

THE BELIEF TEST



BELIEVING JESUS IS FOLLOWING JESUS

- *ALWAYS ...*
- *TOTALLY ...*
- *FOREVER ...*

1) THE PURPOSE OF THE MIRACLES — BELIEF ...

1. Miracle #1 — Jesus feeds the large crowd.

- (John 6:1–15 ESV) **After this** Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. 2 **And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick.** 3 Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. 4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. 5 Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that **a large crowd was coming toward him,** Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” 6 He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. 7 Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, 9 “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” 10 Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, **about five thousand in number.** 11 Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” 13 So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. 14 **When the people saw the sign that he had done,** they said, “**This is indeed the Prophet** who is to come into the world!” 15 Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to **make him king,** Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

- A. The purpose of this miracle was to reveal Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, so that they might believe and have life in his name (see John 20:30-31).
- B. Most of those present missed the purpose—they saw a prophet and potentially an earthly king, but they did not see their Messiah.
- C. Oblivious to their greatest need they failed to grasp his eternal purpose but instead imagined Jesus using his miracle power to satisfy their felt need for a king.

A felt need is a perceived need or desire that is based on an individual's subjective experience and limited by their knowledge and perceptions. Felt needs are influenced by a person's emotions, culture, social norms, life experiences and personal beliefs.

- D. The desire to fulfill felt needs often leads to a misperception of life that is rooted in the here and now and blinds a person to his true need for the forgiveness of sins and peace with God.

2. Miracle #2 — Jesus walks on the sea, gets into the boat and they immediately arrive on the shore.

- (John 6:16–21 ESV) When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 **The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.** 19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, **and they were frightened.** 20 But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” 21 Then **they were glad** to take him into the boat, and **immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.**
- A. God did that — “The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.”
- B. This fearful scene of Jesus walking on the rough sea was a sovereignly planned event to grow their faith in Jesus as God no matter the circumstances.
- C. This miracle is in keeping with John’s stated purpose.
- D. This needed lesson would serve them well for what lie ahead of them in fulfilling the spread of the gospel.
- E. God did that — the boat was immediately on shore.

2) A COMMON, TRAGIC MISTAKE FOR SEEKERS ...

1. The fascination of the crowd is sometimes the main motivation for a person seeking Jesus.

- (John 6:22–24 ESV) On the next day **the crowd** that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. 23 Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 So when **the**

crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, **seeking Jesus**.

2. The crowd finds “a Jesus” but not “Jesus” Jesus because their focus was on the here and now.

- (John 6:25–34 ESV) **When they found him** on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” 26 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **you are seeking me**, not because you saw signs, but **because you ate your fill of the loaves**. 27 **Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life**, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” 28 Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” 30 So they said to him, “**Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you?** What work do you perform?” 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” 32 Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you **the true bread from heaven**. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” 34 They said to him, “Sir, **give us this bread always**.”

- A. They were seeking Jesus because he had fed them.
- B. Their energy was directed by and devoted to food that perishes and not food that endures to eternal life.
- C. Their problem was not a lack of signs but unbelief.

3) WHO EATS THE BREAD OF LIFE ...

1. Only those whom the Father gives to Christ come to Christ and eat.

- (John 6:35–40 ESV) **Jesus said to them**, “**I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger**, and **whoever believes in me shall never thirst**. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet **do not believe**. 37 **All that the Father gives me will come to me**, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 **For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will**

but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but **raise it up on the last day**. 40 **For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life**, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

A. Jesus is the bread of life that satisfies a person’s hunger and thirst for eternal life.

B. Those who eat the bread of life—believe in Jesus—satisfy their hunger and thirst.

2. Grumblers do not feed on the bread of life.

- (John 6:41–51 ESV) **So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said**, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” 42 They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” 43 Jesus answered them, “**Do not grumble among yourselves**. 44 **No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him**. And I will raise him up on the last day. 45 **It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me**— 46 not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. 47 **Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life**. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 **This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die**. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. **If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever**. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

A. The Jews grumbled and contended with Jesus over his claim to be the bread of life.

6:41 grumbled ... γογγύζω [gogguzo] ... to murmur, mutter, grumble, say anything against in a low tone; of the cooing of doves; of those who confer secretly together; of those who discontentedly complain; to make complaining remarks or noises under one’s breath.

B. Here we find several characteristics of grumblers.

- i. They value their thoughts more than they value the words of Jesus.
- ii. They honor themselves over the Lord Jesus by preferring their opinions over Jesus’ words.

- iii. They are not drawn by the Father .
- iv. They have not heard and learned from the Father.
- v. They do not believe, will not eat the bread of life, will die ... and will **not** live forever.

3. The Jews fell into the quicksand of disputing about **how** Jesus might do this.

- (John 6:52–59 ESV) The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “**How can this man give us his flesh to eat?**” 53 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.** 54 **Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life,** and **I will raise him up on the last day.** 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, **so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.** 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. **Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.**” 59 Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

A. The arrogance of “the Jews” reached deadly levels as they challenged **how** the Son of God might accomplish his works as opposed to receiving and obeying his words.

B. The Jews argued among themselves distorting Jesus’ words regarding eating his flesh to have life.

C. Jesus did not explain himself but pushed them even further away with more hard words.

4. The fatal flaw of pretend disciples is that they only give the appearance of believing and loving Jesus.

- (John 6:60–65 ESV) When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “**This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?**” 61 **But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this,** said to them, “**Do you take offense at this?**” 62 Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 63

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 **But there are some of you who do not**

believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) 65 And he said, “**This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.**”

A. His disciples grumbled, took offense and refused to believe or accept what he was saying.

B. They rationalized their unbelief by arguing that no one could listen to something this difficult.

4) SEPARATING FROM “THE CROWD” ...

1. True believers know Jesus, believe everything he says and follow him.

- (John 6:66–71 ESV) **After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.** 67 So Jesus said to the twelve, “**Do you want to go away as well?**” 68 Simon Peter answered him, “**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,** 69 **and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.**” 70 Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” 71 He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

2. Believing and following Jesus will separate us from the crowd because false believers will turn back and go away from Jesus and from us.

- (1 John 2:19 ESV) **They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.** But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

A. Many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with Jesus because his words were too hard.

B. Not turning back but continuing to follow Jesus means being separated from those who do not fully believe Jesus.

3. Those who believe Jesus and follow him come to know and are filled with a wonderful revelation regarding his identity — He is the Holy One of God.