

**I AM THE BREAD THAT CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN - Biblical Commentary by
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John 6,41-51

At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

“Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

In the long discourse given by Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum following the sharing the loaves and fishes, he succeeded in making everyone disappointed. He disappointed the crowd who wanted him to become their king, the religious leaders and he will also disappointed his disciples; some will even abandon him. Let's see why in John's gospel chapter 6, 41-51. “*At this the Jews...*” meaning the religious leaders and the authority “*..they began to grumble..*” as the people did against Moses in the desert “*... about him because he said, “I am..*” it is the vindication of the divine name, “*.. the bread that came down from heaven.*” Why do they grumble at this? The religious institution owes its existence to the distance it has managed to establish between God and men and in this distance there is the mediation of the religious institution. Jesus came to eliminate this distance, he brought God to men and this is intolerable for them, above all it was the law that came down from heaven, not bread, a food of life.

“*They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph,...*” That a man claims to have the divine condition is inadmissible, it is a blasphemy. For religious authorities God's plan for humanity is a blasphemy that deserves death. Well Jesus answers them “*Stop grumbling among yourselves., No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them,...*” What does this mean? “to draw” means an irresistible attraction: the love with which the Father attracts and the love for his children has no limits, deadlines or death, this is where Jesus wants to arrive, not interrupted love, but it makes it even more powerful because with death all the barriers will fall and the reception of this love will not be hindered. The love of God is eternal like the life he transmits to man. So, “*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.*” The resurrection for Jesus is not a final date, but is part of the very existence of the individual, “*It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’* why will all be taught by God? Because there is not more law to learn but to learn to love, a way to love.

Jesus continues “*Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life.*” there is no article

determinative, it is not *"the eternal life"*, it is not something to gain, but it is life itself that is already eternal for those who have accepted Jesus as a model of behaviour. And Jesus claims again the divine condition of himself with the name of God, *"I am the bread of life."* And here it is that Jesus will also displease his disciples because he puts his finger on the wound of the failure of the Exodus. In fact, Jesus argues controversially *"Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died."* The exodus was a failure: all those who followed Moses in the exodus all died in desert, not even Moses was able to enter the promised land, their children entered, but not those who left, so the exodus was a failure, states Jesus. He does not follow in the footsteps of the fathers, he follows the Father and for this reason he distances himself,

"..here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die.", to eat this bread, assimilating the life of Jesus and making himself bread for others, grafted into the individual a dynamism of love that makes his life indisputable. And Jesus continues again *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* The evangelist uses precisely the term *"flesh"* which indicates man in his weakness; this means there are no gifts of God that they do not pass through the flesh, through humanity. The more you become human, the more you become sensitive to the needs and sufferings of others, the more human one is, the more divine he is manifested in the people.