**I Am the Bread of Life**
**John 6:35**

Introduction:

The setting of the story is the day after Jesus fed the 5,000 and walked on the sea in order to get to His disciples (6:1-22).

This statement by Jesus is directly related to the manna that God gave Israel as they walked through the wilderness for 40 years. In fact, this manna and "the bread of life" are compared in John 6:31-33. Today, to help us get a better understanding of what Jesus meant when He called Himself "the bread of life," we will notice the significance of the manna that God gave Israel. We will also notice what this means for us today.

I. To help us understand more fully this statement by Jesus, notice the purpose of bread (manna) in the Old Testament.
   A. Notice some introductory facts about this manna.
      1. We first read about manna in Ex. 16 (called manna in 16:31).
      2. The children of Israel have just come out of the land of Egypt.
      3. They crossed the Red Sea and are on their way to Canaan.
      4. However, just after they cross the sea, they begin to complain about the lack of bread and meat (16:2-3).
      5. Notice what God tells Moses (16:4-5).
      6. There was a specific purpose and command given by God concerning this manna (16:12-16).
   B. Notice two main reasons that God gave Israel this manna.
      1. This manna gave them life.
         a. There was no food to be found in the wilderness that could feed this great nation.
         b. This food came directly from God.
         c. This was the food that they lived on for 40 years.
      2. This manna was a sign to the children of Israel that God was with them (16:12b).
         a. Jn. 6:30-31 - Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? {31} Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"
         b. Remember, Jesus has just miraculously fed the 5,000, and these are some of the same people who ate those loaves of bread.
   C. Notice two main comparisons between manna and "the bread of life."
      1. The manna gave the children of Israel life while they wondered in the wilderness for 40 years.
         a. This manna provided for the nourishment of Israel.
         b. In the same manner, Christ, "the bread of life," will give us the nourishment that we need to live eternally.
         c. Notice two statements of Jesus.

1) Jn. 6:49-50 - Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. {50} This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.

2) Jn. 6:58 - 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.

2. This bread was not good enough for the children of Israel.

a. The children of Israel began to complain about this food that had been given to them.

1) Num. 11:4-6 - Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? {5} We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; {6} but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"

2) Num. 21:5 - And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."

3) They were taking this bread that came directly from God for granted.

b. In the same manner, in the time of Christ, Jesus was rejected by many just as the manna was rejected by the people of Israel.

1) We know that all throughout the accounts of the gospel the Pharisees were against Jesus.

2) Even some of the disciples of Jesus left Him when he finished this difficult saying in John 6 (6:60-71).

D. The comparison between manna and “the bread of life” ends in the fact that the manna was earthly while “the bread of life” is eternal.

1. This bread ceased to be given to them when they came into the land of Canaan.

a. Josh. 5:12 - Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

b. Without this bread from God, the children of Israel could not have survived in the wilderness for forty years.

E. When we understand the true purpose and meaning of manna for the children of Israel, we can understand the true purpose of Jesus as “the bread of life.”

II. Notice the purpose and meaning of this statement by Jesus.

A. Jesus tells us that He is the "bread of life" so that we can have eternal life.

1. In fact, Jesus mentions this three times in this chapter.

a. Jn. 6:32-35

b. Jn. 6:47-51

c. Jn. 6:53-56

2. John 10:10b - I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

B. We are able to obtain that spiritual food by studying the word of God and applying what we study.

1. When we first begin to study the word of God, we must study the first principles of the word of God.

a. Heb. 5:12-13 - For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. {13} For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

b. II Tim. 2:15 - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

c. II Pet. 3:18 - but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2. As we study, we must become more mature Christians.

a. Heb. 4:14 - But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

b. Mt. 5:6 - Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

c. When we search after the word of God, we will be filled with it.

C. When we feed on Christ, we have eternal life.

D. Christ gives us that nourishment that we need in order to have eternal life.

Conclusion:

The ultimate meaning of this statement is that Jesus is provides us with that which we need for eternal life.