

Exegetical Notes, John 6:60-71
“Many Deserted Jesus”

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John 6:60-71

Verse 60

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

- What they heard was Jesus saying that he was the Bread of Life sent down from Heaven by the Father to bring eternal life to all who believed. See John 6:25-59. They had misunderstood what Jesus said about himself even though he had spoken the truth. Because his words differed from their understanding of things and with the traditions they so valued, they found what Jesus said hard to accept.

Verses 61-64

Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! ⁶³ The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. ⁶⁴ Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him.

- Jesus knew that some of his “disciples,” not meaning the twelve Apostles, but some of the others who were following him, were grumbling among themselves about what he said. So he confronted them by asking them if his words “offended” them.
- He reminded them that their concerns did not matter at all, for the words which he spoke to them were true.
- But despite the fact that he had told them truth many of them still did not believe him.
- Jesus told them that he was not caught off guard by this. He knew from the beginning which of them would prove to be untrue to him.

Verses 65-66

He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.”⁶⁶ From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

- Jesus pointed out that the Holy Spirit must lead us into truth so that no one can come to Jesus unless he is led by the Holy Spirit. Thus, only those who the Father enables through the Holy Spirit can embrace truth and come to Jesus. It is never possible to come to Jesus by human effort.
- At this point many of those who had appeared to be Jesus’ “disciples” stopped following him.

Verses 67-71

“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.⁶⁹ We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”⁷⁰ Then Jesus replied, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!”⁷¹ (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

- Jesus then turned to the twelve Apostles and asked them if their intention was to leave him, too. Peter explained that they were convinced that he was the Messiah, and that they would remain loyal to him.
- Jesus then told them that they were the ones he had chosen to be his Apostles. But he told them that he knew that even one of them would turn against him before it was over. He already knew that Judas, one of the inner band, would betray him.

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