



Lesson Title: The I Am's of John—I Am the Bread of Life



Key Concept: Throughout the Book of John, Jesus used the Old Testament declaration "I Am" to reveal the different facets of his relationship with us. Jesus, the bread of life, sustains us and provides eternal life when we believe in him.



Scriptures:

³³ "The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day." ³⁵ Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

(John 6:33–35 *New Living Translation*)

Context Scriptures: John 6; John 1:14; Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 6:9–13; Exodus 16



Lesson Thoughts:

The miracle of the loaves and fishes is a favorite story largely because of the young boy who offered his lunch. Jesus blessed and multiplied the lad's five loaves and two fish, and fed a crowd of five thousand in abundance. Yet, for all of its importance, this story does not stand alone. John provided context: "It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration" (John 6:4). This feast commemorated God's miracles and redemption of their Jewish ancestors, but the crowd didn't realize they were witnessing miracles on the same scale and hearing the greatest redemptive message for all the world. When the people continued to follow after Jesus because he had fed them, he said, "Don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you" (John 6:27). In their conversation with Jesus, they associated what he said with the feast at hand and responded, "After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat'" (John 6:31).

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It was a pivotal moment for Jesus to contrast the perishable with the eternal, and so he proclaimed, “I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. . . . Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh” (John 6:48–51). The Jews knew the manna had sustained their ancestors daily and that it miraculously came from heaven. But they were confused by Jesus’ words that he was the bread that came down from heaven. Even though the crowd had just experienced a miracle, they complained when Jesus revealed the spiritual truth that he is the bread of life. Jesus’ “I Am” proclamation changed the focus from looking back at the manna in the wilderness to looking to the present and future hope of daily provision and eternal life in him.

John described Jesus as the Word made flesh and stirred echoes of the bread of life found in Deuteronomy 8:3: “People do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” Jesus purposefully tied into this imagery of manna in the wilderness when he described himself as the bread of life that sustains. When we believe that Jesus is the bread of life and follow after him, he promises to sustain us in this life and in the life to come.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) What is the significance of Jesus stating, “I am the bread of life” following the miracle of the loaves and fishes?
- 2) Why is the bread of life such powerful imagery? How has your understanding of this powerful imagery been changed by this lesson?
- 3) Why do you think the crowd had such difficulty with what Jesus was saying?
- 4) Manna means “what is it?” How does this apply to the crowd’s lack of understanding of Jesus as the bread of life?
- 5) How does Jesus—the bread of life—sustain you daily?

Next Lesson: I Am the Good Shepherd

Notes and Reflections

- 1) Read The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13. What do you think about daily bread in this prayer?

- 2) Pair a reading of Exodus 16 (God's provision of manna) and John 6 for a brief study on why Jesus used the analogy of bread for himself.

Notes and Reflections, cont.