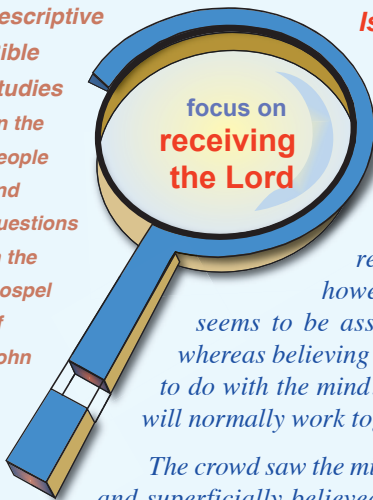


descriptive
Bible
studies
on the
people
and
questions
in the
Gospel
of
John



Is there any difference between believing in the Lord Jesus and receiving him?

These two verbs are used together in 1:12; so they are obviously very closely related. Receiving the Lord, however, such as here in 6:21, seems to be associated more with the will, whereas believing in Jesus sometimes has more to do with the mind. That said, the mind and the will normally work together.

The crowd saw the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 and superficially believed in Jesus (6:14-15 and 26). The eleven, however, willingly received him (6:21) and stayed with him (6:67-69).

after the feeding of the 5,000+

6:14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. **6:15** When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

crossing the Sea of Galilee

6:16 And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, **6:17** And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. **6:18** And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. **6:19** So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. **6:20** But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. **6:21** Then **they willingly received him** into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

the selfish people are puzzled

6:22 The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; **6:23** (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) **6:24** When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. **6:25** And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? **6:26** Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

Let's describe . . .

1. **Jesus** in John 6:14-21

* Why did Jesus go up into a mountain alone according to 6:15? Compare this verse and reason with Mat. 14:23 and Mark 6:46. Was Jesus anti-social? Did he appear to be anti-social to some of those who knew him (7:2-10)?

* What is the significance of Jesus walking on the water, in John's account and in light of it's close connection with the previous miracle of the feeding of the 5,000? One of the best ways to see this is to compare what the multitude wished to do in 6:14-15 and what the disciples actually did in 6:21.

* Compare the content of John's account of this miracle with Matthew's much longer account (Mat. 14:22-33), as well as Mark 6:45-52.

2. **The Disciples** in John 6:14-21

* The first part of the account (6:16-19a) has to do with what the disciples did and what happened to them before the Lord came to them.

* The second part of the account (6:19b-21) has to do with the disciples meeting and interacting with the Lord. In this, 6:21 is especially important and climactic.

* Note that nothing is said in John about Peter walking on the water (Mat. 14:28-31).

* Although the selfish people in 6:14-15 and 24-26 are not described in this study, the disciples' attitude and actions in 6:19-21 contrast sharply with theirs.

and make applications.

* How should and will I be like the disciples in 6:19-21, especially in 6:21?

* Have I willingly received the Lord Jesus into my life, like the disciples received him into their boat? Is he in charge of my life (my plans, relationship and goals) like he was of their boat?

What's missing?

Dr. Johnson likes to stress what sticks out in the passage being studied by comparing John's account with any parallel passages and discussing what's missing or present in John compared to the Synoptics..

No Ghost Story?

Neg (comments on Jesus real body and walking)

"What's *not* in the passage? Some speculate that gravity was missing or overruled, since Jesus was **able to walk on water**, but he was still **using his leg muscles** and probably was still the same weight. Since he became flesh (1:14), he wasn't a spirit being without physical substance, even though the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost, according to Matthew and Mark. John tells us that they were **afraid**, but he leaves out the part about "a ghost." I'm *not* sure why, however."

Dr. Johnson (comments on Jesus' incarnation)

"Of course, nobody knows for sure why the Holy Spirit led John to omit that the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost, but I suspect you've already answered the matter by referring to the incarnation and 1:14. John presents Jesus as fully God *and* fully man with a human body. So it would have been counterproductive for him to report that on one brief occasion the disciples mistakenly thought that the incarnate Son was an evil spirit. Maybe that's, also, why demon possession is rarely mentioned in John, and then mostly by Jesus' enemies."

No Fearful Peter?

Pete (comments on Peter in John and Matthew)

"There is so much personal interaction with Peter in John, such as in ch. 21, for example. So I wonder why Matthew tells us about Peter walking on the water in Mat. 14:22-33, but absolutely nothing is said about that here in John 6:15-21. Jesus comes and gets in the boat and that's it. There are 12 verses in Matthew but only half that many in John. Why so little and why no Peter?"

Dr. Johnson (comments on doubt and hesitation)

"Well, again, we don't know for sure. However, there is a close connection between Peter's hesitation in the face of the wind in Mat. 14:29-31 and the hesitation of some disciples in the face of powerful opposition in Mat. 28:17-18. Most people don't realize it, but when the Lord asked Peter why he doubted in Mat. 14:31 he was asking him why he hesitated or fearfully stepped twice in the same spot. Moreover, this exact same special term for "doubt" is used in Mat. 28:17, as well, about fearful disciples who were hesitant to obey Jesus. So the story of Peter's hesitant walk in Mat. 14 fits wonderfully with Mat. 28. John's focus is different; more on that later."

No Mountain Top Prayer?

Mat & Luke (comments on prayer in the Gospels)

"Unlike Matthew (Mat. 14:23), John doesn't mention that the Lord went up into the mountain to pray. That surprised us a lot, since Jesus prayed in John 6:11 and various other places in John. It also, was a shock to discover that Luke's Gospel doesn't say anything about Jesus praying on the mountain or walking on the water. The entire account is omitted by Luke, a Gospel which contains more on prayer in general than any of the other Gospels. Why is this?"

Dr. Johnson (comments on Jesus' two purposes)

"On Luke, I simply don't know why this story is omitted. However, from Mat. 14:23 and Mark 6:46, we do know that the Lord went up into the mountain to pray. That's great; we're all for prayer. Yet, that wasn't the only reason Jesus climbed the mountain. According to John 6:48, he was, also, **avoiding the selfish crowd's attempt to take him by force and make his king**. As we'll see again in 7:3-5, he was **not seeking superficial popularity**. So John mentions a great negative purpose, while Matthew and Mark state a positive one."

No Instant Help?

Mark (comments on the apparent lack of divine help)

"When I read the parallel passage in Mark 6:45-52, I was shocked to see that the Lord, not only sent the disciples away without him, but that he was, also, **planning to walk past them** (Mk. 6:48) rather than approach and help them overcome the wind and waves. Also John 6:17 and Mat. 14:25 show that Jesus didn't come for several hours. I don't understand this lack of help."

Dr. Johnson (comments on the wind and the will)

"The disciples were **struggling against the wind**, as they had often done as fishermen, but they were **probably not in any great danger**, at least not until Peter got out of the boat (Mat. 14:29-30). So, instead of being about divine help, I believe the main point in Mark 6:48 and John 6:21 is that the Lord doesn't force himself upon anyone, nor can he be forced by anyone. The disciples were **willing to receive him on his terms** after recognizing him (6:21, 1:12), but the will of the selfish crowd was to force him to become king (6:15, 26-27). John's account stresses the contrast between the selfish will of the crowd and the receptive will of the disciples."

No Belief Statement?

Jack (comments on signs & belief in John)

“Rather than comparing this miraculous sign in John six with the accounts of it in Matthew 14 and Mark six, I decided to compare John’s account with the other signs in John. The miracle that’s most like it is the healing of the nobleman’s son in 4:46-54, since only a few people saw these miracles and the accounts of both are short.”

“This was fun at first, but, then, I ran into an unexpected problem. I discovered that Jesus’ walking on the water is the only miracle in John that doesn’t end with something said about people believing or not believing. For example, in 4:53 it says that the nobleman and his whole household believed, but here 6:21 merely ends with the boat arriving on the other shore. Worse, a lot is said about the disciples belief and unbelief in the Mat. 14:31-33 and Mark 6:51-51, but, for the life of me, I can’t see that here in John 6:15-21.”

believing
receiving

Dr. Johnson (comments on belief in John six)

“We’re never far from belief or unbelief in the Gospel of John, including here, in and around 6:15-21. First off, in the context, the belief of the crowd who experienced the feast for the 5,000+ is voiced in 6:14, but exposed as superficial initially in 6:26-27 and, again, even more clearly at the end of the chapter, in 6:60-66.”

“Better still, I’m convinced that the faith-related terminology that John chose to report that the disciples were **ready to “willingly receive”** the Lord Jesus into their boat was an artful and appropriate way of drawing attention to their belief in him. In contrast to this, Matthew and Mark merely say that Jesus got into the boat. John’s use of “receive” in 6:21 is obviously significant, since the same verb was first used in 1:11-12 to speak of belief. Moreover, at the end of ch. six, in 6:67, Jesus asked the twelve if they wanted (literally “willed”) to depart like many others. Except for Judas, they did not.”

No Gang Rape?

Rocky (comments on the desire to use Jesus)

“Look! With my training schedule, I don’t have time to read this passage and that passage. So I just read what’s in John 6:15-21 and went at it toe to toe. As a result, as I see it, in 6:15 we have an attempted rape.”

“The crowd wanted to use the Lord like some selfish brute, who, having discovered the most beautiful and shapely woman in the whole world, wants to seize her and use her for all the selfish physical pleasure that he can get. A guy like that would “believe” in such a woman, but only as an object of his lust (6:14-15, 26-27).”

“Actually, 6:15 is even worse than a rape attempt. It’s more like a gang attempting to abduct a woman and keep her as their sex slave for years. That’s how bad it would have been if the people had been able to force Jesus to be their king. Naturally, the Lord was **avoiding this lustful gang of would-be rapists.**”

Dr. Johnson (comments on receiving the Lord)

“Vivid stuff, Rocky, but I basically agree with you. The only problem I is with your analogy is that the Lord Jesus was a man rather than a woman. Yet, as you said, the crowd wanted to seize him and force him, as if they were stronger than he. So your image fits, though, as the outcome shows, Jesus was stronger than they.”

“In contrast, we could also think of the way the disciples willingly received the Lord into the boat in 6:21 as **like a woman willingly receiving and trusting in the loving advances of her husband.** Maybe these images are too physical for a setting like this, but, for sure, if 6:15 is like an attempted gang rape, then 6:21 is like, the opposite, like responsive intimacy in marriage.”

“As I said earlier, the two main points here in John 6:15-21 probably are: 1.) that Jesus can’t be forced (6:15) and 2.) that Jesus doesn’t force himself upon those who are unwilling to receive him (6:21, 67, 1:11).”

the people Jesus & the disciples	the principles (general principles)	to the point my personal applications
The Lord Jesus avoided the selfish crowd and walked across the sea toward his disciples.	We should seek to do the will of God, rather than seek popularity through pleasing men.	
The disciples were afraid at first, but willingly received the Lord Jesus into the boat.	We should willingly receive the Lord Jesus by faith, rather than seek to selfishly use him.	