

A Study of the Christ Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Death of the Baptist	14:1-12	6:14-29	9:7-9	
The 12 return and they withdraw	14:13	6:30-32	9:10	6:1
Jesus teaches and heals multitude	14:14	6:33-34	9:11	6:2
Jesus feeds 5,000	14:15-21	6:35-44	9:12-17	6:3-14
Jesus prays alone	14:22-23	6:45-47		6:15
Jesus walks on water	14:24-27	6:48-52		6:16-21
Peter walks on water, then sinks	14:28-33			
Healings in Gennesaret	14:34-36	6:53-56		
Bread of Life discourse				6:22-7:1

Overriding Principles

- Serving Jesus is very serious business—so much so that we are to be faithful unto death.
- We cannot be friends with the world and with God at the same time.
- Pride is an extremely dangerous thing.
- Fear cripples and distorts us.
- God cares.
- People are commonly interested in common things.
- To the uncommitted, there are never enough “signs.”
- The only way to follow Christ is totally.

Main Points

- For John had been saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her” (Matt. 14:4).
- Now when Jesus heard it, He withdrew from there in a boat, to a lonely place by Himself (Matt. 14:13).

- Jesus, therefore, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone (Jn. 6:15).
- O you of little faith, why did you doubt (Matt. 14:31)?
- Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled (Jn. 6:26).
- What then do you do for a sign (Jn. 6:30)?
- Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me (Jn. 6:45).
- Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died (Jn. 6:49).
- It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life (Jn. 6:63).
- Jesus said therefore to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:67-68).

Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- Guilt and pride are heavy burdens to bear, they can make a person mentally unstable and miserable, but they are not easily abandoned (**Matt. 14:1-2**; consider King Saul in I Samuel 18:6-24:22).
- Courage isn't merely saying what needs to be said, it is saying it when saying it brings heavy consequences (**Mk. 6:17-18**; cf. Mk. 14:60-64).
- The talk about Jesus' identity had risen to lofty heights, but not high enough (**Lk. 9:7-8**; cf. Matt. 16:13-16).
- John's opposition to Herod's marriage to his brother Philip's wife was probably centered in the teachings of Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21. The sanctity of the family is of considerable importance to God (**Matt. 14:3-4**).
- John had been in prison about a year and a half before his death (**Mk. 6:17**).
- Beginning in **Matthew 14:13-14**; **Mark 6:31-34**; **Luke 9:10b-11**; and **John 6:1-3**, Jesus shifts from a very public ministry to a primarily private one. Factors involved in the change would include:
 - The preaching tour of the twelve in Galilee had happened about the time of John the Baptist's death—these things would have aroused Herod Antipas' suspicion and fear of Jesus (Mk. 6:30; Matt. 14:1-2,13).

- Jesus' followers were pressing Him to take over Judea as a king (Jn. 6:15).
- The hostility of the Jewish leaders was growing (Matt. 12:22-24; cf. Mk. 7:1-23).
- His disciples were tired (Mk. 6:31).
- He needed more time to privately instruct His followers, especially the twelve.
- The Feeding of the Five Thousand is rare in that all four of the gospel writers mention it. Commonly, John goes a separate path, emphasizing the Judean aspects of Jesus' ministry. Here, however, although they converge, John takes the account in a different direction. The Synoptics emphasize Jesus' power (*miracles*: $\delta\upsilon\lambda\alpha\mu\iota\upsilon$, from which we get the word dynamite) John emphasizes the meaning behind the power (sign: *simeion*, that which signifies something).
- Jesus identifies Himself once again with His Father, in this case as the provider of man's physical needs (cf. Matt. 6:25-34).
- Again, compassion is emphasized as one of Jesus' core values (**Matt. 14:14; Mk. 6:34; Jn. 6:4-6**).
- Two hundred denarii would have been about two hundred day's wages, far more than Jesus and the Apostles had in their group treasury (**Jn. 6:7**).
- Odd, isn't it, that the very thing most men covet, a large following, is the very thing that Jesus so often discouraged. He only wanted followers who wanted God's will to rule their lives (**Jn. 6:14-15**; cf. vv. 44-45).
- Jesus' separation from His followers, after withdrawing from the multitude, leads to the interesting reunion on the Sea of Galilee. Matthew records not only Jesus' walking on the water, but Simon Peter's ill-fated attempt to join Him. The message is a simple one, take your eyes off Jesus and you sink (**Matt. 14:24-33**; cf. Col. 3:1-3).
- Mark points out that the twelve's failure to gain insight from the feeding of the five thousand was a roadblock keeping them from having sufficient faith to avoid fear on the sea (**Mk. 6:51-52**). Spiritual sensitivity is required to truly come to know God and benefit from His power (I Cor. 10:10-16; cf. Jn. 17:3; Matt. 11:27-30).
- **John 6:22-71** relates one of the most telling accounts of Jesus' ministry. It is an excellent commentary on Matthew 7:13-14 and the difference between the broad and narrow roads. It also makes similar commentary on Matthew 7:21-27). Talk alone just simply will not do (cf. I Jn. 3:18).

- Remember that John uses the word "Jew" to mean the religious establishment, not just any group of Jewish people (**Jn. 6:41**).
- It is decision time for those who follow Jesus. The Christ represents His Father's agenda perfectly; only those who recognize God's will and sacrificially submit to it can follow Him (**Jn. 6:44-45**).
- The peoples' thinly veiled demand for more signs, like those Moses worked, only betrays their desire for a meal ticket, not a Messiah (**Jn. 6:26, 30-31**).
- Jesus puts the meal issue in stark perspective (**Jn. 6:49**).
- The contrasts of John chapter six center on the difference in quality between the temporal and spiritual, between God's will and man's will.
- Jesus metaphor of "eating His flesh and drinking His blood," was not beyond their grasp. The Rabbi's said a similar thing about what their disciples would need to do if their learning was to be successful (**Jn. 6:48-59**). They didn't want to accept the implications of self-denial, so they feigned ignorance (cf. Jn. 3:4 where Jesus again used a rabbinic metaphor).
- This chapter is not about the Lord's Supper, but about discipleship. The imagery Jesus uses here to indicate feeding on Him as a teacher really relates to internalizing Him through digesting His words (**Jn. 6:44-45, 63**). The Lord's Supper uses the same imagery to represent His sacrifice and atoning blood.
- In this pivotal meeting with a large crowd of Israelites, Jesus deals with the *multitude* (masses, vv. 22, 24), the *Jews* (religious leaders, vv. 41, 52), *disciples* (followers, vv. 60, 66), and the *twelve* (closest followers, v. 67). All depart, except the twelve, and one of them is a devil (**Jn. 6:70**).
- In the turmoil of disbelief and failing faith, Simon Peter gets it right. Whether we always understand Jesus, or even like what He says, there is nowhere else to go (**Jn. 6:68**)!
- The Greek of the way Jesus forms His question to the twelve is instructive. There are three ways to ask a question in Greek:
 - No indication of the expected answer.
 - If the question begins with a form of the word οὐ>, the speaker expects an affirmative answer (cf. Mk. 4:38).
 - If the question begins with a form of μή>, the speaker expects a negative answer (cf. I Cor. 12:29).

- When Jesus asks the twelve if they want to go, He expects that they will say "no."
- The narrow road will be traveled by those who realize that there is no other road available to get where they want to go.
- Questions that arise about Judas being known as the betrayer even before the deed was done do not at all demand accepting Calvinistic predestination. Just remember, the order of God's operation is foreknowledge before predestination (Rom. 8:29). Foreknowledge does not overrule the will of man; it simply knows how it will be expressed.

Relationship to the Church

- Christianity is genuine to the extent that it listens only to God.
- The church must not be formed and maintained out of personal desires.
- Christianity cannot be a religion of convenience.
- When we do not have receptive hearts, our hearts harden—there is no middle ground!
- Marriage is still sacred.
- There is a price to pay to be a Christian, but only for a little while. The price we cannot pay has already been paid on the cross.

Who is Jesus?

- He is the one who inspires a godly loyalty that makes all others loyalties pale in quality and substance.
- He is the Savior who will never agree with us that error is somehow the truth.
- He is the one who wants our attention, our hearts, and our sincere discipleship.
- He rejects all that is false and temporary, accepting only that which is real and lasting.
- Again we are compelled to say, He cares!