

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY
September 2003

Topic: John 6:25 to 6:59 "To do the work of God: Believe"

NOTE: Today's study begins the third major section of the Summary Chart of John's Gospel. The overview of the next seven sessions is to define the work of God. In my reflections this definition has two parts: "To do the work of God," and the "Validity of Jesus' Teachings." Today's session begins to define ". . . the work of God" through the word Believe.

The items to be grounded: Bread of life; will of God; "down from heaven;" being raised up "at the last day."

The audience is "the crowd" (6:22) in the synagogue at Capernaum (6:58).

I. Read through the assignment in one reading. "The work of God is to do the works God requires." So, what does God require? Jesus answers, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one God has sent." (6:28)

II. Today, we have a tall task to unmask these Old Christian Code Words in order to recapture the power of what is going on in this conversation between Jesus and the crowd. First off, recall that "God" is Perfect At-One-Ment. Second, recall that in this gospel, the word "Jesus" always implies "The Logos" or the anointed one.

The tough word in today's study is the sentence "down from heaven" (6:33).

Because John is writing to a Greek/Roman audience, John picks up the world view of his audience. This Greek audience understood "heaven" as an escape to reality or meaning, while this "earth" was a place of un-reality: meaninglessness, pain filled, death-ridden. For the Greeks, heaven is the existence of eternal peace and happiness. For the Greek, heaven is not A PLACE. One did not die to go to heaven; one only had to awaken to it.

For the Jew, heaven was the experience of living with God the Perfect At-One-Ment. Neither the Jews nor the Greeks believed that heaven was a place. Rather, heaven was an existence of wholeness, or the experience of At-One-Ness.

It was not until the 16th Century that "heaven" became a literal place. At this time, the Age of Enlightenment and the birth of the scientific method came into conflict with the Christian Church. This struggle with our old Christian Code Words is a modern invention birthed in this time of conflict. Our Greek background heavily influences this conflict.

So, the awakened people are those who "think like Greeks and believe like Jews." The method to do this is to avoid "Head trip analysis" like the plague, and to always ask the "Gut trip analysis" question: What is your experience of these terms?"

The term "at/on the last day" is understood that Jesus (the anointed Logos) believed he was the LAST DAY! This is the short answer. The long answer concerns the study of eschatology (s-ka-tol-ogy), or the theory of the last things. If you choose to research the term, be aware of the need to avoid "Head Trip Analysis!"

Jesus was the last day for those experiencing life as an escape from reality. Jesus was the last day

for those experiencing life without living in the spirit. (Remember: we live in this world so thoroughly that we forget we are on vacation. This world is not my home. My home is living in the Really Real of Perfect At-One-Ment.

III. With this background, reflect on what Jesus means by "I am the bread of life (see: vss. 6:27, 35, 48); will of God (vss. 29).

IV. Next, re-read the assignment to recapture the power of what Jesus is saying.

What does it mean for us to "believe" in the one God has sent?