

## **John 5:32-47 and 6:1-15**

As you will remember, Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath.

Certainly, after 38 years of immobility, Jesus could have chosen any other day of the week, but He didn't.

No, He chose the Sabbath, and it made the Jews so angry that they were ready to kill Him.

So, what was the point?

Well, Jesus let the Jews make the point for Him.

He was **"equal with God."**

And because He was **"equal with God,"** He had the same rights that His Heavenly Father had, including the right to work on the Sabbath, or on any other day of

the week, for that matter --- **"My  
Father worketh hitherto, and I work."**

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Scripture doesn't tell us where this  
confrontation took place.

Was it in the streets of Jerusalem where  
those angry Jews had finally caught up  
to Him, or was it in a more formal  
setting?

If the latter was the case, then He might  
have been standing before the  
Sanhedrin.

However, whether the street or courtroom, it  
wasn't long before Jesus was in charge.

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Yes, He was **"equal with God,"** and He would  
give them six ways in which this was  
true.

First of all, He worked in tandem and in perfect agreement with His Heavily Father.

Secondly, even though He had left the ivory palaces nearly 33 years ago, He remained in perfect contact with His home base --- **"For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth."**

Thirdly, He is the Judge of all --- **"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."**

Fourthly, He must receive the same honour that the Father does --- **"He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."**

Fifthly, He is the source of eternal life. And by the way, He would make the supreme sacrifice that would allow Him to say

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

And sixthly, "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,  
29: And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

This is true of the unsaved that will stand before Him at the Great White Throne judgment, and the saved, which will have the value of their works judged by Jesus Christ.

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And even before the Jews could object, He took the words right out of their mouth.

John 5:31 **"If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true."**

Jesus wasn't admitting to any untruthfulness, simply pointing out the fact that He was fully aware that Deuteronomy 19:15 required two or three witnesses to establish the facts.

He had boldly proclaimed Himself to be **"equal with God,"** and He was quite prepared to supply four witnesses to back up His statements.

Actually, none of these witnesses were new. In fact, one of them had faithfully proclaimed Jesus' credentials from the time of creation.

However, Jesus began with John the Baptist.

John 5:33-35 **"Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.**

**34: But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.**

**35: He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."**

Yes, John had been well received by the general populace, but not by their leaders.

And their leaders hadn't been well received by John either --- **"O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"**

Nevertheless, John had faithfully performed his commission, and Jesus called him **"a burning and a shining light."**

Listen to his testimony in John 1:15-18

"John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

16: And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17: For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

Notice the words, "**for he was before me.**"

John was just a little older than his cousin Jesus, so he couldn't have been referring to their birth.

No, the point he was making was this: Jesus is the *eternal* one.

Then he says, "--- **of his fulness have all we received**" --- clearly a reference to His Deity.

And on the very next day he made this amazing announcement --- "**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**"

Could a mere sinful man take "**away the sin of the world?**"

No, only the perfect "**Son of God**" could do that.

And then, after John saw the sign of the dove, he said, "**And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.**"

No, John never presented Jesus as a mere man.

He consistently proclaimed Him to be "**the Son of God.**"

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V 34-35 "But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

35: He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

Yes, his testimony had been mighty, but now it was gone, snuffed out by a wicked king.

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But there was a greater light "**than that of John**" that could not be snuffed out.

V 36 "---- **for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.**"

The signs and wonders that these Jews had already seen, or at least heard about, should have been more than enough to

convince them that Jesus was their  
Messiah.

For instance, just think about the people  
Jesus raised from the dead.

Dwight L. Moody once said, no doubt with a  
twinkle in his eye, "You can't find any  
direction in the Bible how to conduct a  
funeral service. Jesus broke up every  
funeral He ever attended."

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And this brings us to witness No. 3.

V 37-38 **"And the Father himself, which hath  
sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye  
have neither heard his voice at any  
time, nor seen his shape.**

**38: And ye have not his word abiding in  
you: for whom he hath sent, him ye  
believe not."**

Remember that marvellous occasion when Jesus came up out of the waters of baptism? First of all, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended upon Him, and then God literally *spoke* from heaven ---

**"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."**

Actually, this is one of those rare occasions in Scripture when we are privileged to see all members of the Godhead together.

Of course, this third witness was of no value to those unbelieving Jews.

As Jesus pointed out, **"Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape."**

However, they had no excuse for missing God's fourth witness.

When it came to Scripture, they were supposed to be the experts.

And for centuries, the Old Testament Scriptures had unerringly predicted the coming of their Messiah, and they were not ignorant of the fact.

Listen to their words when King Herod questioned them concerning their Messiah's birthplace.

Math.2:4-5 **"And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.**

**5: And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet".**

No, their problem wasn't a lack of knowledge. It was a stony heart.

V 39-40 "Search the scriptures; for in them  
ye think ye have eternal life: and they  
are they which testify of me.

40: And ye will not come to me, that ye  
might have life."

"---and they are they which testify of me."

If you can't find Christ in the Old  
Testament, then you're missing the  
point.

For Joseph, Moses, and Isaac are all types  
of Jesus Christ.

The Passover Lamb and the Levitical  
sacrifices speak of Christ's work on  
the cross.

And all the prophets have given witness to  
their Messiah.

That's why Jesus could begin at Moses and  
all the prophets and expound "**unto them**

**in all the scriptures the things  
concerning himself."**

So, in actual fact, Jesus' fourth witness is  
a *multitude* of witnesses.

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John 5:40-43 **"And ye will not come to me,  
that ye might have life.**

**41: I receive not honour from men.**

**42: But I know you, that ye have not  
the love of God in you.**

**43: I am come in my Father's name, and  
ye receive me not: if another shall  
come in his own name, him ye will  
receive."**

Here Jesus looks far into Israel's future.

Having rejected their Messiah, a future  
generation will accept the Antichrist,  
the false Messiah, who will betray  
them.

It is a shortcoming that has always plagued Israel.

Jeremiah 2:13 **"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."**

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Jesus continues in V 44-47 **"How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?**

**45: Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.**

**46: For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.**

**47: But if ye believe not his writings,  
how shall ye believe my words?"**

From Genesis to Deuteronomy, Moses' writings had faithfully foreshadowed their coming King.

For example, in Deuteronomy 18:15, we read

**"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."**

But they weren't harkening.

And until they did, their house would be left unto them **"desolate."**

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The chapter ends, and Jesus' words are left unchallenged.

They had **"sought to slay him,"** but remained powerless.



Clearly, the Judge of all the earth was  
still in charge.

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And so we begin chapter 6.

V 1 **"After these things Jesus went over the  
sea of Galilee, which is the sea of  
Tiberias."**

Actually, the sea of Tiberius has three  
names, being called the Sea of Galilee  
and the lake of Gennesaret.

And on its western shore, you would have  
found the City of Tiberias, which Herod  
had enlarged and beautified, and  
changed its name in honour of the  
emperor.

So it is quite likely that this same Herod  
had renamed this little body of water,  
which already had one name too many,  
the sea of Tiberias.

V 2 **"And a great multitude followed him,  
because they saw his miracles which he  
did on them that were diseased."**

Yes, **"the common people heard him gladly."**

Unlike their leaders who ignored Jesus'  
mighty works, they **"followed him,  
because they saw his miracles."**

Of course, that doesn't mean they recognized  
Him as the Son of God, or even as their  
Messiah.

But their curiosity was aroused, and they  
wondered if He might be Elijah, or  
Jeremiah, or one of their other  
prophets risen from the dead.

V 3-4 **"And Jesus went up into a mountain,  
and there he sat with his disciples.  
4: And the passover, a feast of the  
Jews, was nigh."**

Here again, one of God's special feasts is referred to as "**a feast of the Jews.**" Obviously, they were totally unaware of its deeper meaning, and, of course, had no idea that the *real* Passover Lamb was already among them.

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The feeding of the five thousand is recorded in all four Gospels.

This is quite significant, for in most cases, John's Gospel doesn't repeat the events found in the other three.

Clearly, the Holy Spirit is pointing to the special significance of this event.

And because each of the Gospels record different aspects of this miracle, there are some who point to the seeming contradictions as a proof of the unreliability of the Scriptures.

Actually, these differences only serve to bring out their own unique view of Jesus' character.

In this particular case, John's Gospel continues to emphasize the fact that He is the Son of God.

However, in order to appreciate the full significance of this most important event, we are going to include information from the other Gospels.

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Just prior to this miracle, the disciples had returned from their missionary journeys, and no doubt were completely exhausted.

However, there was no possibility of recuperation.

In fact, the press of this rather demanding crowd was so great that **"they had no leisure so much as to eat."**

And not only were they weary, but they had just received some shocking news.

John the Baptist had met a gruesome death at the hands of King Herod.

It was just too much, so Jesus said, ---

**"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while."**

So they slipped away quietly, but to no avail. --- **"the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him."**

By this time, I think I would have lost my patience, but not Jesus.

In fact, Matthew's Gospel tells us, He **"was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick."**

And so it was, after another long day of teaching and healing, Jesus ended up with 5000 hungry men on His hands, and not a store in sight.

I'm sure you ladies know what it's like to have unexpected company arrive when you have nothing in the house.

What would you do with 5000 men, besides women and children?

V 5-6 **"When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?**

**6: And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do."**

Actually, Judas was the man with the bag.

So, if it were a question of money, he would have been the logical choice.

But it wasn't about money.

Jesus' question was about availability ---

**"Whence shall we buy bread?"**

In this case, Philip would have been the right man to ask.

You see, they were quite close to Bethsaida, which was Philip's home town.

Yes, Philip would have known exactly where you could buy food.

And since the multitude had come to them out of the cities in that area, he probably knew many of these hungry people.

However, that wasn't the real reason why Jesus asked him.

V 6 says **"And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do."**

No, Jesus didn't need Philip's help. He was testing him.

You see, Philip was one of the very first disciples to follow Jesus.

Nathaniel had introduced him to Jesus at the beginning of His ministry, and Philip had followed Him ever since.

As a result, he would have been at the wedding in Cana of Galilee where Jesus turned the water into wine.

In fact, Philip had probably seen every one of Jesus' miracles.

And as we all know, Scripture says **"unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required:"**

Yes, *midterm exams* had arrived, and Philip flunked the test.

V 7 **"Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient**



**for them, that every one of them may  
take a little."**

Now, any Israelite could have said that.

A pennyworth represented an average day's wages, so two hundred pennyworth would be no mean sum.

And when you're dealing with a crowd of very hungry people, taking just a little is really not an option.

No, Philip hadn't measured up to the light he had.

Nevertheless, his lack of faith provides us with a very important lesson.

If we limit our Lord to strictly natural solutions, the cost will always be astronomical, and the results mediocre.

And no matter how insurmountable the problem becomes, the Lord knows what He will do.

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V 8-9 "One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,  
9: There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes:  
but what are they among so many?"

No doubt Andrew had been scurrying around to see what was available, and the results had been rather disappointing.

However, Jesus wasn't disappointed.

He had one lunch and one heart that was willing to share.

V 10 "And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand."

At this point, I have to ask a question, actually two questions.

At the wedding in Cana, why did Jesus ask the servants to **"Fill the waterpots with water?"**

Did He really need water to make wine?

In like manner, why did He use a little boy's lunch to feed 5000 men, besides women and children?

After all, John 1:3 clearly tells us that, **"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."**

He's the Creator, right?

Then why didn't He just make the wine and this tremendous banquet from nothing?

Why did He get the servants and this little boy involved?

Obviously, it's because Jesus wants to *include* us in His miracles.

Oh, we don't have much to offer, but neither did that little boy.

And wouldn't he have had a story to tell his mother when he got home?

V 11 **"And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would."**

Did you notice that Jesus gave thanks for the food?

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, **"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."**

Yes, we should be thankful for our daily bread and for all the other mercies and blessings we receive.

And by the way, do you want to know what the will of God is for your life?

Well, you can start right here --- **"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."**

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And what was Jesus giving thanks for?  
Was He thanking His Heavenly Father for  
enough food to supply 5000-plus people?  
Well, perhaps He was, for He was thanking  
the Lord in faith.

However, it almost appears that He was  
thanking His Heavenly Father for **"five  
barley loaves, and two small fishes."**

Are you ever disappointed by the amount of  
talent and ability God has given you?

Thank Him for it!

That's all He really needs to bless  
multitudes!

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And did you notice that Jesus didn't get involved in passing out the food?

No, **"he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples"** gave it to the crowd.

And isn't that the way the Bread of Life is distributed?

He gives it to us, and we are to give it to others.

**"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."**

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And look at the results!

There was no more talk of taking just **"a little,"** for it was a feast!

In fact, they could take **"as much as they would."**

And no one had to worry about taking the last piece, for there were leftovers.

I wonder if that little boy got a big bag of leftovers to take home to his mother? It certainly would have made his story much more believable.

V 12-13 **"When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. 13: Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten."**

He did the same thing at the wedding, didn't He?

In fact, He had made between 72 and 114 gallons of wine, far more than any wedding would need.

So we have to ask the question, Why does Jesus make so much?

I don't really know, but obviously that's  
the way He works.

And, according to Eph.3:20-21, that's the  
way His Heavenly Father works also ---

**"Now unto him that is able to do  
exceeding abundantly above all that we  
ask or think, according to the power  
that worketh in us,**

**21: Unto him be glory in the church by  
Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world  
without end. Amen."**

So, if you absolutely insist on trusting  
Jesus, you'll just have to get used to  
--- too much.

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Yes, Jesus is always generous, but He's not  
wasteful.



He told His disciples to **"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."**

*Waste not, want not* --- that's what my mother always said, and I think it's still good advice.

V 14 **"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world."**

Jesus had done many miracles of healing, even on that very day, but this one rang a special bell.

You can almost hear them saying, "Free food!"

Now, I'm sure there were many poor folk among them who had never eaten such a meal before.

However, the point is this.

Their real interest in Jesus was based on material things, and on material things alone.

They weren't looking for God's promised Messiah. They were looking for a free lunch.

V 15 **"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."**

The blessings of God's kingdom were right at the doors, but they weren't interested.

They had their own agenda, and they were determined that Jesus would fit into it, even to the point of taking **"him by force."**

They wanted a King who would supply their temporal needs and free them from Rome's rule, and they wanted Him now.

Yes, the crowd was getting out of hand, so

**"Jesus departed again into a mountain  
himself alone."**

How often we miss God's blessings by  
insisting on doing things our way!