

Dr. Dave Turner, John, Session 8, A Significant Meal and a Difficult Teaching – John 6:1-71 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Turner, John, Session 8, John 6:1-71, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Turner's session on John chapter six explores the pivotal events and teachings following Jesus' miraculous feeding of the multitude. The session examines **Jesus' subsequent interactions** with the crowd, his disciples, and the twelve, highlighting the **difficult discourse** about him being the bread of life, which caused many to abandon him. Turner analyzes the **geographical context** of these events around the Sea of Galilee and Capernaum, and discusses the **theological significance** of the feeding miracle, Jesus walking on water, and his "I am" statements. Furthermore, the lecture considers the **popular Messianic expectations** of the time, the **typology of Moses and the manna**, and the **potential Eucharistic connections** within the chapter, ultimately focusing on the necessity of faith and an intimate relationship with Christ.

**2. 23 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Turner, John, Session 8 – Double click icon to play in
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]
Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament →
Gospels → John).**



Turner_John_Session
n08.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Turner, John, Session 8, John 6:1-71

Briefing Document: John 6 - A Significant Meal and a Difficult Teaching

Overview: This session provides an in-depth analysis of John chapter 6, highlighting the geographical context, the two key miracles (feeding the multitude and walking on water), the ensuing difficult discourse of Jesus concerning the "bread of life," and the varied reactions of the crowd, disciples, and the Twelve. Dr. Turner emphasizes the chapter's movement from a large audience to Jesus' inner circle, the challenging nature of Jesus' teaching, and its connections to Old Testament themes and the Eucharist.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. Geographical Transition and Setting:

- Following debates in Jerusalem (John 5), Jesus travels to the northeast area of the Sea of Galilee, near the Golan region.
- The narrative moves from the feeding of the multitude in this area to the disciples crossing the sea, likely towards Capernaum.
- The location of the feeding is near where the Church of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes stands today at Tabgha, southwest of Capernaum.
- The geography becomes somewhat complex as the crowd and people from Tiberias pursue Jesus to Capernaum.

2. Two Miracles Leading to Three Conversations:

- **Primary Miracle:** The feeding of the multitude (John 6:1-15), unique as it is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels.
- **Secondary Miracle:** Jesus walking on water.
- **Three Conversations:** The chapter progresses through conversations with the wider multitude, then with the disciples (many of whom leave), and finally with the Twelve. This illustrates a "centripetal force" narrowing the focus to Jesus' closest followers.

3. The Feeding of the Multitude and its Significance:

- The crowd's reaction to the miracle was to identify Jesus as "the prophet who is to come into the world" (John 6:14), likely based on their understanding of Deuteronomy 18.

- They intended to "come and make him king by force" (John 6:15), revealing a popular, potentially nationalistic, view of the Messiah.
- Jesus rejected this attempt, as it did not align with his Messianic purpose.

4. The Difficult Discourse on the Bread of Life (John 6:25-71):

- Jesus confronts the crowd in Capernaum, stating they sought him not because they understood the *sign* of the miracle, but because they were physically full: *"You are looking for me not because you saw the signs I performed, but because you ate the loaves and you got full."* (John 6:26)
- He urges them to seek "food that endures to eternal life" (John 6:27), which the Son of Man will give, having God's "seal of approval."
- Jesus clarifies that it was not Moses who gave the true "bread from heaven," but his Father, and that he himself is "the bread of God...which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:32-33).
- **Key "I Am" Statement (Qualified):** Jesus declares, *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."* (John 6:35)
- This discourse leads to the controversial teaching about "eating his flesh and drinking his blood" (John 6:53), which Dr. Turner notes is a "very grotesque in a sense way of describing their necessity to experience, relate, in a sense imbibe him as their portion from God."
- This teaching was a major stumbling block, leading many disciples to stop following him (John 6:66).

5. Understanding the "Eating Flesh and Drinking Blood" Metaphor:

- Dr. Turner suggests this language is not literal cannibalism or the physical consumption of blood (which would be offensive to Jewish tradition).
- He aligns with Calvin's interpretation that Jesus uses metaphors "accordant with the situation," drawing on the miracle of the feeding.
- He compares verses speaking of believing in Jesus with those about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, highlighting the parallel results: eternal life and never thirsting.

- *"Jesus is saying I'm like bread. The person who appropriates me will be like a person who has a good meal. Faith will lead you to a point in your life where you won't be hungry and thirsty spiritually."*
- The core message is the necessity of personally appropriating Jesus by faith for eternal life.

6. Divine Sovereignty and Human Response:

- Jesus' statement, *"No one can come to me unless the Father who has sent me draws him..."* (John 6:44, 65), introduces the theme of divine sovereignty in salvation.
- However, Dr. Turner emphasizes the need to also teach "human freedom" in conjunction with this.
- The passage suggests that understanding Jesus requires a spiritual discernment enabled by God, beyond merely observing the signs.

7. Typology of Moses and the Manna:

- The crowd's reference to the manna in the wilderness connects Jesus' teaching to the Mosaic tradition (Exodus 16).
- Jesus corrects their understanding, stating his Father was the true giver of that bread and that he is the greater, life-giving bread.
- The failure of their ancestors (who ate manna and still died) contrasts with the eternal life offered through him (John 6:49-51).

8. "I Am" Statements in John:

- Dr. Turner introduces the significance of Jesus' "I am" statements in John's Gospel, categorizing them as:
- **Qualified (with predicates):** e.g., "I am the bread of life," "I am the light of the world."
- **Absolute (without predicates):** e.g., "I am" (to be discussed more in John 8), potentially alluding to the Old Testament "I am he" texts in Deuteronomy and Isaiah, and possibly Exodus 3:14.

9. Connection to the Eucharist:

- The language used in the feeding of the multitude (taking the loaves, giving thanks, distributing) bears a striking resemblance to the institution of the Lord's Supper in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22) and 1 Corinthians 11.
- Dr. Turner raises the question of whether John 6 serves as John's version or prefiguration of the Eucharist, especially given the absence of a formal institution in John 13.
- He touches upon the historical controversies within the church regarding the interpretation of the Lord's Table (symbolic vs. real presence).
- He suggests that John 6 might prompt reflection on the meaning and significance of this practice.

10. Broader Theology of Meals in the Bible:

- The session expands beyond the Eucharist to consider the wider theme of meals in Scripture, from God providing sustenance in Genesis to the Passover, the manna, and the ultimate marriage feast of the Lamb in Revelation 19.
- Food often portrays God's faithfulness and provision.
- The problem arises when humans focus solely on the physical food and forget the God who provides it, as seen in the wilderness and in the initial motivations of the crowd in John 6.
- Prayer for "daily bread" encompasses all human needs, and food should be a means of praising and thanking God.

11. The Turning Point and the Disciples' Reactions:

- Jesus' difficult teaching acts as a turning point, revealing who truly understands and believes in him.
- Many disciples rejected his words and stopped following him.
- Peter, speaking for the Twelve, affirms their faith: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."* (John 6:68-69)

12. The Shadow of Judas:

- Despite Peter's positive confession, Jesus' response, "*Have I not chosen you, the Twelve, yet one of you is a devil?*" (John 6:70), introduces a note of foreboding and refers to Judas Iscariot, who would later betray him.
- This highlights the contrast within Jesus' inner circle and foreshadows future conflict.

Conclusion: John chapter 6 presents a pivotal moment in Jesus' ministry, marked by a miraculous provision that leads to a profound and challenging teaching about his identity as the true "bread of life." The varied reactions underscore the difficulty of grasping Jesus' spiritual claims and the necessity of faith grounded in divine enabling. The chapter also connects to significant Old Testament themes and raises questions about the relationship between the feeding of the multitude and the later institution of the Eucharist, all while hinting at the complex dynamics within Jesus' own disciples.

4. Study Guide: Turner, John, Session 8, John 6:1-71

Study Guide: John 6 - A Significant Meal and a Difficult Teaching

Key Themes:

- The significance of miracles as signs pointing to Jesus' identity and mission.
- Misunderstandings of Jesus' Messianic role and the nature of true faith.
- The contrast between physical and spiritual nourishment.
- Jesus as the "bread of life" and the necessity of "eating his flesh and drinking his blood" as a metaphor for faith and intimate relationship with him.
- The role of divine sovereignty in drawing people to Jesus.
- The typology of Moses and the manna in understanding Jesus' claims.
- The "I am" statements of Jesus and their Old Testament context.
- Potential connections to the Eucharist and the broader theology of meals in the Bible.
- The division among Jesus' followers in response to his difficult teaching.

Key Sections of the Text (John 6):

- **Verses 1-15:** The feeding of the five thousand, the crowd's desire to make Jesus king, and his withdrawal.
- **Verses 16-21:** Jesus walking on water and joining the disciples in the boat.
- **Verses 22-24:** The crowds and those from Tiberias search for Jesus in Capernaum.
- **Verses 25-59:** Jesus' discourse on the bread of life, the contrast between physical and spiritual food, and the difficult teaching about eating his flesh and drinking his blood.
- **Verses 60-71:** The reaction of the disciples, many leaving, Peter's confession, and Jesus' foreboding statement about Judas.

Study Questions:

- What geographical locations are significant in John 6, and how does Jesus move between them?

- What two miracles are discussed in this chapter, and which one is unique in its portrayal across the Gospels?
- How do the crowds and the disciples initially react to Jesus' miracles? What motivates their interest in him?
- Why does Jesus withdraw to the mountain after feeding the multitude? What does this reveal about popular Messianic expectations?
- When the crowds find Jesus in Capernaum, what is his initial response to their question? What does this reveal about his understanding of their motives?
- Explain the metaphor of Jesus as the "bread of life." How does he connect this to the manna in the wilderness?
- What is the "difficult teaching" in John 6 that causes many disciples to turn back? How does the lecturer interpret this teaching?
- How does the lecturer connect the language of "eating his flesh and drinking his blood" to the concept of faith? Cite specific verses to support your answer.
- What does the lecturer suggest about the connection between John 6 and the Eucharist (the Lord's Supper)? What are some points of comparison and contrast?
- How does the chapter conclude? What are Peter's and Jesus' final statements in this section, and what is the significance of the mention of Judas?

Quiz:

1. Following his time in Jerusalem (discussed in the previous session), where does Jesus travel at the beginning of John 6, and what event of historical significance is associated with this area today?
2. According to the lecture, what is the primary miracle in John 6, and why is it considered primary? What was the crowd's immediate reaction to witnessing this miracle?
3. When the crowds seek Jesus in Capernaum, what does he say is their primary motivation for following him? What kind of "food" does he urge them to seek instead?
4. Explain Jesus' statement, "It is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but my Father." What spiritual point is he making with this correction?

5. What Old Testament passage does Jesus allude to in verse 45 when he says, "Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me"? What is the significance of this allusion?
6. What does Jesus mean when he declares, "I am the bread of life," and later, "This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"? How do his listeners react to this statement?
7. According to the lecture, why did many of Jesus' disciples find his teaching in John 6 to be difficult? What specific aspect of his teaching was particularly troubling for a Jewish audience?
8. How does the lecturer interpret Jesus' words about "eating his flesh and drinking his blood"? What does he suggest this language signifies in terms of one's relationship with Jesus?
9. What is Peter's response when Jesus asks the twelve if they also want to leave? What does Peter's confession reveal about his understanding (or lack thereof) and his commitment?
10. How does the chapter end? What contrasting figure is mentioned alongside Peter, and what does this foreshadow?

Quiz Answer Key:

1. Jesus travels from Jerusalem to the northeast area of the Sea of Galilee, near the Golan Heights. This area is often in the news today due to geopolitical tensions and its strategic location.
2. The primary miracle is the feeding of the multitudes (five thousand). It's considered primary because it's the only miracle narrated in all four Gospels. The crowd's immediate reaction was to recognize Jesus as "the prophet who is to come into the world" and they intended to make him king by force.
3. Jesus says they are looking for him not because they saw the signs, but because they ate the loaves and were filled. He urges them to work not for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give.
4. Jesus is correcting their understanding by stating that while God provided manna through Moses, the true bread from heaven is from his Father and gives life to the world in a more profound and lasting way, ultimately referring to himself.

5. Jesus alludes to Isaiah 54:13, which speaks of everyone being taught by God. This highlights the idea that those who truly come to Jesus are those who have been taught and drawn by the Father.
6. When Jesus says "I am the bread of life," he is claiming to be the source of spiritual sustenance and eternal life. When he says "This bread is my flesh," he is making a startling statement about the necessity of intimately receiving him. His listeners react with confusion and disbelief, questioning how he can give them his flesh to eat.
7. Many disciples found it difficult because Jesus spoke of the necessity of "eating his flesh and drinking his blood," which sounded like cannibalism and was a direct violation of Jewish law against consuming blood. They struggled to understand this metaphorical language.
8. The lecturer interprets this language metaphorically, suggesting it signifies the necessity of personally appropriating Jesus by faith, having an intimate relationship with him, and imbibing his life-giving power, just as one takes in food for physical sustenance.
9. Peter responds, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God." This shows Peter's commitment and recognition of Jesus as the source of eternal life, even if his understanding is incomplete.
10. The chapter ends with Peter's confession followed by Jesus' statement that he has chosen the twelve, yet one of them is a devil, referring to Judas Iscariot who would later betray him. This introduces a note of foreboding and highlights the contrasting responses within Jesus' inner circle.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the different reactions of the crowds, the general disciples, and the twelve apostles to Jesus' teachings and miracles in John 6. What do these varying responses reveal about the nature of faith and the challenges of following Jesus?
2. Explore the significance of the "bread of life" discourse in John 6. How does Jesus use the metaphor of bread to explain his identity and the means by which people can receive eternal life? Consider the Old Testament background of the manna in your analysis.
3. Discuss the "difficult teaching" in John 6 regarding eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood. How has this passage been interpreted throughout Christian history, and what do you believe is the most accurate understanding of Jesus' intended meaning in this context, based on the provided source?
4. Examine the interplay between divine sovereignty and human response in John 6, particularly in light of Jesus' statements about who comes to him. How does the lecturer address this complex theological issue within the chapter?
5. Evaluate the potential connections between the feeding of the multitude in John 6 and the institution of the Eucharist (the Lord's Supper) in the synoptic Gospels. What similarities and differences exist, and what conclusions can be drawn about John's purpose in narrating this event without explicitly mentioning the Eucharist?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Messiah:** The promised deliverer of the Jewish nation prophesied in the Hebrew Bible. In the context of John 6, popular expectations included a kingly and prophetic figure who would meet their physical needs.
- **Sign:** In the Gospel of John, miracles are often referred to as signs. They are not merely displays of power but point to a deeper meaning about Jesus' identity and his divine nature.
- **Bread of Life:** A title Jesus uses for himself in John 6, signifying that he is the true source of spiritual nourishment and eternal life, contrasting with physical bread that provides only temporary sustenance.
- **Manna:** The miraculous food provided by God to the Israelites during their wanderings in the wilderness (Exodus 16). Jesus uses this as a point of comparison to highlight his own superior role as the true "bread from heaven."
- **Divine Sovereignty:** The theological concept that God is in ultimate control and has supreme authority over all things, including who is drawn to Jesus.
- **Typology:** A method of biblical interpretation where Old Testament events, people, or institutions are seen as prefiguring or foreshadowing New Testament realities, particularly aspects of the person and work of Jesus Christ (e.g., Moses and the manna foreshadowing Jesus as the bread of life).
- **"I am" Statements:** Significant declarations made by Jesus in the Gospel of John, often echoing the divine name revealed to Moses in Exodus 3 ("I am who I am") or alluding to Old Testament prophetic pronouncements (e.g., "I am he"). They reveal Jesus' divine identity and his unique relationship with God.
- **Eucharist:** Also known as Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper, a Christian sacrament commemorating the Last Supper Jesus shared with his disciples, involving the consumption of bread and wine as symbols of his body and blood.
- **Synoptic Gospels:** The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which share a similar perspective and content in their accounts of Jesus' life and ministry, often contrasting with the Gospel of John.
- **The Twelve:** The core group of twelve apostles chosen by Jesus to be his closest followers and to whom he entrusted a special role in spreading his message.

5. FAQs on Turner, John, Session 8, John 6:1-71, Biblealearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: John Chapter 6

1. What is the geographical setting for the events described in John chapter 6, and why is it significant? The events of John 6 primarily take place in the northeastern region of the Sea of Galilee, specifically the area around the Golan and later in Capernaum. This setting follows Jesus' travels from Jerusalem after his debates with religious leaders. The chapter details Jesus feeding the multitudes on the Golan, withdrawing to a mountain, his disciples crossing the stormy sea to Capernaum, Jesus walking on water to meet them, and the subsequent gathering of people from the area and Tiberias who then encounter Jesus in Capernaum. The geographical transitions set the stage for different encounters and highlight Jesus' movements and the growing crowds following him.

2. What were the two main miracles that occurred in John chapter 6, and how did they lead to the subsequent conversations? The two primary miracles were the feeding of the multitude with a small amount of food and Jesus walking on water. The miraculous feeding, notable as the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels, demonstrated Jesus' power and provision, leading the people to believe he might be the prophesied prophesying. This desire to make him king by force prompted Jesus to withdraw. The subsequent miracle of Jesus walking on water occurred as the disciples were crossing the lake in a storm and served to reassure and bring them safely to shore. These miracles drew the crowds and others to seek Jesus, resulting in a series of conversations that moved from a wider group to his closer followers and finally to the twelve disciples.

3. What was the initial motivation of the crowd in seeking Jesus after the miracle of the loaves, and how did Jesus respond to their pursuit? The crowd initially sought Jesus not because they understood the significance of the miraculous sign he had performed, but because they had eaten their fill of the loaves and were likely hoping for more physical provision. Jesus directly addressed their superficial motives, urging them to work not for perishable food but for the food that endures to eternal life, which he, the Son of Man, would give. He emphasized that God the Father had placed his seal of approval on him, indicating his divine authority and the deeper spiritual nourishment he offered.

4. What was the "difficult teaching" that Jesus presented in John chapter 6, and why did it cause many of his disciples to turn back? The difficult teaching involved Jesus declaring himself to be the "bread of life" that came down from heaven and stating that unless one eats his flesh and drinks his blood, they have no life in them. This language was shocking and offensive to many, evoking notions of cannibalism and violating Jewish laws against consuming blood. Many of his disciples struggled to understand this metaphorical language about the necessity of intimately receiving and appropriating Jesus as the source of spiritual life and eternal sustenance through faith. Their inability to grasp this deeper meaning led many to stop following him.

5. How did Jesus use the metaphor of bread and the reference to manna in the wilderness to explain his identity and mission? Jesus drew a parallel between the manna provided by God to the Israelites in the wilderness and himself as the true bread from heaven. He clarified that it was not Moses who gave the lasting bread, but his Father. By calling himself the "bread of life," Jesus asserted that he is the essential nourishment for spiritual life, surpassing the temporary sustenance of the manna, which did not prevent death. He taught that just as the Israelites depended on the manna to survive physically, people must "eat" him – that is, believe in and receive him – to have eternal life.

6. How does the passage in John chapter 6 relate to the concept of faith, and what role does divine sovereignty play in understanding who comes to Jesus? Jesus links belief in him with receiving eternal life, indicating that faith is the means by which one appropriates him as the bread of life. However, he also introduces the concept of divine sovereignty by stating that no one can come to him unless the Father draws them. This suggests that while human faith is necessary, God's initiative and enabling are also at work in bringing people to Jesus. The chapter highlights that some people saw the signs but did not truly believe in their deeper meaning, while others were enabled by the Father to understand and come to Jesus.

7. What is the significance of Peter's response on behalf of the twelve at the end of John chapter 6, and how does Jesus' reply introduce a note of foreboding? When Jesus asks the twelve if they also want to leave, Peter responds with a powerful declaration of faith, acknowledging Jesus as the one who has the words of eternal life and affirming their belief and knowledge that he is the Holy One of God. This moment showcases the commitment of the core group of disciples. However, Jesus' immediate reply, "Have I not chosen you, the twelve, yet one of you is a devil?" introduces a stark contrast and a sense of foreboding, alluding to the future betrayal by Judas Iscariot. This ending underscores the complexity of Jesus' followers and hints at the challenges and betrayals to come.

8. How might the events and teachings in John chapter 6 relate to the later institution of the Eucharist (Lord's Supper) in the synoptic Gospels, even though it is not explicitly mentioned in John? While John's Gospel does not narrate the Last Supper in the same way as the synoptics, the language used in John 6, particularly concerning eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood, has been interpreted by some as a foreshadowing or a spiritual parallel to the Eucharist. The description of Jesus taking the loaves, giving thanks, and distributing them in John 6:11 echoes the actions at the Last Supper. The emphasis on receiving Jesus for eternal life, rather than just physical sustenance, aligns with the symbolic and spiritual significance of the bread and wine as representing Christ's body and blood, through which believers partake in his life and sacrifice. However, John's focus remains on the necessity of ongoing faith and an intimate relationship with Christ as the means of spiritual nourishment, which some theological traditions see as being reinforced by the practice of the Eucharist.