

John 6:50

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

Analysis

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. The demonstrative 'houtos' (this) identifies Jesus Himself as the bread. The present tense 'katabainon' (coming down) indicates the ongoing reality of Christ's divine origin and mission. The purpose clause 'hina...mē apothanē' (that...not die) specifies the result: eating this bread prevents death—not physical death, but eternal separation from God. Reformed theology emphasizes that Christ is both the gift and giver—God provides Himself as our sustenance. The bread 'from heaven' underscores divine initiative; salvation originates entirely with God, not human striving. To 'eat thereof' is metaphorical for faith that appropriates Christ's person and work, resulting in union with Him. This verse promises definitive victory over death through Christ.

Historical Context

Jesus continues His synagogue discourse in Capernaum, building on the manna controversy. First-century Judaism had developed extensive rabbinic commentary on manna, seeing it as the perfect food that adapted to each person's taste. Some rabbinic traditions expected the Messiah to provide manna again. Jesus radically reinterprets these expectations—He doesn't merely provide bread like Moses; He IS the bread. This claim would shock His hearers. The promise 'not die' addresses the universal human fear of mortality, especially acute in the Roman world with its uncertain afterlife concepts. Early Christian apologists like Justin Martyr used this verse to demonstrate Christianity's answer to death's finality.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'eat' of Christ—how do we actually appropriate Him by faith?
2. How does Christ as the 'bread from heaven' demonstrate that salvation is entirely God's initiative?
3. What comfort does the promise 'not die' provide to believers facing physical death?

Interlinear Text

οὗτός ἐστιν τοῦ ἄρτος τοῦ ἐξ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
This is which the bread which from which heaven
G3778 G2076 G3588 G740 G3588 G1537 G3588 G3772

καταβαίνων ἵνα τις ἐξ αὐτοῦ φάγη καὶ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ
cometh down G2443 a man from G846 may eat and G3361 die
G2597 G5100 G1537 G5315 G2532 G599

Additional Cross-References

John 6:33 (Parallel theme): For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Romans 8:10 (Parallel theme): And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

John 6:58 (Parallel theme): This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

John 6:51 (Parallel theme): I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 8:51 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

John 6:42 (Parallel theme): And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

John 3:13 (Parallel theme): And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

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