I AM the Bread of Life Study

Our focus is on John 6:35***. 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty…'***

Matthew, Mark and Luke gradually disclose Jesus' identity as God incarnate throughout their unfolding narratives. The gospel of John seems to be different. What is so obviously different about John's gospel?

John 6:35 is the first of 7 'I Am' type statements in John's gospel.

- What is significant about 'I Am' claims by Jesus? See Exodus 3:14
- What is significant about 7 such statements?

Consider the list of 'I Am' statements and the list of 7 signs. How might each seven function in John's gospel?

The 7 'I Am' statements in John's gospel	The 7 signs in John's gospel
• I am *the bread of life* (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51). • I am the *light of the world* (John 8:12; 9:5). • I am *the gate* (John 10:7, 9). • I am *the good shepherd* (John 10:11, 14). • I am the *resurrection* and the *life* (John 11:25). • I am the *way*, the *truth* and the *life* (John 14:6). • I am the *true vine* (John 15:1, 5).	• Water into wine at Cana (John 2:1-11) • The healing of a royal official's son (John 4:46-54) • The restoration of a paralyzed man (John 5:1-15) • The feeding of five thousand (John 6:1-14) • Jesus walking on water (John 6:15-21) • The healing of a man born blind (John 9:1-12) • The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44)

Read John 6:25 – 59

1. Jesus had just fed 5000 and then these Jews ask for sign like manna in the desert? What were they thinking?
2. Bread was the food that everybody ate. Everybody ate the manna in the desert. Bread is not caviar, cake or cream puffs that only a minority enjoy. Was Jesus meaning his offer of true life was for all?
3. Why did Jesus speak in metaphors to Jews who seemed to take his every word literally?
4. With the benefit of history we can appreciate Jesus' 'I AM' declarations of divinity. But what if we had been there in the crowd? How would we have responded?

In John 6:51 Jesus said ***'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'***

1. Contrast this with the limited supply of bread to the 5000, where leftovers needed to be collected because food runs out quickly. How different is the 'living bread' which enables people to 'live forever'?

These are watershed statements that summon one response or another

The response of the Jews:

- John 6:42, ***"Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"***
- Later in John 10:33 they will try to stone him and utter, ***"We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because <u>you, a mere man, claim to be God</u>."***

In contrast, the response of the disciples is seen in 6:66-68.

> ***66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.***
>
> ***67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve.***
>
> ***68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."***

What about us?

1. Was Jesus a mere man, or was he God incarnate?

Jesus said, ***'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' (John 6:51)***

- If Jesus was a mere man then he was deluded evil liar, claiming to be God. Hardly a model citizen!
- If Jesus was God incarnate, he was and is the bread of life, given for our rescue and redemption.

2. How do we respond to the man who claimed to be God and did the things that only God could do? In the words of C.S. Lewis,

"You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

3. John 6:35***. 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty…'*** It raises some questions:

- Are we hungry?
- Are we thirsty?
- Where do we turn for true life?
- Pray together