



## [John 6:31-40](#)

(31) Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" (32) Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. (33) For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (34) "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." (35) Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. (36) But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. (37) All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. (38) For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. (39) And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. (40) For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

*New International Version*

John 6:31-40 is an encouraging passage, showing that we are never alone. Therefore, guidance and help in governing ourselves is ever-present as we walk the path toward God's Kingdom.

These verses give people of [faith](#) solemn assurance that Christ is always present in our lives and always willing to help. Jesus makes the ironclad promise in [Hebrews 13:5](#) that He will never leave nor forsake us. A large portion of Jesus' preaching in John 6 is a comparison between food that satisfies a person's hunger and also provides strength and energy to carry out his responsibilities. At the same time, we understand that food enters the body as one eats and becomes a more or less permanent part of the body as the body uses it.

The illustration is drawn from Israel's pilgrimage through the wilderness when [God](#) mercifully and miraculously provided food in the form of manna. God produced that daily

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miracle for the Israelite's benefit so that they could physically make it to the Promised Land, in addition to giving us encouragement by His assurances.

Jesus' concern for us is spiritual, and accomplishing our pilgrimage to the [Kingdom of God](#) is the goal we strive for. Producing fruit along the way greatly pleases the Father. Bread symbolizes the means of internal, spiritual strength and energy, whereas the fruit metaphor of John 15 is external, something seen and produced because the individual uses the spiritual strength and energy drawn from the "bread."

(We may understand Jesus' instruction in this important discourse more clearly if we focus, not on the term "bread" specifically as bread, but more broadly as including a wide range of strengthening and energizing food.)

Jesus begins in [John 6:32](#) by declaring that He is the true bread. In John 13 and I Corinthians 11, bread is specifically used as a metaphor in a different circumstance. Here, bread is figuratively used as the source of spiritual nourishment, strength, and producing fruit by those making the pilgrimage.

The manna is a type of [Jesus Christ](#). It descended, as it were, from heaven, but the Father was the real Giver. Thus, in the wilderness [Moses](#) did not literally provide the manna but only gave instructions for its use. The manna indeed satisfied their immediate need for nourishment for physical strength and energy, but by way of contrast, Jesus, the true bread of God, gives *life*, not mere nourishment. Verse 34 shows that the Jews, as with virtually everything else He taught, did not grasp His teaching spiritually.

Thus, in verse 35, Jesus says, "I am the bread of life." He explains His mysterious teaching more plainly, essentially saying, "I am the One who both imparts and sustains life." He is, of course, emphasizing spiritual teaching. The Greek shows that He completely identifies Himself with the bread, as it actually reads, "I am the bread of *the* life." It is not mere life but *everlasting spiritual* life. He means that through faith and an intimate, spiritual union and relationship with Him that, as the body assimilates actual bread physically, so spiritual assimilation with Him gives everlasting life ([John 6:63](#)).

Continuing in verse 35, He adds that "he who comes to Me"—meaning the one who believes in Christ, coming with nothing but [sin](#) and needing everything—will in no way become spiritually hungry or thirsty. In other words, he truly will be fed, unlike those in the wilderness who became hungry. Those who come to Him will be given complete and enduring spiritual satisfaction.

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Verse 36—where Jesus says to the Jews, "You have seen Me and yet do not believe"—is interesting in that it shows that God does not hold unconverted man guiltless. Indeed, as soon as a person sins, the death penalty immediately falls on his head. Here, Jesus places the entire blame for the Jews' rejection of Him on them. Why? Because, being of Israel, they should have known better by recognizing the fulfillment in Him of familiar scriptures. Thus, their rejection of Him contained a large measure of deliberateness.

Verse 37 ought to be especially encouraging to us because [John 6:44](#) implies that a calling must be given for fuller understanding of what Jesus is teaching. Obviously, we do understand what He is saying, or we would not be in our present circumstance in relation to Him. Verse 37 is a strong promise that He will make every effort to provide us with salvation.

Verse 38, then, asserts to us that, if God calls a person, it is definitely God's will to do so. It is no mistake or happenstance. God's will is being worked in the called one's life. In verses 39 and 40, Jesus adds that it is the will of the Father, and therefore the Son's also, that all those given to Christ should be resurrected to everlasting life!

Verses 39-40 are the closest statements regarding a guarantee of [salvation](#) as one will see in God's Word. Verse 58 confirms His words, "This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

God has appointed Jesus Christ as largely responsible for our salvation. He has already given His life's blood for us so our sins can be forgiven. He has paid the penalty that inhibits us from receiving everlasting life. Once that penalty is paid, the responsibility falls on us to give of our energies to change our lives so that they exhibit consistent obedience.

Whereas in times past we did not care much about our responsibilities to God, it has now become incumbent upon us to be very concerned. In making the New Covenant, we owe submission to the Father and Son, to conform our conduct to agree with theirs. Thus, we will be formed into their image. We must submit to their rule, then, as well as those parts of their rule that they have assigned to others.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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[Fully Accepting God's Sovereignty \(Part Four\)](#)

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