

Lesson 13

Proper 13

The Holy Gospel: John 6:22–35

The crowd that enjoyed the miraculous meal Jesus provided for them in the wilderness followed Him back to Capernaum. They had seen Jesus' disciples leave in their boat without Him. Unknown to them, Jesus had gone to the disciples during the night, walking on the water, again displaying to them His divine authority over all of creation. Jesus ignored the crowd's question about all of this and got right to the point. The Greek text has the very formal "Answering them, Jesus said" and His *amen, amen*, both of which indicate that what Jesus was saying was weighty with importance. They asked about *Him*; His answer was about *them*. He wanted them to know that they were looking for Him for the wrong reason: to get more free food.

190. Why is "the reason why" so important in our coming to Jesus and to God? How might we be guilty of working for "food that perishes" in our coming to Jesus?

The food they were hoping for from Jesus was not unimportant to those who looked for Him. Many were day laborers and the going day's wages barely supported a family from day to day. It's understandable that they had bread on their minds, and for the same reason, had wanted to make Him king. Jesus warned them to look beyond bread.

191. How may we get beyond working just for "food that perishes" to working for the "food that endures to eternal life"?

The crowd thought Jesus' saying "[labor] for the food that endures to eternal life" urged greater *religious effort*, and they asked, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus explained that this involves something much more basic than what we can do: ____.

192. In the light of what they had already seen the day before, why did the crowd challenge Jesus to give them a sign to prove His claim? Why did they point to the manna their forefathers ate in the desert?

193. Jesus corrected their mistaken view of the manna in the wilderness and of Moses' role in it. How did Jesus then direct their thinking away from just comparing the manna in the wilderness and the meal He had supplied for them?

As John told of Jesus' identifying Himself as the bread of life, his Greek made the statement solemnly emphatic. This is the first of seven word pictures by which Jesus described Himself in John's Gospel. All are begun with a majestic "I AM." In the Greek, using the personal pronoun along with the verb (which already has *I* in it) emphasizes what is being said. *Eimi* means "I am"; when the *ego* is added, its impact is "I, I alone, am." All seven of Jesus' word pictures begin with *Ego eimi*. They echo the words of Exodus 3:14 in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, where the Lord identified Himself to Moses as *Ego eimi*, "I AM" Yahweh.

194. How do these "I AM" statements of Jesus underscore the theme of John's Gospel? (See John 1:1-4, 14; 20:30-31.) What does it say to your faith that Jesus said, "I am the bread of life"?

The Old Testament Lesson: Exodus 16:2-15

One month had passed since the Israelites had left Egypt, passing safely through the sea and escaping the pursuing Egyptians. Moses had led them down the Sinai peninsula to keep the appointment with Yahweh at "the mountain of God." They had experienced God's special care at Marah, where, at God's direction, Moses threw a piece of wood into the bitter water, and it became sweet and drinkable. But a month of traveling evidently had consumed provisions brought with them, and the people began to grumble against Moses and Aaron. Suddenly Egypt sounded good to them again. They had been slaves, but now they remembered only having all the food they wanted. They thought life as slaves was preferable to starving to death in the desert. The Lord responded and promised to ____.

195. What did Moses make them see regarding their grumbling against him and Aaron? How did the Lord again display His presence to the people? What was the deeper reason behind the Lord's providing bread from heaven for His hungry people?

Quail flying into the camp might have been seen as just a fortunate phenomenon of nature, although it continued regularly. Bread on the desert floor was another matter.

196. How did the people react to finding the "fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost" when the dew burned off?

197. How does this Old Testament Lesson tie in with today's Holy Gospel?