

John 6:41-51

What was the people's objection in vv. 41- 42? Jesus claimed to have come down from heaven which offended them. After all, they have known Him and His family all His life. They were confused and struggling to believe Him.

Their thinking was seemingly logical: one whose parents are known could not be from heaven (cf. Mark 6:3). They were ignorant of His true origin and full nature. They said He was the son of Joseph.¹

How did Jesus continue His previous claims (v. 44)? He explained that those of them whom the Father had chosen for salvation would believe in Him, regardless of their inability to reconcile His earthly and heavenly origins. The important thing for them to do was believe Him, not try to figure out all the difficult things to understand.....i.e. the apparent contradictions that they observed.²

Without God's help any assessment of God's Messenger will be faulty. No one can come to Jesus or believe in Him without divine help. People are so ensnared in the quicksand of sin and unbelief that unless God draws them (cf. v. 65), they are helpless and hopeless.³

What is the message of vv. 44, 65? Salvation is ultimately a work of God. We were spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1). A dead person is unresponsive to external stimuli. Dead people need a life-giver. God initiates the relationship by drawing us to Himself. In and of ourselves, we don't have the moral or spiritual ability to come to Christ (Romans 3:11). We like to feel as though we are in charge and that we seek after God and give ourselves to Him. In truth, He calls and we come.

Three times Jesus says, "I will raise him up at the last day" (vv. 40, 44, & 54). What was Jesus stating? The promise/the assurance of the resurrection of the believer.

Jesus clarified also that the Father's drawing (Gr. *helkyo*) is selective (cf. v. 37). He does not just draw everyone in the general sense of extending the gospel invitation to them. He selects some from the mass of humanity and brings them to Himself for salvation. It is that minority that Jesus will raise up to eternal life on the last day (cf. v. 40). This truth does not contradict 12:32, where Jesus said that He would draw (Gr. *helkyo*) all men to Himself. There He was speaking of all peoples (ethnic groups) without distinction, not just Jews but also Gentiles. He did not mean all individual people without exception.⁴

How does the Father draw people to himself (v. 45)? Having stated in strong terms that no man could come to Him unless the Father drew him, the Lord goes on to explain how the Father draws men. First of all, He quotes from Isaiah 54:13, "*And they shall all be taught by God.*" God not only simply chooses individuals; He does something about it. He speaks to their hearts through the teaching of His precious Word.⁵

Then man's own will is involved. Those who respond to the teaching of God's Word and listen and learn from the Father are the ones who come to Christ. Here again we see the two great truths of God's sovereignty and man's choice placed side by side in Scripture. They show us that salvation has a divine side and a human side as well.⁶

Note: When Jesus said, "*It is written in the prophets,*" He meant the books of the prophets. He meant Isaiah in particular, but the thought He expressed here is found throughout all the prophets. It is by the teachings of God's Word and by God's Spirit that men are drawn to God.⁷

What is the message of v. 47? In spite of the truth of the Father's drawing the elect to Himself, it is still imperative that they believe in Jesus. This is the human responsibility side of the equation. However, belief in Jesus is not something that deserves a reward from God; it is not meritorious. It is simply the proper response to God's working. The result is eternal or everlasting life, which the new believer begins to enjoy the moment he or she believes in Jesus. All of this is part of what Jesus meant when He claimed to be the bread of life. Eternal life was at stake, not just physical life.⁸

This is one of many verses in the New Testament that clearly teaches that salvation is not by works, not by law-keeping, not by church membership, not by obeying the Golden Rule, but simply by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.⁹

After Jesus restates his claim to be the Bread of Life (v. 48), How does he compare Himself to the manna (vv. 49-51) The Jews had previously brought up the subject of the manna in the wilderness and challenged the Lord Jesus to produce some food as wonderful as that. Here the Lord reminded them that their fathers had eaten the manna in the wilderness and were dead. In other words, manna was for this life only. It did not have any power to give eternal life to those who ate it.¹⁰

In contrast to the manna, the Lord Jesus spoke of Himself as the bread which comes down from heaven. If anyone ate this bread, he would not die. This did not mean that he would not die physically, but that he would have eternal life in heaven. Even if he did die physically, his body would be raised at the last day, and he would spend eternity with the Lord.¹¹

Jesus had been speaking of everlasting life, and had claimed that He, as the bread of life, could provide it. Now He clarified the distinction between the physical bread that God provided in the wilderness, and the spiritual bread that He provided in Jesus. The result of eating the manna was temporary satisfaction but ultimately physical death, but the result of believing in Jesus was permanent satisfaction and no death— i.e., victory over physical death and no threat of the second or spiritual death.¹²

¹ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 296.

² Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 192.

³ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 296.

⁴ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 192.

⁵ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1504.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 194.

⁹ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1504.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid..

¹² Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 194.