in the other Gospels, and yet he recorded very few of the miracles in general, and only one of the miracles that the other Gospels recorded, which basically sort of proves our point that John was not trying to duplicate, but rather to supplement what the other Gospels had already given us. But one thing he does is tell us what the other Gospels do not. They all tell us about the feeding of the 5,000, but none of the others tell us about the discourse that arose the next day and what some people have called the collapse of his Galilean campaign.

Now John has told us very little about the Galilean campaign up to this point. The Synoptic Gospels are almost entirely about the miracles and travels and teachings and conflicts that Jesus experienced in Galilee during what's called his Galilean ministry. John has said almost nothing about it.

About the Galilean ministry. Not that he has ignored it. In chapter 4 he mentioned that Jesus went to Galilee, and that was the beginning, in fact, of the Galilean ministry, though as far as details go he only told us of one miracle there, and that was the healing of the nobleman's son.

And then he's got Jesus going back to Jerusalem immediately in chapter 5 for a feast. And everything we've seen so far that Jesus has done in John's record has been in Judea, except for the turning of water into wine in chapter 2 and the healing of the nobleman's son at the end of chapter 4. John has ignored all of the activity of Jesus in Galilee, which was the entire focus of the other Gospels. But when he comes to this particular story of the feeding of the 5,000, it is apparently important enough theologically for John to include it, even though the other Gospels have already included it.

He almost deliberately avoids duplicating what the other Gospels include. But we do have here the feeding of the 5,000, and we might add as part of the same story the walking on the water. That is, of course, another miracle that is included in some of the

other Gospels, not all.

So why then does he break his normal procedure and duplicate what the other Gospels have said? Clearly we would have to say it is because he could not bring himself to leave this out. It must have been significant enough, and no doubt primarily because of this sermon that it occasioned the next day, which he spends more time presenting than he spends presenting the miracle itself. But just as there was a miracle at the beginning of John 5, which gave rise to a talk, a monologue that Jesus gave about his relationship with his father, so now there is a miracle that gives rise to another important theological monologue.

It says, After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And by the way, it is called by both terms. It is also called by others.

There are a variety of names by which this body of water is called. In most of the Gospels we have it called the Sea of Galilee. Here he calls it also the Sea of Tiberias.

There are other names as well. Tiberias was the name of one of the Caesars, and a city had been built on the west shore of this lake and called Tiberias after the Caesar. And so sometimes the sea was called the Sea of Tiberias.

Then a great multitude followed him because they saw his signs which he performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now he has crossed over the Sea of Galilee to the eastern shore in the northern region in the area of Bethsaida, which was the hometown of Philip and Nathanael.

We are told that in chapter 1. And this is the area that we today would call the Golan Heights. We all have heard the term the Golan Heights, even if we are not very familiar with the geography over there because the Golan Heights are often in the news because of disputes over who really should control them. But that is where Jesus was.

He was in control of them at this point. And there was a great multitude following him who were willing to give him control of the whole country. As we shall find by verse 15, they are ready to take him by force and make him king, which was something he was not open to.

And we might speculate without much risk of being mistaken that the crowds already had something like this in mind even before this particular miracle. I mean this great multitude that followed him had expectations that the Messiah was going to come soon and that he would deliver the people of Israel from the oppressor, Rome. But how so many people got gathered in one place at one time is not made very clear.

It says they gathered because they saw the signs that he performed on those who were diseased. In other words, they saw healings. And he had been doing that throughout

Galilee for some months prior to this.

We just have not had record of it in John's gospel. But we have record of it in the other gospels. And so there was a lot of miracles of various kinds Jesus had done in Galilee and therefore had a lot of popular appeal.

But in Mark's gospel it tells us that this particular miracle happened on the heels of an outreach where he had sent his 12 out two by two to various villages and gave them authority to cast out demons and heal the sick and even raise the dead. And they had gone out on that outreach and done those things. And when they returned, he said, well, let's go apart for a while away from the crowds.

And that's what they were endeavoring to do when he crossed the Sea of Galilee on this occasion to get away from the crowds. Obviously he did not succeed. But the crowds were somewhat inflated perhaps by the fact that the disciples had just been out in all the villages doing these miracles and preaching the kingdom of God and the people's expectations were up, this is the kingdom of God is coming, the Messiah must be around the corner, maybe he's here.

And they'd heard about Jesus' miracles, they saw the miracles of the disciples, it looked like something exciting was happening. And so because of the disciples having been to all these villages and preached there just in the immediate precedent to this, there were lots of crowds that come out of these villages to hear and see Jesus. And as I said, we should not be surprised if they already were considering that this movement which had so much power was that of the Messiah and that this was the king that Moses and the prophets had spoken of.

This was of course the view of the disciples already. In fact, it was the view of Philip, or I should say of Andrew, when he first met Jesus. He went and found his brother, Simon Peter, and said, you know, we found him of whom Moses and the prophets spoke, Jesus the Messiah.

So it didn't take the disciples most of them long to reach the conclusion that Jesus was the Messiah and that's no doubt how these people were thinking. But the disciples and the crowds all were very much unaware of what the actual mission of the Messiah would be. They had their own ideas.

And for the most part, they thought he'd be another David, another conquering general, who would, like the judges of the past, or like David in his time, would leave Israel to victory against those Gentiles who had been oppressing them for so long. And the Jewish people could certainly, you know, appreciate that prospect. They definitely were eager to see themselves being independent people again.

They had never really been independent since the Babylonian exile. Although they did

return from the Babylonian exile, they did so as vassals of the Persian monarch. And then when Persia fell to the Greeks, they were under the Greek control.

And when the Greek kingdom divided, they became sort of a tennis ball batted back and forth between the powers of Egypt and Syria to the south and north of them, respectively. They were always under one or the other of these foreign powers. Then came the Romans and conquered the region.

There was only a very short period of time in there where the Jews actually had some independence. And that was after the Maccabean revolt. They overthrew the Syrian power.

But they never really established their own monarchy, not legitimately. They had some priests who forced themselves into political power. But it was a mess, and there were intrigues and assassinations and things like that.

And there was this temporarily independence they had just from the time of the Maccabean revolt until the coming of the Romans from about 168 B.C. to about 70 B.C. And then the Romans came in, and so the Jews were strictly under the heel of Gentile power again, as they were when Jesus came. They were getting sick of it. It had been about almost 600 years since they'd had a truly independent state under a Jewish monarch.

And that's what they wanted. That's what the Messiah was supposed to be. And they were certainly thinking, this is now a good time for the Messiah to be here.

And this man is a good candidate. But they were hoping that he might mobilize an army, and certainly 5,000 men. And this is what really appeared here on this occasion, 5,000 men.

And Matthew's parallel says not counting women and children. And, of course, if you add to the number of men probably an equal number of women and probably some children in the crowd too, maybe as many as men, maybe as many as adults, there could have been 15,000 to 20,000 or more people in this crowd, a very large multitude. And one that would have promise.

If a man wished to start a popular revolt against Rome, he had a pretty good seed crowd here. And that's exactly what the people, by the end of the story, wanted to happen. Now, Jesus, on the other hand, had crossed the lake to avoid the crowds.

When the disciples had come back from their outreach, he felt it was time for them to have a little bit of rest. And he wanted some time alone with his friends. So they crossed the sea, but the people actually saw where he was going.

It doesn't say so here, but the synoptics tell us that the people saw him and his disciples

take off in the boat and made mental calculations of what direction they were going and where they're likely to land. So they went around the northern end of the sea, or the lake, and came around and got there before the boat did. So that when Jesus got there, he saw the multitudes, although that's exactly what he's trying to avoid.

But it says in Matthew that when he saw them, he had compassion on them. Instead of saying, you know, why don't you guys just leave me alone for a little while? That's why I'm looking for some R&R, some peace and quiet. Instead, he sees their hunger, he sees their need, and it says in Matthew that he had compassion on them because he saw them as sheep lacking a shepherd.

And so he taught them and healed them. That's what was going on. Not all of that is recorded in John, but that's filling in the gaps here.

Here we simply read that he went up on a high mountain and he sat with his disciples, and it was now the Passover, a feast of the Jews was near. It would appear this Passover, Jesus might not have gone to Jerusalem. The Jewish men were supposed to go to Jerusalem for the Passover and Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles, but apparently it became considered to be more or less optional, probably from the time of the Babylonian exile on, because once the temple was destroyed in 586 BC and the Jews were in Babylon for 70 years, obviously they had broken the habit of going three times a year to Jerusalem.

They didn't have that option. And then once the remnant came back, most of the Jews were still in exile. And many of them made the trip as often as they could to Jerusalem for the festivals, but they obviously couldn't be expected.

Working people with jobs and families couldn't travel across the Mediterranean from Rome three times a year. I mean, some people fly that often or more, but you couldn't really do that and maintain a life if you lived across the continent. And so it was more or less optional these days for Jews to go to Jerusalem.

But people who lived in Palestine usually would do it unless they were impious. Jesus, we read of going to Jerusalem at least two Passovers that are on record. The first one in chapter 2 and the last one was the one in which he died.

But even then, that last Passover before Jesus appeared publicly, the people in Jerusalem said, what do you think? Do you think he'll come to the Passover? Like it wasn't necessarily the case that he would. In fact, his own brothers on that occasion in John chapter 7 urged Jesus to go to the feast. And he indicated he wasn't necessarily going to go up right then and gave the impression to them that he might not go at all.

Here it was Passover, but he's quite far from Jerusalem and we don't have any record that he went shortly after this to Jerusalem. So what telling us that it's Passover simply

tells us it's springtime, March or April. And that is just a detail that John remembers from being an eyewitness.

This story is full of eyewitness details, some of which are not found in the other Gospels. For example, he's going to make reference to the abundance of green grass in the area. Well, they were in the wilderness, but that time of year it was not desert like.

In springtime it had a lot of green grass. Just a month or two later it would be all dry. But there are these little touches of detail that would be the reminiscences of someone who was there and could still remember the lush green grass in the area.

Something not necessary to the story, but just something someone who was there might recall. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and seeing the great multitude coming toward him, he said to Philip, where shall we buy bread that these may eat? Now the Synoptic Gospels tell us that the disciples came to Jesus. And there's much more detail there because they say the reason this came up it tells us in Mark that the people had been listening to Jesus teach all day.

There's no mention of that here. It just tells us that Jesus looked up and decided to feed them. But they had actually been with him all day.

He'd been teaching them and they'd been being healed of sicknesses, but they apparently had not brought food with them. And Jesus didn't have enough to feed them. And the disciples came to Jesus and said, send these people away so that they can go get food.

And the Synoptic tells us that Jesus turned back to the disciples and said, you give them something to eat. And then we have the response that is here attributed to Andrew saying, well, it would take 200 denarii to feed all these people, even a little bit. Now, this actually reads a little differently, the sequence.

The other Gospels have Jesus coming to, the disciples coming to Jesus to suggest that he should send them away to get food. Here we have Jesus sort of initiating the suggestion to Philip. Where are we going to get food for these people? Now, this is not a contradiction.

We could see easily that both of these things could have been part of the conversation. At one point, the disciples figure it's late. We haven't had any time alone.

These people haven't eaten. It's a good time to close the meeting. Let the people go home and eat.

Send them away. And they might well have come to Jesus about that initially. And in response to that suggestion, he could have just turned to Philip and said, where can we get food? After all, they were near Bethsaida.

That was his hometown, Philip's hometown. What restaurants are good around here? Where do you buy food around here for multitudes? And yet he didn't really expect an answer. It says that he said this to test Philip because he himself knew what he would do.

So Jesus already had a plan to feed these people, and he knew how it was going to be done. But he was testing Philip's faith. And probably Philip should have said what Ezekiel said when he saw the valley of dry bones, and the angel said to him, can these bones live? Well, the truth is it didn't look much like they could, but the question begins to raise the possibility.

Well, I don't want to say no, and it doesn't look like it could say yes, and so what did Ezekiel say? Sir, you know. And likewise, John, when he was caught up in Revelation chapter 7, he saw this great multitude with the palm branches. One of the elders said, who are these people here? And John said, sir, you know.

And that's probably what Philip should have said. Lord, you know. Instead, Philip indicated that it wasn't possible, which was probably failing the test.

We're told that Jesus was testing him, but he essentially did not believe it could be done. Philip said, 200 denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have even a little. Now, this statement is attributed to the disciples in general, in the other Gospels.

Here we're told it was Philip that made the statement, so that again, it's another eyewitness detail. John remembers this conversation and with which of the disciples it was initiated. Now, 200 denarii, how much money is that? Back in the King James days in 1611, they translated a penny, 200 penny worth.

But obviously with inflation and so forth, the word penny, first of all, is very inadequate to express the amount of money that this was talking about. And no matter what amount would be translated now, it would change with inflation. So the translators would do well to simply leave it untranslated, 200 denarii.

One thing we do know is that in the parable that Jesus told of the workers in the vineyard, each one was paid a denarius for a day's labor. And that apparently was the standard wage for a day laborer. So one denarius would be a day's wage, not for the rich people, but for the working class.

I don't know what a day's wage would be now for the poorer sorts of people, I guess whatever minimum wage is. Of course, we don't have as long days either. But I suppose, what does a minimum wage worker, what's minimum wage now, 7 bucks, 8 bucks, 8.50? So 8 bucks for an 8-hour day, you know, 60-something dollars.

That'd probably be sort of the equivalent of a denarius in that time. And 200 of them

would be about 8 months worth. So Philip was saying, and he did these mental calculations rather quickly, and he probably underestimated, because 200 denarii would be only the wages, a day's wages for 200 people.

There were 5,000 plus women and children there. So it's probable they really couldn't even buy enough for all the people, even to have a little, as he said, for the amount he suggested. But it sounded like a lot of money to him, and they obviously didn't have the money.

He didn't say there's nowhere around here where you could buy that much food, but that might have been true also. Philip was probably thinking more in terms of what it would cost them if they took on that responsibility. He said, we couldn't even give everyone more than just a little bit of food, even if we had 8 months' worth of wages to spend on it, which, of course, they did not.

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, there is a lad here who has 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish, but what are they among so many? Now, the fact that there are 5 loaves and 2 fishes is mentioned in the other Gospels too, but there's details here that aren't in the other Gospels. John alone tells us that it was Andrew that discovered this cache of food, and it's only John that tells us that it was a young boy who had brought the food. In the other Gospels, it just says, we have here 5 loaves and 2 fishes, but only here we read that they're stealing a kid's lunch.

Actually, he must have volunteered it. So Andrew says, someone's come up with a little food here, but it really isn't much. You can't really do much with it.

5 loaves and 2 fishes. And fishes, these are not the kind of fish that would make an entree. These are more like sardines.

In fact, the other Gospels for fish use the word ichthus, which may be a word you may be familiar with from the little fish stickers that we put on bumpers and things like that. The Greek letters in there spell ichthus. Ichthus literally means a little fish in Greek.

And John uses a different word that's more specific. He actually uses the word for a certain species of fish, which is like a little tiny fish that you would dip in some kind of sauce and eat it. Sort of like sardine size.

So they had 2 little tiny fish. And the loaves they had were not like our loaves of bread. They were like muffin size.

They were like rolls. Barley. Cheap barley rolls.

And so they had 5 of those and 2 little fish. And so Andrew says, well, this is all we've been able to come up with. Now, I don't know how he came up with it.

I don't know if he put out sort of an appeal that we don't read about asking anyone to have any food here and only the boy volunteered. But somehow Andrew knew what the limits were of what the resources were on hand and he said that's just not going to be enough for what we need. We have too many people.

Then Jesus said, make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down in number about 5,000.

And Jesus took the loaves and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to the disciples. And the disciples to those sitting down. And likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

Now, it doesn't say, I mean, we have this mental picture of how this happened, although it's really hard to picture how it happened. All it says, he took the food and he distributed it to the people. In some of the gospels, it talks about how he broke them.

And we have to almost imagine that as he broke the food, the pieces that he broke, the halves were as big as the original, so he was able to do it, so the food multiplied. We're not really told how he multiplied the food or what this would have looked like to anyone watching. That movie that came out with the Gospel of John, I was interested to see how they portrayed it.

And they brought him this basket with these fish and bread in it. And he holds it up and he turns around and comes back around and he's got a basket full of bread. And it just shows him supplying baskets.

But really, that's all the Gospel of John tells us. All it says is he distributed the food. It doesn't really say anything.

It doesn't even say he performed a miracle. It just says he distributed the food, the five loaves and the two fishes. But of course, we recognize this as a miracle of multiplication because, as Andrew said quite correctly, you could not even begin to feed the number of people with that amount of food unless it was increased.

Now, there are people who are always trying to find naturalistic explanations of the miracles of Jesus. I don't know if you're aware of that. There are theologians who are of a more naturalistic mindset who actually don't even believe in miracles and therefore they, assuming that these stories did have some kind of historical basis, try to explain how they could have happened without there being any genuine miracle.

And so what they often will say is that all these people who had come to hear Jesus speak had brought their food with them but they realized there were a lot of other people around them who might want their food if they pulled it out. So they were hiding it. They were hiding their lunch under their robes.

And so nobody was eating and everyone appeared to be without food because no one wanted to bring out their food unless someone else would want some of it. They didn't want to share. And then when they saw this young boy surrender his whole lunch, it just inspired them and they all started pulling through.

Well, if he could do it, I guess I can do it. So they started pulling out their food and suddenly there was enough food for everybody. Now, that would be moving.

That would be inspiring. That would be wonderful, but it wouldn't be what's described. This says that Jesus distributed the food.

It does not say that people got out their food and started sharing it with each other. Furthermore, it will say that the people saw this as a miracle. And while we might figuratively say it's a miracle when stingy people become generous, it's not the kind of miracle that causes the reaction that these people had to Jesus.

Furthermore, it would be the little boy's generosity, not Jesus, that inspired the miracle, so to speak. So Jesus wouldn't really have any reason to get any credit for what was done. Everyone should be honoring the little boy.

You have cured us of our selfishness and our stinginess. Anyway, nothing about the telling of the story really fits that scenario. Although a story like that could happen, it's not the story that's here described.

And so they ate as much as they wanted. So when they were filled, he said to his disciples, gather up the fragments that remain so that nothing is lost. So when they started out, they didn't have enough for everybody, but then everybody ate as much as they want and were filled.

And then they said, well, there's some extra left over. Let's go gather it up so we don't waste anything. Now you might think if there's ever any food that would be no tragedy to waste, it'd be food that came so freely.

If you work hard for your food and you've paid money for it, you'd say, I don't want to waste any of this because that's my hard-earned food. But this is food that kind of came supernaturally without anyone working except Jesus distributing. It was free food.

So who cares if it just gets left out and wasted? Well, Jesus cared. He was a good economist. He didn't want to take miracles for granted, even.

Food is important stuff. There's people starving. We don't want to waste it.

And so they gathered it up, and that was important because it gave evidence of how much surplus there was. And it just so happened to be there were 12 baskets full of what they gathered. Therefore, they gathered them and filled 12 baskets with fragments of

the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.

Perhaps no fish were left over. But the 12 baskets, the number 12, certainly is suggestive, either that it meant that each of the disciples got a large lunch as well after they were done distributing to the others. You know, that is a possible meaning that we're supposed to take from this, that the disciples were not able to eat first.

They were busy serving. Jesus took the food, gave it to his disciples, and they gave it to the people. Well, I've been on an airplane before where a couple of flight attendants are serving, you know, 150 people.

And I wonder, it looks like a lot of work to them, but I see afterwards they're in the back, they're having their food later, but they have to wait until they've served everybody else. If it was 5,000 people, 5,000 men plus women and children, that's a big catering job. And 12 guys doing it all themselves, they were probably pretty exhausted.

They probably hadn't had time to eat themselves as they were passing out food and making sure everyone had some. So after they had been served, they got a whole basket each for themselves, and that's their reward. But they had to serve others before they got to eat themselves.

And it says, Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did... Now, this is said to be something Jesus did, not something the little boy did. The people were not inspired by the little boy's generosity, they were inspired by what Jesus did. And it was one of the signs, the same word that's used throughout the Gospel of John for the miracles that Jesus did.

They said, This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world. Now, the prophet who is to come into the world we've already seen has been mentioned back in chapter 1 when the delegation from the Pharisees came from Jerusalem to question John the Baptist, their first question was, Are you the Messiah? And he said no. And they said, Are you Elijah? And he said no.

And then they said, Are you the prophet? And they meant the same thing that these people mean. When they say the prophet, who was to come into the world? Obviously a reference to Moses' prediction in Deuteronomy 18, that God would raise up another prophet like Moses. And you know the book of Deuteronomy closes.

After telling of Moses' death, it says, Since then there has arisen no prophet like unto Moses. So, Deuteronomy leaves the reader, in fact the whole book of the law, the whole Torah, closes with a statement of an unfulfilled promise. Deuteronomy 18 says, God will raise up a prophet like unto Moses.

And he says, To him shall all you people hearken. And anyone who does not, I will require it of him. Or as it says in the Septuagint, Whoever does not listen to the words of

that prophet, shall be cut off from the people.

That's how it's quoted by Peter in Acts chapter 3, quoting the Septuagint. So this prophet that would come, that Moses predicted, was one that would be absolutely mandatory for the people to listen to. If they did not, they'd be cut off from the people.

That means if a Jewish person did not follow this prophet, he would no longer be part of Israel. He'd be cut off from the people. Therefore, after the coming of that prophet, Israel would be defined by those who are following that prophet.

Because anyone who didn't, would be cut off from Israel, even if they were Jewish by birth. So Israel suddenly becomes redefined by the coming of that prophet, to mean those who follow this prophet. Right? So, Deuteronomy contains that prediction and then closes in its final words with the statement, since Moses has died, there has arisen no prophet like unto Moses.

And, so the book of the Torah, the five books of Moses, they close with this statement of deficiency, this statement of something that's expected that has not yet arrived. And so the Jews looked for this prophet. Now we know from what the New Testament teaches us that that prophet is the same person as the Messiah, because Jesus is that prophet and Jesus is the Messiah.

The rabbis didn't necessarily equate the two. Now in the popular mind, the average Jew might have, because the rabbis had a lot of different ideas about Messiah, but many of them had distinctive roles for the prophet who would come on the one hand and the Messiah who would come on the other hand, and Elijah on the other hand. That's why they asked John all three questions.

Are you the Messiah? No. Are you Elijah? No. Are you the prophet? No.

The scholarly Jews thought of these as different individuals. At least most of them seem to. However, you know very well that even in our day where all Christians have Bibles, they all can be very confused about what the eschatology is, even that which is accepted by their denomination if they haven't heard it taught clearly or if they've just never become acquainted with it.

Even Christians can read their own Bible and be confused about Christian eschatology. So Jews who didn't have Bibles to read, who were mostly peasants, illiterate probably, and if not illiterate, at least didn't have access to Bibles to read them, they might well not be very familiar with the details of their rabbi's eschatological outlook, and they might have, in their own minds, equated the prophet that Moses predicted would come with the Messiah. To them, they might have had it all mixed together, and if they did, then they accidentally got it right because that's what turned out to be the case.

Jesus was the prophet and he was the Messiah. It was the same person after all. And that

may be how the people thought because they said, truly, this is the prophet who is to come into the world.

And the verse next says, Therefore, when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he departed again to a mountain by himself alone. Now, they could hardly desire to take him by force to make him king unless they were seeing him as the Messiah because to do so would be viewed as such a revolutionary act by the Romans that unless he turned out to be the Messiah, it would be squashed in a bloody massacre. They would know that from history, recent history.

There had been a number of false messiahs, pretenders that had come up even in the lifetime of these people. Most notable of them was Judas of Galilee, not one of our Judas's in the Bible, but known from history. Judas of Galilee in the year 6 AD when Jesus was about 10 years old had started the zealot party by raising up a revolution against Rome, sort of a messianic movement.

And Rome had crushed it and crucified most of the people involved in it. And that's what Rome tended to do whenever anyone began to talk about being a king other than Caesar, a Messiah. The word Messiah was a word very threatening to the Romans, not because they believed in the Messiah, but because the Jews did and because whenever the Jews thought they'd found the Messiah, it made them unruly and ungovernable and revolutionary and it gave the Romans trouble and the Romans crushed them without mercy.

So, the fact that these people said let's make him king means they must have thought he was a Messiah. Otherwise, they're going to expend all their powder on a guy that's not going to be able to deliver them. The Messiah alone would deliver them and it was the Messiah who would be the king.

It was the Messiah who would be the king from the line of David that they expected. Everyone knew the Messiah would be the king. Now, the prophet that Moses spoke of, maybe he was somebody else, but Messiah was the king.

But these people, perhaps some of them, saw him as the prophet and then maybe their view morphed into Messiah. We don't know. Or they might have just thought the prophet and the Messiah are the same person.

The actual theological knowledge that these people had is hard to pin down because you'll find even in the Gospel of John, there's times when John records what the crowds were saying among themselves and some were saying, well, this man can't be the Messiah because when the Messiah comes, no one's going to know where he came from. That was apparently one of the opinions out there. The Messiah's going to come out of nowhere.

No one will know where he came from. On another occasion, the crowds were saying, this man can't be the Messiah because the Messiah's going to come from Bethlehem and he's from Galilee. Well, here they were somewhat better informed about where the Messiah's coming from but not very well informed about where Jesus was from since he was born in Bethlehem.

But the point is, some people were saying the Messiah's going to come out from out of nowhere. Others were saying, no, he's going to come from Bethlehem. And there was no united opinion.

There was just this popular sense that God was going to send somebody to save us. There's this prophet Moses spoke about. There's this Messiah of the line of David supposed to come.

And all these different opinions around, just like there was about eschatology today. I mean, all Christians expect Jesus to come back but that's about all they have in common in their eschatology. There's so many other details that are disputed.

It was not different among the Jews and the rabbis either. But it's clear that the crowd, seeing that Jesus fed them, concluded he was the prophet and apparently simultaneously or as their ideas morphed even within a few moments' time, began to conclude he was the Messiah. And since he did not seem to be making any motion toward mobilizing them as an army against Rome, they decided to take the initiative and force him to be their king.

Now why would the feeding of the 5,000 have that effect on them? After all, he had done many other miracles. Why didn't they do that when he healed lepers? Or when he raised Jairus' daughter, which had happened prior to this. Why did they take this particular miracle and reach that particular conclusion from it? And why do all the Gospels, including John, include it? Why does this miracle stand out not only among the Gospel writers but among the people who were looking on who said, okay, this is the guy.

Well, there's a couple of things. Both, again, are strands of rabbinic teaching that were around, which the people may have heard and probably had. One was that a famous rabbi had said that as the original Redeemer of Israel, Moses, had fed the people with manna, so would the second Redeemer, the Messiah, feed the people with manna.

So this was obviously a miraculous provision of bread, certainly as miraculous as manna. And the next day, in the discourse that we're going to see at the end of this chapter, the latter part of this chapter, the people actually challenged Jesus and said, Moses gave us manna in the wilderness. You give us food, too.

And so, in their minds, they were perhaps connecting this with Moses was the first deliverer, and the rabbis said the second deliverer will do the same thing, that he'll give

them manna and deliver them. Another stream of Jewish thought, of rabbinic thought, was that the Ark of the Covenant, which had disappeared when the temple was destroyed in 586 BC, when the Babylonians destroyed the temple almost 600 years before Christ, that the Ark of the Covenant had been rescued by Jeremiah. Nobody really knows what happened to the Ark of the Covenant.

The Babylonian bas-reliefs that can be seen at the, I think they're at the British Museum now, that have carved images of the Babylonians carrying away the plunder from Jerusalem from that incident. It shows them carrying, for example, the menorah, the candlestick, and some of the furniture from the temple, but it doesn't show them carrying the Ark. And so, it is not known whether the Babylonians captured the Ark or not.

And the Jews had a tradition among them that Jeremiah had somehow gotten the Ark out of the temple and taken it with him down to Egypt. Now, what the Bible tells us is that Jeremiah and our group of the Jews fled to Egypt before the temple was destroyed. They knew it was going to be.

They knew the Babylonians were coming back to avenge the death of the Babylonian-appointed governor Gedolias. Someone had assassinated him, and so they knew there would be reprisals. They knew Nebuchadnezzar would come back and destroy them.

So, the Jews felt that Jeremiah, seeing this coming and being, as it was, forced against his will by his companions to go with him to Egypt, at least rescued the Ark from the temple and took it to Egypt with him. And that was a very strong tradition. Now, the Ark was said to have in it, among other things, the golden pot that had manna in it.

In Moses' day, Moses instructed the people to take a sample of the manna that had fallen, put it in a golden pot, and store it in the Ark. The rabbis had said, when the Messianic age is ready to dawn, Jeremiah will reappear with the pot of manna, and he will miraculously feed the multitudes with the manna from that golden pot. That's one reason why, when Jesus was at Caesarea Philippi, and he said to his disciples, Whom do men say that I am? They said, Some say you're Elijah.

Some say you're John the Baptist. Some say you're Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. Well, why would they say he was Jeremiah? Jeremiah had died, you know, 500 and something years earlier.

Why would people think he was Jeremiah? It was because of this rabbinic idea that Jeremiah is going to reappear at the dawning of the Messianic age. And he's going to bring the manna that was taken, that was in the Ark. And he's going to feed the people.

And that would be the Messianic feast. Now, these thoughts were swirling in the heads of the Jewish population before Jesus even set foot in the temple or the tabernacle to speak

to them. And now that he miraculously feeds them, to them that's like a signal.

This is the Messianic age. This is maybe Jeremiah. This is maybe that prophet.

Maybe this is the Messiah. But whoever it is, this is the beginning of our deliverance. This is the time that was spoken of.

Some of the rabbis said the Messiah would do this kind of thing, give manna, as Moses had done. So people were pretty excited. They wouldn't be that excited if they'd all pulled food from out of their coats and shared it with each other.

That wouldn't convince them that Jesus was the Messiah. Obviously, a miracle had occurred. And that's some kind of a miracle of feeding the multitudes is exactly what they associated in their tradition with the coming of the Messianic kingdom.

So Jesus saw that they were about to take him by force and make him king. And his reaction was he departed again to a mountain by himself alone. And it says, when evening came, his disciples went down to the sea and got into a boat and went over the sea toward Capernaum.

That is without Jesus. He was up on the mountain praying. And they got in the boat and headed across the sea.

John doesn't tell us this. The details I'm about to tell you. But you almost need them to make sense of it.

Why would Jesus go up on the mountain and the disciples leave him there? Well, the other Gospels tell us, Matthew and Mark especially, that although they don't tell us about this Jesus perceiving that the people were going to take him and make him king, the other Gospels just tell us that after Jesus fed the multitudes, he compelled his disciples to get into a boat and go over the sea while he went up into a mountain to pray. The disciples must have thought that was rather strange. They had come across to that side of the sea together.

And now they were taking the boat without him. And he's going to stay on the other side. Well, they just were following orders.

He said, cross over to the other side. He sent them away and stayed himself on that side. Now, why did he send them away? It says he compelled them to go.

Very possibly, he knew. And John tells us what the others don't, that this was kind of a powder keg kind of situation. There was almost this mass riot kind of situation where the people were going to take Jesus against his will and hail him king.

And no doubt, Jesus thought the disciples could get caught up in this enthusiasm. The disciples had sort of the same ideas about the Messiah. And while they knew Jesus was

the Messiah, they were no doubt a little bit perplexed why he wasn't doing these messianic things.

But if the crowds had made Jesus king, the disciples would have probably thought, hey, this is what was supposed to happen. This is the day. This is the hour.

This is what we've been looking forward to. And perhaps to spare the disciples that delusion, he sent them away quickly, put distance between them and this crowd. And then he put distance between himself and the crowd and went up on the hill to pray.

Of course, it remained undetermined at this point how he would ever rejoin the disciples without a boat. But he managed it. But there's something important about this passage that John tells us that others don't.

And that is that Jesus was not interested in being that kind of messianic king, although the people were interested. And this is really just the opposite of what many of our popular teachers tell us. Because if you're acquainted with dispensationalism, you may know that the dispensationalists agree with the Jews about the Messiah.

He's supposed to be a military political ruler. They believe, as the Jews believed, that the Messiah is supposed to come and sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem. And dispensationalism teaches that Jesus came offering to be just that.

He came saying, the kingdom of God is at hand. And to the dispensationalists, the kingdom of God is a political kingdom with Jesus reigning from Jerusalem. Where do they get that? They get that from the same prophecies the Jews got it from.

They take those prophecies literally, as the Jews did. And therefore, dispensationalism says, that's what the kingdom is. It's Jesus on the throne in Jerusalem, reigning like David did over the nations, over the world, ruling from Jerusalem.

That is exactly what dispensationalism teaches Jesus came to do. But according to the dispensationalist scenario, he offered himself in that role, but Israel rejected him. And because they rejected him, he canceled the offer.

Went back up into heaven after his resurrection and postponed the establishment of the kingdom until the millennium. So that Jesus would have established the kingdom when he was here, but the Jews were not amenable to it. And so he just said, OK, you're going to have to wait for this.

And he went back to heaven, inaugurated the dispensation of the church age. But when that ends and the church is raptured, then God's going to start dealing with Israel again. And when Jesus returns, he'll establish that kingdom that he meant to establish the first time.

And that will be the millennial kingdom. And yes, it'll be political. It'll be everything the Jews wanted it to be.

He'll be reigning on a throne in Jerusalem, just like David did, and have subdued his enemies by force, ruling with a rod of iron. This is what is expected by dispensationalists. And that's what was expected by the Jews.

But the scenario doesn't seem to work with the facts, because the Gospels don't present Jesus offering himself as a king, and the people weren't into it. It's the other way around. They were going to force him to be king, and he wasn't into it.

Their ideas of the Messiah were different than his ideas of the Messiah. If he had, in fact, intended to do that, this was the moment to seize the opportunity. He never had so much popular support at any time in his ministry as he had at this moment.

This was the crescendo of the Galilean ministry. And he never had more followers elsewhere than in Galilee. With 15,000 or 20,000 people following him, he had what we would today call a megachurch.

And with 5,000 of them being men, that would make a pretty good-sized militia. King Saul only had 3,000 in his army, and that was delivered. That was the size of the army he wanted to maintain.

And they were occupied by the Philistines in his day, and he was happy with 3,000. Jesus could have mobilized 5,000, and that would be just the beginning. Most of the Jews who weren't there, if they saw a Jewish army of 5,000 marching against Rome, they'd be running for their hatchets and their clubs so they could join the crowd and march against Pilate in Jerusalem or Herod.

I mean, there were these Roman rulers in Galilee and in Judea, and the Jews would be saying, wow, we've got a bigger movement here than we've ever had before. And so Jesus could have done this if that's really what the kingdom of God was supposed to be, if Jesus saw it the way the Jews did and the way that dispensationalism does, that it's supposed to be him sitting on a throne in Jerusalem and ruling there like a political king. This was his opportunity.

And it was not the Jews that rejected this offer. He never made that offer. They offered it to him.

In fact, they wanted to make him an offer he couldn't refuse. They wanted to force him into that mold, and he just wasn't going to do it. Remember, it says in John 2, many believed in him because of the signs that they saw, but he did not commit himself to them because he knew what was in man.

And no one needed to tell him what was in man because he knew what was in man. He

would not commit his movement into the hands of the popular crowds who thought he was great. Well, he was great, but he wasn't going to let them decide how things were going to go, and it wasn't going to go this way.

So he sends the disciples away. He goes up on a mountain and disperses the crowds. Apparently, the movement to make him king had not organized very thoroughly yet.

He must have become aware of people murmuring, let's make him the king, let's make him the king. The crowd had not become cohesive enough to force him against his will, but he saw that they were wanting to. And so he said, okay, meeting's over, thanks, come back next week and we'll have potluck and bring your own food.

He dispersed the crowd and went away so they couldn't find him. And the people saw him disappear up the mountain. We know they saw him go because the next day they remembered that he had disappeared and they wondered how he'd gotten across to Capernaum the next morning.

Well, that's what we find out here in verse 18. The disciples were now crossing back across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum, and they were having trouble because the weather was against them. Storms blow up on the Sea of Galilee quite suddenly and quite frequently.

The topography of the area is such that it's very conducive to sudden violent storms. First of all, the sea is at a very low level, below sea level, and it's surrounded by steep mountainous cliffs and so forth, and there are certain ravines where the air just comes pouring down into that low area and it just stirs up a storm out of nowhere. And many travelers in Israel have commented on that.

If you go out on a tour ship or something out on the Sea of Galilee today, you may actually experience one of these because storms just come up unexpectedly out of nowhere, and they're violent. It's just a little lake, but you've got - it's only five miles across, but you've got big waves and tempests, and it's like being on the high seas. And the disciples on this occasion were finding the weather adverse, the winds were against them, the sea arose because of great wind blowing, which means they had a hard time.

Now we're told in one of the Gospels that it was at the time that Jesus came to them on the water, it was in the fourth watch of the night, which means between three and six in the morning, just shortly before dawn. But if they had started during daylight the previous day, that means they'd been rowing for nine hours or more. And how far did they get? We're told they got about three miles.

Now you could walk three miles in one hour under normal conditions. I don't know how fast rowing usually goes with 12 guys, but it should be at least walking speed, I think, and even if it was half that, they should have gotten three miles in two hours. But they'd

been rowing all night, and they were still only three-fifths of the way across the lake.

They still had two miles more to go, and they were struggling against the oars and so forth. And it says, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat, and they were afraid. But he said to them, It is I, do not be afraid.

Then they willingly received him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going. So they were at least a mile or two from the other shore, but as soon as he got in the boat, they were at the other shore immediately. That could be said to be a miracle, too, but they don't make an issue of it.

It's just one of those things that went well because Jesus was in the boat with them. But this story of Jesus walking on the water, a couple of things I want to say about it. Once again, the modern skeptics and liberal theologians, the anti-supernaturalist commentators, they're often looking for ways to explain this story without the miraculous element.

One of the ways that some have explained it was that Jesus, of course, couldn't walk on water. People can't do that. But there was under the water, just below the surface of the water, unseen by the disciples, there was sort of a reef, sort of a ridge of rock that rose, and Jesus was able to walk on it, sort of almost like a land bridge that he knew about, and they didn't, apparently.

So he appeared to be walking on the water, but he's really walking on this rocky ridge, which was just maybe inches below the surface of the water at this time. And so it looked to them that he was walking on the water, and that's what scared them. They thought, whoa, he must be a ghost.

That's what the other Gospels tell us when they tell the story. They thought they were seeing a ghost. It terrified them because it looked like he was weightless.

But in fact, it was really just not a miracle, nor was he a ghost. He was simply walking on solid ground, just below the surface of the water. Now that suggestion raises some questions, like if there was such a ridge that extends three miles out into the middle of the sea, where is it today? It seems like one might be able to find it.

No one has ever found such a ridge like that, and rock doesn't change that much under the surface of a lake, no matter how many centuries go by. There's not that much erosion. I think there'd be some evidence that such a thing had existed at one time.

More than that, we would think the disciples were more familiar with that lake than Jesus was. They spent their lives fishing on that lake. They were not unfamiliar with that lake.

If there had been a reef that shallow there, they would have had to be aware of it to

avoid it in their boats continually. It'd be a very unusual thing to have a reef that's three miles long from the shore out into the middle of the lake that Jesus could walk on, and the disciples not know about it. That'd be a very significant geological structure.

And since they spent their lives on that lake and didn't know about it, that raises serious questions about whether it was really there. Furthermore, Matthew's Gospel, and only Matthew's Gospel, and Matthew 14 tells this story, and tells us a feature that is not mentioned in the others, and that is that Peter actually got up and walked on the water a bit. You know the story, when they were afraid and thought they saw a ghost, Jesus said, it's I, don't be afraid.

And Peter said, well, Lord, if it's you, command me to come to you on the water. Let me walk on the water too. And so Jesus said, come on.

And so Peter got up and started walking on the water. But when he became fearful, he began to sink. And Jesus had to pull him up again.

All of this sounds like there's, you know, if this was all about walking on a ridge under the water, it's all very coincidental that Peter happened to step out on the same ridge, but there must have been a gap somewhere between him and Jesus that he didn't know about. All of this is very unlikely to be true. And therefore, frankly, it's more likely that a miracle would happen, especially in the life of a man who is full of miracles.

When we have a man who's also healing every kind of sickness, raising the dead, you know, stilling storms with his word, feeding multitudes from a few loaves of bread, it's much more likely that he walked on top of water than that this elaborate scenario, which is totally unverifiable and unlikely, would be true. So many skeptics do not resort to that particular expedient. There are some liberal scholars who say, they take a little more sophisticated approach.

It says Jesus came to them walking on the sea. The expression walking on the sea, the exact same expression in the Greek, is also found in John 21.1. That is the expression on the sea. Not walking on the sea, but just on the sea.

And in John 21.1, it says, After these things, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. Now, at the sea, in the Greek, is the same expression on the sea. That is mentioned here.

And it means, obviously, on the seashore. At the seaside, Jesus was on dry ground. At the edge of the sea.

But the expression on the sea, that is used here, that Jesus appeared to them on the sea, which means he was, you know, we know he was on the shore cooking fish for them. It means, obviously, on the seashore. On the edge of the sea.

That is the same expression used in John 6, where it says Jesus came to them walking on the sea. So some have suggested that because of the storm, the disciples were kind of hugging the shore. They didn't venture out into the middle of the sea, but they were just kind of cutting along, not far from the edge of the sea, to make it around to Capernaum.

But not venturing out too far. And they saw Jesus walking on the seashore, you know, alongside them. And so they say that is what the term meant in chapter 21, verse 1. Why would it mean that here? Well, one reason it wouldn't mean that here is because it didn't mean that here.

The other gospels telling the same story say that the boat was in the midst of the sea. They were not at the edge of the sea, they were out in the middle of the sea. Furthermore, why would seeing a man walking along the shore scare people? You've got 12 men, burly men, and they see a man, not particularly a menacing man, but one man walking on the seashore, and they're going to be terrified and think it's a ghost? That would not be what most people would think when they saw such a thing.

They'd think, oh, there's a man out in the rain. I wonder why, he must be a traveler who got stuck out in the rain. Poor guy.

They're not going to be afraid. And Peter would not say in such a case, Lord, if that's you over there on the shore, tell me to walk on the water. I mean, there's just nothing about the story that lends itself to the thesis that Jesus was walking alongside the sea.

Though the Greek phrase could technically be interpreted that way in another context. In this context, it doesn't work. This is one of the miracles of Jesus, Him walking supernaturally.

He walked differently than anybody else could walk. It says in 1 John 2, I think it's verse 6, John said, if anyone says he abides in Christ, then he ought to walk even as He walked. 1 John 2, 6. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Now, it's obvious that Jesus didn't walk the way other people walked, and therefore a person who abides in Christ must walk differently than other people and the same way Jesus did. But the way Jesus walked, what's that mean? Of course, walking is often in the Scripture a metaphor for living. The Bible talks about, you know, walk in love, or walk worthy of the calling by which you're called.

Or God told Abraham, walk before me and be perfect. Or the expression, walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. This isn't talking about literally walking, it's talking about living.

But life is often compared with a walk. Walking can be a metaphor of living for the same reason that walking is a journey. Life is a journey.

Walking takes you from one place to another. You don't stay in the same place. As time passes, your life progresses too, some direction, somewhere.

Walking is taken step by step. Well, life is a series of steps too. I mean, there's a lot of ways in which walking becomes a fitting metaphor and one that was not missed by the biblical writers.

They used it all the time. And so when John says in 1 John 2, 6, let him that says he abides in Christ, let him walk as Jesus walked. He meant, of course, let him live like Jesus lived.

But how can you do that? Jesus lived perfectly. That's supernatural. That's a supernatural way of walking.

Well, that's how Christians are supposed to walk, supernaturally. How did Jesus walk? He walked in the Spirit. He walked in the Spirit, and we're told to walk in the Spirit.

And if you walk in the Spirit, the Bible says things will be happening that couldn't happen otherwise. Like Paul says in Galatians 5, 16, walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Yet, fulfilling the lust of the flesh is the natural thing for people to do.

The flesh is you. How would you not fulfill your own wishes? How can you defeat yourself? Well, by walking in the Spirit. You will have supernatural assistance to do what you could not do otherwise.

That's how Jesus did it. That's how Jesus did not fulfill the lust of the flesh, by walking in the Spirit. And we are to walk even as he walked, that is, by the Spirit.

A supernatural way of walking. Christianity isn't just the Jesus fan club where people decide, yeah, I like Jesus better than I like Buddha, so I'm going to be in his club. I like Jesus better than I like Muhammad, so I'm going to be in his club.

I'm going to follow his rules, I'm going to believe his doctrines, I'm going to join his group, sing his songs. To many people, becoming a Christian is nothing more than that. It's joining the Jesus club.

And they don't realize that Christianity isn't just another religious club to join. You pay your dues, your tithes, you go to the meetings, you sing the club songs, you listen to the inspiring lecture from one of the club leaders. This is how many people experience Christianity.

That's all it is to them. Jesus is sort of the figurehead. He's the one that, remember, we might have a picture of him or a statue of him to commemorate him since he's not really here.

That's not what Christianity is. Christianity is having a supernatural encounter with God

that makes you have a supernatural life. Receiving the Spirit of Christ who gifts you with supernatural abilities, who brings forth supernatural endowment of fruit of the Spirit in your life, who causes you to not walk in the flesh, who actually makes you walk the way Jesus walked, something that human beings cannot do naturally.

And therefore, Christianity in its normal form is a supernatural thing. It's not just Jesus saying, you need to stop doing what you're doing and start doing the right thing. It's, he says, you need to be filled with my Spirit so that I can do the right thing in you because you can't.

There are things that I can do that you can't do but you have to be able to do them so you've got to do it through my power. And when Peter wanted to walk on the water, he wanted to walk like Jesus walked. And I think that the story of Jesus walking on the water, while it's entirely literally true, like the other miracles recorded in John, they're recorded for the purpose of illustrating something in particular.

And I wonder, when we think of this, the fact there are seven miracles in John and seven I am sayings of Jesus, I've often wondered which of the I am sayings of Jesus this one would illustrate. It might not illustrate any of them but if it doesn't, then it breaks the mold. There certainly is the case that at least four or five of the I am sayings, indisputably, are illustrated by the miracles and it would give reason to believe that at least the other six, number six and seven, would also do the same.

And there is one of the I am sayings that strikes me as very possibly illustrated here and that is where Jesus said, I am the way, which means the path, the way to walk. I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but through me.

That you're coming to the Father, that's walking, that's traveling. You're approaching. And he is the way of approach.

You walk his way. You walk that path. He is the path you walk.

He is the way you walk, the way you walk to God. There's a certain walk that is distinctly Jesus' walk. Walking on water would be a good example of it because no one else does it.

No one else walks on water, only Jesus does, and those that he commands to do so and who believe him and walk by faith. So, Peter is like a man who saw Jesus walks like no other man walks and he wanted to do that. Because sometimes I think, why didn't Peter just stay in the boat? Well, I don't think Jesus wanted him to stay in the boat.

Peter said, if you want me to, you call me. And Jesus said, come on. Jesus commanded him to come and he obeyed the command and as long as he had faith, he could do it.

Because the word of God, believed, confers the supernatural power of the Spirit to walk as Jesus walked. And as long as Peter believed, he could do it. He could walk as Jesus

did.

He walked by faith. And when he stopped believing or had trouble believing, then of course, he was not able to walk that way any more than anyone else could. Peter wasn't a supernatural man.

He was a man walking in a supernatural way because of faith in Christ and his word. And so, this is the way to walk. And Jesus is the way.

He walked the way that we should be walking. He's the example of the way to go. And so, walking on the water seems to be a miracle that had, like the other miracles recorded in John, illustrative value.

Now, the feeding of the 5,000, what did that illustrate? Well, that's what we'll find out in the next lecture because when Jesus got across the lake to Capernaum, the crowds eventually found him there again the next day. And that's when he gives a discourse that elaborates on this idea of him being the bread of life. And where he really becomes so controversial that he causes a big church split.

You know, he had a mega church. He caused a big church split by his injudicious speech. Careless.

You know, if you were, if you were called to candidate as a pastor for a big church, and sometimes big churches lose their pastors because of scandals and things like that, so they start looking for someone to pastor. They call in someone to give a sermon to see if he's good and then they might hire him. Suppose you were called in to preach to the church with 15,000 people in it and you gave one sermon and it caused a big church split so that the next week only 12 people showed up.

All the others were gone. That's what Jesus did at Capernaum in the synagogue at Capernaum. He gave one sermon there and the big church of 15,000 turned into a small remnant of 12 guys.

And one of them was a devil, as Jesus pointed out. So 11 guys. And that's what happens tomorrow.

So tomorrow night we'll be talking about this and that is what is in the rest of chapter 6 of John.