

Do You See What I See?

Week 8: Feb 19-25 – *Matt. 14-16; Mark 6, 7; Luke 9; John 6*

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Helpful Resources

Maps of Palestine and Jerusalem (p.47, 48), Progressive Revelation (p.33), Jesus and Moses (p.51)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

Jesus continued His ministry near the Sea of Galilee, where several big events occurred. First, Jesus heard of the brutal murder of John the Baptist. Then, Jesus fed two huge crowds, one of 5000 people and another of 4000 people. Finally, Jesus walked on the water. In addition to these things, He taught, healed, and ministered to people everywhere He went. While it is difficult to see clearly when we just focus on one or two of these events, when we step back and consider them all, the big picture comes into view. Every detail happens for a reason, and every smaller story fits nicely into a larger narrative. In this review, we will see how the puzzle pieces fit together and produce a beautiful mosaic.

- Progressive Revelation

What exactly is progressive revelation? A revelation occurs when something that was previously unknown is made known or revealed. The word *progressive* means to advance or to move forward. Thus, progressive revelation is the idea that God has gradually revealed His plan to redeem mankind. Take a minute to observe the chart entitled, "Progressive Revelation." Those who lived later in history understood more than those who lived before.

Now, let's look again at the week's events. First, we will consider how each situation captured the concept of progressive revelation. Then, we will step back and observe the other pieces in the puzzle. What will emerge is the larger picture of God's revelation of the gospel.

1. **From Blurry to Clear** (*Mk. 8:22-26*): Jesus healed a blind man in two phases. Did Jesus not have the power to heal him in one step? Of course. But the healing was an object lesson. In time, people see Jesus more clearly and their faith becomes more solid.
2. **Little to Big Faith** (*Mk. 6:45-52; 8:27-30*): During the three years that the Disciples spent with Jesus, their understanding of Jesus' identity deepened. At first, they were described as those with "little faith," but eventually Peter walked on the water with Jesus. His eyes were opened, and he declared, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."
3. **From Manna to Messiah** (*Mk. 8:1-10; Jn. 6*): Jesus fed 5000 people (mainly Jews), then 4000 people (mainly Gentiles). Because of the miracle, the people tried to make Him king. They couldn't yet see that He was "the bread of life." Thus, many deserted Him.
4. **A Time of Transition** (*Lk. 9:7-9*): John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets. Jesus introduced the New Testament with the fulfillment of the Law and His sacrificial death on the cross. This transition became clearer with John's arrest and death.

5. **The Prophet of Moses** (*Deut. 18:15; Jn. 1:43-45; 6:14; 7:40*): Those who lived in the day of Moses were told about a Prophet who was to come. He would be like Moses, and the people should listen to Him. That Prophet, of course, was Jesus. The Israelites who heard Moses's prediction did not understand, but the people who heard Jesus connected the dots. See the chart entitled "Jesus and Moses."

- Personal Application

1. **We Can't, But He Can:** The disciples had several difficult (or impossible) situations in which they could not endure or overcome without the Lord's help (healing, feeding crowds, stormy seas, etc.). But, after lots of practice, their faith increased, and they began to realize that though they couldn't do everything, God can empower them to accomplish "the impossible" (like Peter walking on water).
2. **Defiling Moment:** Often, we view external things as defiling (as the Pharisees did), when we are already defiled internally. Our problem is on the inside, not the outside, and only Christ has the answer. Our words and actions are indications of our internal condition.
3. **Improving Our Sight:** Just like God has revealed more of Himself to His people throughout history, He does the same in our lives. Compare your understanding of and faith in God now with your spiritual depth at salvation. Then, imagine your relationship with Him decades from now. Praise God that He never stops opening our eyes!

- Difficult Doctrine — Election

In *John 6:37-47, 65*, Jesus made some interesting statements about salvation. We will find these truths affirmed many times in the weeks to come, but let's introduce them now.

1. **"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me"** (*v.37, 39, 44, 45, 65*): Those whom God has elected or chosen will come to Christ for salvation. Salvation begins with God.
2. **"Everyone who believes in Me will have eternal life"** (*v.40, 47, 51, 58*): Salvation includes human response, believing in faith, but that faith is a gift of God (*Eph. 2:8, 9*).
3. **"I will certainly not cast out... I will lose nothing"** (*v.37, 39, 40*): Salvation is not ours to maintain. Salvation is preserved by Christ and sealed by the Spirit (*Eph. 4:30*).
4. **"I will raise [them] up on the last day"** (*v.39, 40, 44*): Like Christ, His followers will be resurrected in body to live with Him forever, sometimes called "the last day."

The Bottom Line

The Lord gradually reveals more of Himself to us and steadily grows our faith in Him.

Questions to Consider

1. What impossible situations have you faced lately? At what point did you recognize your limit and cry to God, like Peter, to save you? How did He answer?
2. Although we recognize that we have been cleansed from our internal, sinful defilement, at what point should we be concerned about defiling ourselves with external influences?
3. How has your understanding of and faith in God progressed over your lifetime? Who are those people whom God placed in your life to help you grow?