

THE ANSWER TO MAN'S GREAT HUNGER

JOHN 06 : 22-29

Introduction

Man has a gnawing hunger within for both the physical and the spiritual. He hungers for both food and material things and for God and spiritual things, things such as love, joy and peace. Therefore, most of man's time and energy are spent in seeking to satisfy his hunger. This passage deals with the answer to man's great hunger.

- I. Answer 1: know that people have a great hunger, a great need (vv. 22-25).
- II. Answer 2: acknowledge that the motives of people are corrupt (vv. 26-27).
- III. Answer 3: work for food that endures — that gives eternal life (v. 27).
- IV. Answer 4: do the work of God — believe in Christ (vv. 28-29)

I. *John 06:22-25 Spiritual Hunger of Man*

The first answer to man's great hunger is to *recognize* the hunger. The people had been miraculously fed. It was a common belief that the Messiah would give manna from heaven even as Moses had done; in fact, it was thought that the Messiah would give more than Moses had given. The people were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, so they wanted to lay hold of Him and make Him king (vv. 1-15). Note four things.

1. The people acknowledged their need for the Messiah. They had need and they knew it. Confessing their need was not a problem for them (See *Christ, Messiah*, Jn. 1:20).
2. The people noted Jesus' absence. There had been only one boat docked at shore, and the disciples had taken it to cross the lake. However, Jesus had not accompanied them; He had stayed behind. The people thought He was in another section of the crowd or else off somewhere by Himself. The fact that He was not close by did not dawn upon them until the next day. The point is filled with lessons: the people, knowing they had need, wanted their need met. Jesus had proclaimed that He could meet their need, but He was gone; therefore, their need was going to go unmet unless they could find Him.

Thought 1. Man does have a great need for God's Messiah.

- (1) Man must acknowledge his need.
 - (2) Man must observe to see if Christ is present. If Christ is absent, then man's need goes wanting.
 3. The people sought Jesus. Believing that Jesus was the answer to their need, they did what they should have done: they sought Him. Other boats had drawn up to shore during the night, probably seeking refuge from the storm. Therefore, the people immediately took passage on these boats to cross over to Capernaum, hoping to find Jesus. Note how diligent they were in seeking Him.
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Thought 1. Man should search diligently to find Christ. He should seek and seek until the Lord is found.

Luke 11:9-10 “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Isa 55:6 Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

4. The people questioned Jesus' absence. In their minds the Messiah was to give manna from heaven to meet the needs of the people just as Moses had done, only more so. They could not understand why Jesus would leave them, especially if He were the true Messiah.

Thought 1. This point is crucial, for men of every generation do wonder and question the fact: If Jesus is really the Messiah, why does He so often seem absent and far away, especially in times of trouble? Another way to word the same thought is: If there is a God and if Christ really is the Son of God, why is the world in so much trouble and why are so many people suffering? Why would Christ not place Himself right in the midst of the world and its problems? Why would He not go ahead and solve the problems, meeting man's needs immediately? The answer, of course, is what this passage is all about.

JOHN 01:20 JESUS CHRIST, THE MESSIAH

He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Christ.”
John 01:20

The words *Christ* (Christos) and “Messiah” are the same word. Messiah is the Hebrew word and Christ is the Greek word. Both words refer to the same person and mean the same thing: *the anointed one*. The Messiah is the anointed one of God. Mathew said Jesus “is called Christ” (Mt. 1:16); that is, He is recognized as *the anointed one of God*, the Messiah Himself.

In the day of Jesus Christ, people feverishly panted for the coming of the long-promised Messiah. The weight of life was harsh, hard, and impoverishing. Under the Romans, people felt that God could not wait much longer to fulfill His promise. Such longings for deliverance left the people gullible. Many arose who claimed to be the Messiah and led the gullible followers into rebellion against the Roman state. The insurrectionist Barabbas, who was set free in the place of Jesus at Jesus' trial, is an example (Mk. 15:6f).

The Messiah was thought to be several things.

1. *Nationally*, He was to be the leader from David's line who would free the Jewish state and establish it as an independent nation, leading it to be the greatest nation the world had ever known.
2. *Militarily*, He was to be a great military leader who would lead Jewish armies victoriously over all the world.
3. *Religiously*, He was to be a supernatural figure straight from God who would bring righteousness over all the earth.
4. *Personally*, He was to be the One who would bring peace to the whole world.

Jesus Christ accepted the title of Messiah on three different occasions (Mt. 16:17; Mk. 14:61; Jn. 4:26). The name *Jesus* shows Him to be man. The name *Christ* shows Him to be God's anointed, God's very own Son. *Christ* is Jesus' official title. It identifies Him officially as Prophet (Deu. 18:15-19), Priest (Psa. 110:4) and King (2 Sam. 7:12-13). These officials were always anointed with oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit who was to perfectly anoint the Christ, the Messiah (Mt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10-11; Lk. 3:21-22; Jn. 1:32-33).

John 1:41 *The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).*

John 1:45 *Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*

John 1:49 *Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."*

John 4:25 *The woman said, "I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."*

John 4:26 *Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."*

John 6:69 *"We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."*

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."*

John 11:26 *"And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

John 11:27 *"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." □*

II. *John 06:26–27 Motive for Seeking Jesus – Utopia*

The answer to man's great hunger is acknowledging that man's motive is corrupt. This point is critical to see. Jesus stressed it with a solemn *attention getter*, "I tell you the truth" (listen). Man's motive in seeking the Messiah – in seeking the answer to his problems – is often corrupt. In the case of these people it was, and tragically, it is with so many in every generation.

1. Man seeks a Messiah (Saviour), but not to worship and serve Him. He seeks a Messiah for what he can get out of Him.
 - a. *Man is interested* in getting his needs met, whether by someone human or divine. Man is interested in himself, not in acknowledging and honouring Jesus to be Lord and not in serving Him and making Him known to a lost world. The thoughts of the crowd were focused on how wonderful it was to be *saved from hunger* and to have their *needs met*. Here was a Saviour (Messiah) who could meet all their needs, who could satisfy and give them a complete and full life. He could provide all things for them and deliver them from all their enslavements and enemies. He could bring Utopia (the Kingdom of God) to earth. Every need could be filled and satisfied. Note that man's thoughts are focused...
 - on the earth
 - on material things and personal possessions
 - on the flesh (sinful nature) and its satisfaction
 - on the human and the carnal only
 - b. *Man should be interested* in the Messiah for who He is and not for what he can get out of Him. Very simply, as with any person, the Lord wants to be sought and loved for who He is and not for what He can do for a person. The Lord (Messiah) is not a tool to be used; He is a Person to be sought and loved. The crowd should have seen that such a miracle could have been done *only by the Son of God* Himself. Therefore, seeing and standing before the Son of God, they should have fallen down before Him in all humility. They should have humbled themselves...
 - to recognize and acknowledge Him to be the Son of God.
 - to worship and praise Him for who He is.
 - to offer their lives to Him, all they were and had.
 - to see that all things belonged to Him and were due Him.
 - to see that He was not the One who should be giving to them, but they were the ones who should be giving to Him. He was the One who should be receiving, not them.
2. Man seeks food that spoils. He simply misplaces his work. He centres and focuses his thoughts, energies, and efforts upon the moment, that is, upon his years on earth. Man seeks to *feed his soul* on...

- feelings and pleasures
- recognition and honour
- comfort and ease
- position and power
- plenty and more
- fame and self

Such self-seeking is foolish, for all things pass away, even man himself. A day is not guaranteed, much less a year. Even if a man has years left to live, they pass ever so rapidly, as any middle age or older adult knows. Man desperately needs to heed two eternal truths.

- a. The things of the earth with all their pleasures and feelings do not satisfy (Isa. 55:2). They still leave a man empty, incomplete, unfulfilled, hungry, dissatisfied, seeking more and more.

James 4:2-4 *You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.*

1 Cor 6:13 *"Food for the stomach and the stomach for food" – but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.*

Rev 18:14 *"They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and splendour have vanished, never to be recovered.'"*

Job 15:23 *He wanders about – food for vultures; he knows the day of darkness is at hand.*

Eccl 6:7 *All man's efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied.*

Isa 29:8 *As when a hungry man dreams that he is eating, but he awakens, and his hunger remains; as when a thirsty man dreams that he is drinking, but he awakens faint, with his thirst unquenched. So will it be with the hordes of all the nations that fight against Mount Zion.*

Isa 44:20 *He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, "Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?"*

Isa 55:2 *Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.*

- b. The earth and its things with all their pleasures and feelings pass away. They age, deteriorate, die, and decay. (Mt. 8:17; 1 Cor. 15:50; Col. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 9:27.)

Rom 8:5-6 *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds*

set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

1 Cor 15:50 *I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*

1 John 2:16-17 *For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

III. John 06:27 Seeking Jesus Christ, the Son of Man

The third answer to man's great hunger is to work for food that endures, that gives or lasts "to eternal life" (eis zoen aionion). The basic hunger within man is for...

- an abundant life, a life that is complete and fulfilled, full of love, joy, peace and all the good things of life (See *Life in Jesus Christ*, Jn. 10:10).
 - an eternal life, a life that survives, that is not snatched away, but goes on forever and ever. (See *Eternal Life*, Jn. 17:2-3.)
1. Jesus said that the Son of Man is the One who can give food that lasts forever, the One who can give life that is both abundant and eternal. (Note, *Son of Man*, Jn. 1:51.)
 2. Jesus said that the Son of Man is sealed, that is, guaranteed by God (See *Seal, Certify*, Jn. 3:33). God guarantees...
 - that Christ is the Messiah
 - that Christ is the One who can give food that is abundant and lasts forever

John 4:14 *"But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* (see Jn.7:37)

John 6:33-35 *"For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." 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."*

JOHN 10:10 LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." **John 10:10***

Life is one of the great words of the Scriptures. The word *life* (zoe) and the verb *to live* or *to have life* (zen) have a depth of meaning.

1. Life is the energy, the force, the power of being.
2. Life is the opposite of perishing. It is deliverance from condemnation and death. It is the stopping or cessation of deterioration, decay, and corruption (Jn. 3:16; 5:24, 29; 10:28).
3. Life is *eternal* (aionios). It is forever. It is the very life of God Himself (Jn. 17:3). However, eternal life does not refer just to duration. Living forever would be a curse for some persons. The idea of eternal life is also quality, a certain kind of life, a life that consistently knows love, joy, peace, power, and responsibility .
4. Life is satisfaction (Jn. 6:35).
5. Life is security and enjoyment (Jn. 10:10).
6. Life is found only in God. God is the source and author of life, and it is God who has appointed Jesus Christ to bring life to man. Jesus Christ gives the very life of God Himself (Jn. 5:26; 6:27, 40; 10:28; 17:23).
7. Life has now been revealed. It has been unveiled and is clearly seen in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ shows man what life is (Jn. 1:4-5; 5:26; 1 Jn. 1:2).
8. Life only comes to a man by believing in Jesus Christ. A man outside Jesus Christ only exists. He merely has the existence of an animal. Real life is found only in God. This is to be expected and it is logically true, for God is the creator of life. As the creator of life, He alone knows what life really is and what it is supposed to be (Jn. 3:36; 5:24; 6:47). This is the reason He sent His Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, into the world: to show men what life is. When a person looks at Jesus Christ, he sees exactly what life is, exactly what it involves (Gal. 5:22-23):
=> love => patience => faithfulness => kindness => gentleness
=> joy => peace => goodness => self-control □

JOHN 17:02–03 ETERNAL LIFE (AINIOS)

“For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” **John 17:02-03**

Life, real life. It is the very life of God Himself. It is the very energy, force, being, essence, principle and power of life. It has more to do with quality and with what life really is than with duration. To live forever in the present world is not necessarily a good thing. The world and man's body need changing. That changed life is found only in eternal life. The only being who can be said to be eternal is God. Therefore, life —

supreme life — is found only in God. To possess eternal life is to know God. Once a person knows God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, that person has eternal life — he shall live forever. But more essential, the person has the supreme quality of life, the very life of God Himself.

John 3:14-15 *“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”*

John 5:24 *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

John 6:40 *“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.”*

John 3:36 *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”*

John 11:25-28 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.” And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.”*

John 12:25 *“The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”*

Rom 5:21 *So that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Gal 6:8 *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

2 Tim 1:10 *But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

1 John 3:14 *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.*

1 Jn 5:11-12 *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. □*

JOHN 01:51 JESUS CHRIST, SON OF MAN

He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." John 01:51

Jesus Christ is the Son of Man. This does not mean that Jesus was born of a man. It means that He is more than what an ordinary man is, more than a son of some man. Jesus is what every man ought to be, *the Son of Man Himself*.

1. Jesus Christ is the Ideal Man: the *Representative Man*, the *Perfect Man*, the *Pattern*, the *Embodiment* of everything a man ought to be. Jesus Christ is the *perfect picture* of a man. Everything God wants a man to be is seen perfectly in Jesus Christ (see Jn. 1:14; Col. 2:9-10; Heb. 1:3).
2. Jesus Christ is the *Ideal Servant* of man. The term *Ideal Servant* stresses Jesus' sympathy for the poor, the broken hearted, the captives, the blind, the bruised, the outcasts and the bereaved (see Lk. 4:18). Jesus is the pattern, the model, the perfect example of concern and caring. He served other people just like every man ought to serve other people.

Jesus called Himself "the Son of Man" about eighty times. It was His favourite term. The title *Son of Man* is probably based upon the Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14. There is also a picture of Jesus as the heavenly Son of Man contrasted with Adam as the earthly Man in 1 Cor. 15:45-47. Both references picture Jesus as *the Representative Man*, *the Ideal Man*, in God's plan for world history.

Mat 8:20 *Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."*

Mat 9:6 *"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home."*

Mat 20:28 *"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Mat 24:27 *"For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."*

Mark 8:38 *"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

Luke 18:8 *"I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"*

Luke 19:10 *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*

John 5:26-27 “For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.”

John 6:53 Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.”

John 12:23 Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”

John 13:31-32 When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.”

Mat 16:13, 16 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”.... Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Acts 7:56 “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” □

JOHN 03:33 SEAL — CERTIFY

A man's seal or certification was affixed to a document to show he agreed with it. He reckoned it as legal, binding, valid and authentic. A seal guaranteed that the record was true and genuine. When a man receives the testimony of Jesus, he shows that God is true. Conversely, the only way a man can show that God is true is to accept the testimony of Jesus (see Jn. 6:27). □

IV. *John 06:28–29 Works vs. Grace*

The fourth answer to man's great hunger is to do *the work* of God — believe. Note two crucial facts.

1. The people thought in terms of works (plural). They thought that by *doing good works* they could win the approval and acceptance of God. If they did enough good and lived a life that was moral and just, God would save them and give them the food that satisfied, the food and life that was both abundant and eternal.

Thought 1. There are those who see people in three categories.

- (1) There are *good people*, people who do plenty of good works. They live good, moral, and just lives; therefore, they are acceptable to God.
- (2) There are *bad people*, people who do mostly bad works. They live immoral and unjust lives; therefore, they are not acceptable to God. They are not saved.

- (3) There are *compromising people*, people who do both good and bad. They live both moral and immoral, just and unjust lives. They are close to securing God's approval, not quite, but close. By doing just a few more *good works* and living just a little more morally, God will accept them.
3. Jesus corrected the people's thoughts, their concept of salvation by works. They did not secure the favour of God and were not acceptable to God because of works (plural). They received God's favour and acceptance because of a work, one work (singular). The work of God is only one: believe — "in the One he has sent" (See *Saving Faith*, Jn. 2:24).

Gal 2:16 *Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.*

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. ■*

JOHN 02:24

SAVING FAITH: BELIEVE, COMMIT AND ENTRUST

The word commit or entrust is the very same word "believe" (see Jn. 2:23). This gives an excellent picture of *saving faith*, of what *genuine faith* is — of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent. It is not just *believing the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Saviour just as A J Abdul Kalam lived upon earth as the President of India. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of Abdul Kalam.
2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the *Saviour* and *Lord* of life. It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Saviour and Lord.
3. Saving faith is commitment — the commitment of a man's total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is a man's commitment of all he *is and has* to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of a man's affairs. The man trusts Jesus to take care of his past (sins), his present (welfare), and his future (destiny). He entrusts his whole life, being, and possessions into Jesus' hands. He lays himself upon Jesus' keeping, confiding in Him about his daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. He follows Jesus in every area and

in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving his welfare up to Him. It is simply commitment of a man's whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus.

There are three steps involved in faith, steps that are clearly seen in this passage.

1. There is the step of *seeing* (Jn. 2:23) or *hearing* (Rom. 10:16). A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.
2. There is the step of *mental assent*. A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behaviour to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.
3. There is the step of *commitment*. When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment*, a *personal commitment to the truth*. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits (entrusts) and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behaviour and life. □