



Week 25 Study Questions (4/9/25)
MP3 Bible Study, John 5-7

PZ'S TEXTUAL OBSERVATIONS:

John 5: As in the synoptics, Jesus does get into trouble with the “Jews” early in the gospel of John. Once again, the issues is healing on the sabbath, which implies “working” on the sabbath. The story of the healing of the man at the pool of Bethzatha is unique to John. However, some of the language is not. Look at verses 8-9: “Jesus said to him, ‘Stand up, take your mat and walk.’ At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.” Have we heard this before? Sounds very similar to the story of the paralytic who was let down through the roof by his friends in Mark: “[Jesus said] ‘I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.’ And he stood up and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them” (Mark 2:11-12). Similar, memorable language here in both. Is this the same story? The authors recall Jesus saying “stand up and take your mat?” but they are unsure of the specific details so they supply them differently? Perhaps I’m stretching here, but I wonder about these things. As the Jews continue to doubt the authority of Jesus he responds by declaring it comes from the Father: “Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise” (John 5:19). John, theologically, will flesh out the relationship between Jesus and the Father throughout his gospel in ways the synoptics do not bother to.

John 6: Much in this chapter! Jesus feeds the five thousand in a very similar fashion to the synoptics. Fun trivia question—the feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle performed by Jesus in all four gospels. Like the synoptics, not long after feeding the 5,000 Jesus also walks on water. But, then John becomes John and leaves the narrative storyline and gives us rich and deep conversations that Jesus has with the Jews. In chapter 6 the issue at hand is the eucharist. What does it mean that Jesus is the bread of life and what does it mean that we eat his flesh and drink his blood? Jesus again asserts that the Eucharist, like baptism in his earlier conversation with Nicodemus, points to eternal life: “But the one who eats this bread will live forever” (vs. 58). I love the passage where Jesus gives the disciples permission to leave: “Do you also wish to go away?” (vs. 67). It is a reminder that discipleship is not a *got to* but a *get to*. We don’t follow Jesus in order to secure grace or the promise of eternal life. That is already accomplished by Christ. We follow as a response to that grace in order to love and serve others and grow in our personal faith.

John 7: John is moving at a quick narrative pace . . . Jesus is already in Judea causing trouble with the Jews as early as chapter 7. Interesting the verses about where Jesus is from, and where the Messiah is to be from. “Yet we know where this man is from: but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from” (vs. 27). Do they know where Jesus is from? The gospel of John seems to identify “Galilee” as his homeland. But, we never hear of Nazareth or of Bethlehem in the gospel of John. Finally, one more “haha” moment. Jesus says, “You will search for me, but you will not find me” (vs. 34). He is speaking of his crucifixion, but the Jews take it literally: “Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?” (vs. 35).