

# The Gospel of John

Knowing Jesus through  
the I AM Statements

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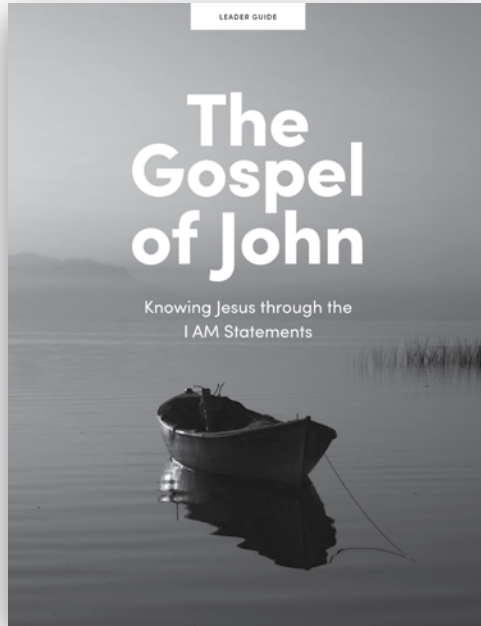
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## ALSO AVAILABLE

An item related to teaching this Personal Study Guide is the *The Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus through the I AM Statements* (January Bible Study 2026) *Leader Guide* (item number: 005851835). The Leader Guide includes commentary, teaching plans, and a redeemable code for a digital download with additional helps.

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# Introduction

The Gospel of John has blessed the hearts of God's people through the centuries. **Some of the most widely known and best-loved texts in the Word of God are from John.**

*“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”*

**JOHN 3:16**

*“I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again.”*

**JOHN 6:35**

*“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”*

**JOHN 11:25B-26A**

*“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

**JOHN 14:6B**

Because of these and many other passages, it is not surprising that the Gospel of John has been a source of blessing to generations of God's people.

## The Uniqueness of John

All four of my children have watched all three of the *Chronicles of Narnia* movies, but not before they read the books adapted to create the movies. However, reading the books prior to seeing the movies produced an outcome I did not expect: disdain for those who would create movies that do not strictly adhere to details and plot lines given in the books. All of my children were put out at the liberty movie-makers took with the original details presented in the novels. Though the story still held together as a whole, the fact that not every detail lined up was something they found difficult to accept, much less appreciate.

To some, reading John's Gospel after reading the other three (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) can produce a similar feeling. The other three, known as the Synoptic Gospels, look at the life of Jesus from similar viewpoints and employ very similar language. But John is quite different. **If the Synoptic Gospels are the book, then John's Gospel is the movie. This is not to say that John's Gospel is contrary to the others; it contains some different scenes, but the story is the same.** Some of these differences are as simple as omitting or adding things that the other Gospels have or don't have.

John omits a lot of things at least some of the Synoptics include.

- John gives no account of Jesus's birth.
- John gives no mention of Jesus's baptism (though he presupposes his readers have knowledge of it).
- John gives no account of the Lord's Supper.
- John gives no account of Jesus's ascension.
- John gives no examples of Jesus teaching in the form of a parable.

John also includes things the other Gospels omit. For example:

- John alone speaks of Jesus changing the water to wine.
- John alone tells the story of Nicodemus.
- John alone tells the story of the woman of Samaria.
- John alone tells the story of Lazarus.
- John alone gives us lengthy discourses spoken by Jesus to His own disciples during the final week in Jerusalem.

Given all of this, it's important to note that John is under the conviction that what he's writing has a specific purpose, a purpose that he explicitly states in John 20:31: *"But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

## The Big Picture of John's Gospel

John believed the life and mission of Jesus held immense significance for all of existence and history. That's why he begins his story by setting Jesus within the context of God the Father and His eternal purposes for the universe. **Whereas other Gospels might start in the quaint and humble village of Bethlehem, John starts within the nature of God Himself.** Luke's Gospel is careful to date his account with historical figures like Roman emperors and Jewish priests, but John takes his readers to the beginning of time. Where the Synoptic authors wind us through the Old Testament lineages and prophecies that point to Christ from history, John takes us into eternity past to see that Jesus has always been.

John does this specifically in the first eighteen verses of his Gospel, which are commonly referred to as the "prologue." In poetic and somewhat philosophical fashion, John introduces Jesus and His significance with more verbs than adjectives, as if there is no better way to understand the nature of Jesus than by examining His actions and behaviors. It is difficult for even the most insincere or begrudging reader to not be captivated from the outset with the person of Jesus. This is all the more true as one reads about Jesus's teaching, conversations, miracles, and proclamations about Himself in the chapters that follow. By the time the crucifixion and resurrection occur, some first-time readers may be shocked but not altogether surprised. Though the bulk of John's Gospel is committed to communicating the life of Jesus prior to His death and resurrection, the final two chapters give an account of the deeds and significance of Jesus Christ after His earthly ministry comes to a close.



## Theological Themes in John's Gospel

Though it is wrong to say that there is no chronology to John's Gospel on the whole, **it is a mistake to read John's Gospel as if the events he recorded happened in order of one another as time unfolded.** Like all the Gospel writers, John built his account strategically, under the authority and leadership of the Holy Spirit, and as a result, one can soon see that the Gospel affords one to pick up on a number of theological themes that weave throughout. Let us consider a few of them, ending with the one we will study more thoroughly every session in this study.

### The Doctrine of Salvation

Early in John's Gospel, John the Baptist proclaims, **"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"** (John 1:29). But how? John answers this question with virtually every aspect of his Gospel. With every conversation, teaching, or miracle, John takes his readers on a journey to the crucifixion, where the payment for sin was made, and then on to the empty tomb, where death was defeated.

It will probably not surprise the reader that a Gospel bent toward speaking of Jesus in poetic and philosophical terms also does not shy away from speaking of our salvation with lofty theological truths. **John comfortably combines theological realities about salvation that some find impossible to reconcile.** For example, John writes of many miracles as a means of validating Jesus's identity and calling his readers to belief yet also speaks of Jesus's disappointment that signs are demanded by people (John 4:48). Additionally, John holds human beings responsible for belief but equally leans into the fact that faith is the result of God's sovereign choice. **Even when people's hearts are hard and resistant, God's plan always stays on track, and the salvation of men is not immune to this reality.**

### Eschatology (The Doctrine of Last Things)

Christians live with an "already, not yet" perspective regarding Jesus's kingship. In Jesus, the kingdom of God has come, but we must wait for it to come again in its fullness. The Holy Spirit is like a preview of the awesome life we'll have in the new world created

by God. It's like a downpayment or a guarantee that something incredible is coming up. While we live in these earthly bodies, we can feel a sense of longing for the day we'll be fully redeemed and experience this new and better life that awaits us. **John emphasizes the opportunity Christians have to enjoy the present realities of Jesus's kingdom in the power of the Spirit—but not in a way that leads one to not long for Jesus's final return.**

### The Holy Spirit

It would be irresponsible to speak of eschatology in John's Gospel and not elaborate further on the importance of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit descends upon Jesus at His baptism (John 1:32-34), and Jesus is uniquely endowed with the Spirit (John 3:34). In the farewell discourse of John 14–16, Jesus repeatedly describes the Holy Spirit as the “Helper” (*paraklētos*), giving us more than a glimpse as to how believers experience the Holy Spirit until Jesus's return. **So prominent is the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John that one wonders just how trinitarian Christian theology could be without it.**

### Jesus's Identity

John's portrayal of Jesus is crucial to understanding this book. John calls Jesus “the Word” (John 1:1), signifying that God is expressing Himself through Jesus, who is both one with God and distinct from Him, bringing to life the hopes of the prophets. Another prominent title for Jesus in John's Gospel is *the Son of God*, or simply, *the Son*. While “Son of God” can be similar to “Messiah,” it's special in how Jesus, as God's Son, relates to God the Father. The term “Son of Man” also takes on a unique meaning in John's Gospel compared to the other three Gospels. The Son of Man is lifted up in death to bring eternal life to believers, being the bridge between heaven and earth, sharing heavenly knowledge.

**The “I Am” statements of Jesus speak to Jesus's identity. In these, Jesus evokes the personal name of the God of Israel and espouses His equality and unity with God the Father.** Each of these reveals a different facet of Jesus's nature and character, and they teach followers of Jesus how to relate to Him and what we can expect from Him. It's to six of these “I Am” statements that we now turn.

# 1

## THE BREAD OF LIFE

### JOHN 6

On the two or three nights a week that our schedules allow it, our family shares a home-cooked meal around the kitchen table. After the table is set, plates made, cups filled, the blessing asked, and a few bites taken, one of the common questions my wife will ask all to answer is, “What is your high and low of the day?” As one might expect, a senior pastor, a biblical counselor, a middle school girl, and a grade school-aged boy all have different perceptions about what is “high” and what is “low,” and each have different experiences to evaluate and share.

- The senior pastor’s “high” was a gospel conversation with someone new to the congregation who, as it turns out, was a believer but had never been baptized.
- The grade schooler’s “low” was being left out of a conversation at school about video games that his parents do not let him play.
- The biblical counselor’s “low” was a client’s persistent struggle with anxiety related to the strain of raising two children with autism.
- The middle school girl’s “high” was the recognition she received by her rock climbing coach for a particular “problem” she had solved with surprising skill and speed.

Given our different lives and responsibilities, this type of variety is most frequent, but there are days when we all have the same high and all have the same low. On the third day of our summer vacation last year, all agreed that snorkeling was the high and having to leave that day was the low. **Unusually powerful experiences that we share have a way of uniting us and transforming us.**

Perhaps this is why the account of Jesus feeding the five thousand is, apart from the resurrection, the only miracle in all four Gospel accounts. Each Gospel author has reasons for their accounts and how they relate to the big picture of their particular telling of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection, but John's treatment of the story stands out, for from that miracle flows a series of conversations that reveal something core to Jesus's identity and purpose, the demands they have on our identity and purpose, and the obstacles that frustrate the two coming together. Understanding what it means for Jesus to be the *Bread of Life* begins with the account of Jesus extending life through the miraculous provision of bread.

## Bread for Life

### JOHN 6:1-15

John is keen to tell the story of the feeding of the five thousand in context with events prior—namely, the healing of a disabled man on a Sabbath day and the subsequent conversation between Jesus and unbelieving Jewish leaders in which Jesus equated Himself with God. These leaders were so put out, due to the perceived blasphemy that He spoke, that they began to discuss how they could kill Him. Jesus left these people and went out into the Galilean villages in search of a more receptive audience to His identity and purpose. Galileans were essentially peasants, living hand to mouth, day by day. Survival and hunger were daily struggles. **This transition of audience, from the educated elite to the uneducated poor, highlights Jesus's uniqueness as One able to love and serve all, regardless of background or status.**

Interestingly, Jesus was followed by those who had seen Him perform similar miracles. Taken with the entire context of John 6, it seems that no matter what one's view of Jesus is, all are still only interested in Him to the extent that He can do something miraculous for them without challenging their belief systems. As we will see, there is no version of following Jesus on our own terms. Any attempt to do so is to use Jesus, not follow Him.

In verse 4, John interjects a small but apparently important detail with regard to the Jewish calendar: The Passover was near. It's difficult to know with certainty why John mentions the Passover

just prior to the miracle Jesus would soon perform. Perhaps he is pointing out just how blind the Jewish people were to Jesus's true identity. In their very midst stood the fulfillment of the Passover, effectively on the Passover, yet none recognized Him as such. Nevertheless, reading the account on this side of redemption exposes a great irony: Keeping the Passover feast forced Jewish people to remember the time they feasted on a sacrificial lamb. Here, in person, was the Sacrificial Lamb, miraculously providing a temporal feast that would point to the eternal one available in Himself, as we will soon explore. Even Philip's short-sightedness about what Jesus was capable of is illustrative of this irony.

In verses 8-15, John doesn't pretend to describe how Jesus did what only Jesus could do, but he is keen to describe the results. Everyone ate as much as they could, and twelve baskets of leftovers were available for others who might have had needs. **This is the only proper way to describe anything that Jesus does for us. He gives us all that we need and more, not only in His daily care for us, but most importantly in His death and resurrection for us.** Yet even this was not enough for the thousands that benefitted. Rather than see the miracle for what it was—a signpost pointing to Himself as the Bread of Life—the people sought to enthrone Him as an earthly king.

Jesus withdrew from them because the passion these people displayed wasn't truly for who He is at His core—a fact that holds immense significance. It's common for people to be enthusiastic about Jesus without analyzing their understanding of Him first. Proverbs 19:2 says, **“Even zeal is not good without knowledge, and the one who acts hastily sins.”** This is true of many who claim to follow Jesus. Do they follow Him as He actually is or as they understand Him to be? Are they embracing a version of Jesus that isn't entirely aligned with who He really is? If one's zeal for Jesus is directed toward a distorted or incomplete image of Jesus, it doesn't honor the authentic Jesus, and He may withdraw.

Beware the temptation to make Jesus out to be what He does not set Himself out to be. This may be the most frightening form of idolatry. The religious leaders made Him out to be a law-breaker, but He was the fulfillment of the law. Peasants sought to make Him a political king. We are no different. **In our day, there remains a general conviction that the primary aim of Christ's life, death, and resurrection was to provide us with a fulfilled life. Such a belief may save us from low self-esteem, but it does not honor God.**

## A CLOSER LOOK

### Passover

The Passover was the most important Hebrew feast, commemorating their deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

In Jewish life, a festival was a regular religious celebration remembering God's great acts of salvation in the history of His people. Traditionally called "feasts" in the English Bibles, these can conveniently be categorized according to frequency of celebration. Many of them were timed according to cycles of seven. The cycle of the week, with its climax on the seventh day, provided the cyclical basis for much of Israel's worship: As the seventh day was observed, so was the seventh month (which contained four of the national festivals), and the seventh year, and the fiftieth year (the year of Jubilee), which followed seven cycles of seven years each. Not only were the festivals as a whole arranged with reference to the cycle of the week (Sabbath), two of them (the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles) lasted for seven days each. Each began on the fifteenth of the month—at the end of two cycles of weeks and when the moon was full. Pentecost also was celebrated on the fifteenth of the month and began fifty days after the presentation of the firstfruits—the day following seven times seven weeks.

Those hearing Jesus's teaching about bread would have the Passover in the back of their minds.<sup>1</sup>

## Bread of Life

JOHN 6:22-59

### Material Needs (vv. 22-33)

The drive to use Jesus for one's earthly needs is relentless, as illustrated by the Galileans' pursuit of Jesus in Capernaum. They needed to break their overnight fast, and nothing was easier or more entertaining than Jesus providing so much from so little. Jesus, in response, is ever gracious. He confronts their motives, calls for a course correction, and clarifies His identity and purpose for them.

*Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Don't work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal of approval on him."*

JOHN 6:26-27

One could give these peasants a pass with regard to their materialism (though Jesus clearly does not). They remind us of Tevye in the musical *The Fiddler on the Roof*, who laments that God had made him poor, unwilling to give a "small fortune." One can more easily judge a wealthy person for being a materialist, but those who live in poverty want for material needs all the more and can easily idolize someone or something that provides what they want most.

This is why Jesus boldly confronts those He abundantly cared for just a day earlier. **Their fascination with Him, He states, is based primarily on His ability to provide materially for them, and this fixation prohibits them from seeing who He really is and what the prior day's miracle was all about.** Feeding thousands from so little was a sign pointing to Jesus's purpose to provide eternal life to all those who would "feast" on Him by grace through faith. It's this faith one should be hungry for.

Jesus's invitation to believe in Him for eternal life is met with yet another request for what they originally came to Jesus for—a miracle—only this time, they make their request under the guise of Jesus needing to prove Himself, as if yet another miracle that served their material needs would somehow validate Him further in their eyes. In verse 31, they bring up Moses and the miraculous manna from heaven, thinking Jesus fits the bill, but Jesus sets the record straight once more: It wasn't Moses who provided the manna; it was God, His Father—the same God who walked with Moses, now offering them the true sustenance, the genuine bread from heaven (v. 33).

## Symbolism of Bread In the Bible

Jesus's statement that He is the Bread of Life is packed full of references to Jewish history and spiritual teachings. Look up these passages to match the bread reference to its historical or spiritual application.

<b>UNLEAVENED • BREAD</b> (Deuteronomy 16:3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• constant communion with God</li></ul>
<b>MANNA •</b> (Exodus 16:32-34)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• utter dependence on God for His provision</li></ul>
<b>FIRST FRUITS • GRAIN OFFERING</b> (Leviticus 2:8-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the sacrifice of Jesus</li></ul>
<b>BREAD OF • PRESENCE</b> (Leviticus 24:5-7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• memorial to the Jews' exodus from Egypt</li></ul>
<b>DAILY BREAD •</b> (Matthew 6:11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sustenance for the priests</li></ul>
<b>BROKEN BREAD •</b> (Luke 22:19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• giving God our best</li></ul>



### **Bread for All (vv. 34–35)**

As they express a flicker of spiritual longing, asking for this heavenly bread in verse 34, we witness the unveiling of their earthly-bound perceptions as the conversation unfolds. In response to their plea, Jesus boldly proclaims in verse 35, “I am the bread of life.” *Those who approach me won’t hunger, and those who believe in me won’t thirst.* This pivotal declaration is the first of six “I Am” statements in the Gospel of John, echoing God’s self-disclosure found in Exodus 3:14: “I AM WHO I AM.” While the other three Gospels may present this differently, **the essence of Jesus recognizing His unique role in humanity’s connection to God shines brightly in these words: “I am the bread of life.”**

This statement encapsulates the crux of Jesus’s mission—He is the answer to the deepest yearnings of the human heart. Bread, for Jesus’s audience, symbolized sustenance, the very essence of life itself. It remains a vital nourishment for millions across the globe, and even those with gluten-free diets strive to make breads that mirror actual bread, which shows just how desirable and important it is in our diet. Such a fact emphasizes the universal significance of Jesus’s role as the Bread of Life. Be it a biscuit at a late-night diner or a loaf at a Michelin Star restaurant, bread is for everyone, and so is Jesus.

Moreover, the title “Bread of Life” speaks volumes about Jesus’s fulfilling and satisfying nature. If you’ve ever filled up on bread at a restaurant while waiting for your main course, you know all too well how instantly fulfilling and satisfying bread can be. So, too, is Jesus. While other breads leave us wanting, Jesus fills us beyond measure. Once we taste of Him, our hunger pangs cease, our thirst quenched indefinitely.

Amid a society exhausted by soul-searching endeavors, Jesus stands out as the ultimate solution—the One who fills the void within, ensuring that those who come to Him will never hunger or thirst again. The problem is that far too few do come to Him, for we have not yet given up on other potential sources to satisfy us.

For a season in our marriage, my wife and I would celebrate special events at a particular restaurant in our city housed in an old-fashioned cinema building. To be inside of it is to be immersed in the golden age of Hollywood from the 1920’s to the 1960’s. If you’re a foodie and movie buff, it’s really quite wonderful. On one

particular date, my wife ordered scallops, not so much for the scallops themselves but because they were served over or alongside a cheesy risotto. Yet as it turned out, the scallops were amazing . . . so perfectly cooked and seasoned in such an incredible environment and such mesmerizing, good-looking company . . . that ever since, no other scallops are good enough for her. None of them compare to the scallops at this restaurant. Gordon Ramsay could cook scallops in my kitchen, and my wife wouldn't be satisfied. She only craves those from that restaurant because they alone satisfy.

This is what Jesus is getting at. **He alone is truly satisfying to that deep longing we have in our hearts and minds to be spiritually satisfied. And if we will just “taste” it, we will find that we want more and more of Him.**

### **If We Believe (vv. 36-59)**

Verse 35 constitutes a marvelous invitation to the gospel. Jesus makes an overt and compassionate call to the Galileans to come to Him for salvation. Yet, as verse 36 reveals, it's not received well.

*“But as I told you, you’ve seen me,  
and yet you do not believe.”*

**JOHN 6:36**

The unbelief of these Jewish people presents a series of troubles. First, it's disheartening that they are so materialistic that they are unable to separate their faith in God from their love of a softer, easier life. Second, it's unsettling that as Jews, they do not believe Jesus is the Messiah. He is the fulfillment of their Scriptures, yet they do not see it—even though He is right there in front of them. The third reason it's troubling is related to the second: If Jews are not receiving Jesus as Savior and Messiah, then one could easily charge that God has failed (see Romans 9).

All of these reasons are deeply disappointing in the abstract but all the more heartbreaking when applied to one's personal relationships. A person who possesses eternal life is heartbroken when friends and family strive diligently to find ultimate satisfaction in the gifts of God rather than God Himself. Yet greater than this is the potential for one to conclude that God's Word has failed and Jesus is not who He said He is if those people never believe.

While we know, even from this passage, that Jesus looks on people with compassion and demonstrates His compassion through miracles and preaching, the most important thing is not the needs, perceptions, feelings, and thoughts of human beings but that human beings love God.

This is what Jesus speaks to in the verses that remain in John 6. **Jesus affirms God's sovereignty, man's volition, the call to faith, and how eternal security relates to it all.** So committed is Jesus to making sure we all understand these three things that He says it three different times in three similar waves. The first wave is in verses 37-40. The second wave is in verses 41-51. The third wave is in verses 52-59. In all of these verses, the same three points are being made by Jesus over and over again. He really wants us to understand that God is sovereign in salvation, that our eternal destiny is secure, and that we must look to Him to be saved. We will focus primarily on verses 37-40, using the other verses to support or further illustrate the point.

So let's look at verses 37-40 as a separate unit so that we can see these three truths in one coherent statement, then we will look at these three truths in all of the passages by jumping around a bit so you can see and feel the intentional repetition through the whole conversation.

*"Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."*

**JOHN 6:37-40**

## Sovereignty and Salvation

I have four sinful (though saved) children, and I've had many strong (ahem) conversations with each of them over the last twenty years. Sometimes, my children are so stubborn or non-responsive to the ordinary measures of advice, warnings, or discipline that I am forced to pull them aside and speak solemnly to them about the choices they are making. I lovingly refer to these conversations as “come to Jesus” meetings. These are meetings that only I, as the father, can arrange.

Similarly, if anyone is going to have a “come to Jesus” meeting, the Father has to arrange those! In other words, God is sovereign over salvation.

Immediately, our western civilization's sensitivities are threatened and our deism is exposed. Has not God simply started this world in motion and is now waiting to see how we will respond to the gospel? Is it not solely up to us to believe? Are not *we* sovereign over *our* salvation?

**But if we are willing to get our truth from Scripture, examine our prayer lives, and think sensibly about what salvation is, we soon discover that we believe God is sovereign in our salvation after all.** If prayer is anything, it is acknowledgement that anything good we receive is a gift of a God who can deliver it. If prayer is anything, it is a laundry list of things for which we are grateful, implying that we could not have or experience them on our own. Now, let us apply this very logic to our salvation. Do we give God thanks for it, or do we point out to God how impressed He should be at our wisdom? Do we ask God to save others, or do we pray to others to save themselves? The answer, of course, is that we ask God to save whomever, and we do so because we ultimately believe that God is sovereign over salvation. And so does Jesus.

## Sovereignty and Security

Directly related to God's sovereignty in our salvation is our security in that salvation. You've likely heard the phrase, "Once saved, always saved." Perhaps it is better to say, "When saved, always saved." God does not renege on His eternal salvation, for it is just that: eternal! And the reason this is true is because of Jesus, as He explains in verses 38-39.

*"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day."*

JOHN 6:38-39

**It is because our salvation is secure in Christ that we have assurance of it.** If someone asks how one is to be certain that we are saved, we can answer with truth from John 6: because God drew me and Jesus never let go of me once I got there. This is why the Baptist Faith and Message (1925, 1963, and 2000) puts these two doctrines (election and eternal security) together in one article, article V:

"Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."<sup>2</sup>

## The Case for Eternal Security

Jesus's words as recorded in John 6 make a clear, convincing, and consistent case that our salvation is eternally secure in Him. This biblical principal is echoed throughout Scripture. Fill in the blanks below for another statement of assurance.

For I am persuaded that neither \_\_\_\_\_  
nor \_\_\_\_\_, nor \_\_\_\_\_  
nor \_\_\_\_\_, nor things \_\_\_\_\_  
nor things to \_\_\_\_\_, nor \_\_\_\_\_,  
nor \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_,  
nor any other created \_\_\_\_\_ will be able  
to \_\_\_\_\_ us from the \_\_\_\_\_  
of God that is in \_\_\_\_\_ our Lord.

**ROMANS 8:38-39**

What is not covered in this declaration?

## Sovereignty and Responsibility

Whatever biblical things we might learn about sovereignty must include that it is, as we just read in our statement of faith, consistent with the free agency of man. The fact that Jesus is working to convince the Galileans (see verses 51-58 in particular) to understand is evidence enough, and verse 40 communicates this as well.

*“For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who  
sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal  
life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”*

**JOHN 6:40**

Everyone who sees. There are no conditions or exceptions. Regardless of who you are, all you must do to be saved today is to look to Jesus—which is to repent of your sin—and believe in who He is and what He has done for you in the cross and resurrection and follow Him into eternity. **Any apparent contradiction between God's sovereignty and our responsibility is just that: apparent—and only to us.** We must hold on to everything that is true about each of these, without ever letting those truths cross one another. **We must let the knowledge of God's sovereignty inform the way we live and let the knowledge of human responsibility and accountability inform the way we fully rely on our sovereign God.**

## Conclusion

Whenever I interview potential candidates for positions in our church, I usually begin with a few “softball” questions. These are meant to give the candidate time to get comfortable with me and with the environment. They are questions that are important but not controversial and not complicated.

Jesus's first “I Am” declaration in the Gospel of John is no mere “softball.” We are challenged straightaway to repent from our idols and embrace the exclusive Son of God who alone bears the seal of approval from the Father. We are forced to reckon with grand theological truths that confront our presupposed sovereignty and volition.

But we are also excited and galvanized. Because Jesus is the Bread of Life, we can be bold and confident in the sharing of our faith, because God uses us to draw people to Himself. When those we share with come to Christ, we can give God the glory. When they reject Christ, we can be heartbroken for them but remain confident that God's Word never returns void. We can confidently play our part while God plays His and others play theirs. Because Jesus is the Bread of Life, we can rest assured that we are saved. Yes, we will fall into sin through neglect and temptation, grieve the Spirit, and so on. But He never lets go.

**May Jesus's identity and purpose as revealed in John 6 assure us of our eternal future and fuel us for our earthly ministry.**

## Application Questions

1. Different people approached Jesus expecting Him to meet their specific needs rather than accept Him as He had revealed Himself. What expectations do you bring to Jesus? How do these expectations keep you from seeing who Jesus truly is?
2. As the Bread of Life, Jesus invites us to feast on Him. How are you feasting on Jesus this week?
3. How can we cultivate hearts that love and seek God for who He is rather than for simply what He provides?
4. Respond to the statement: "Amid a society exhausted by soul-searching endeavors, Jesus stands out as the ultimate solution."