

JOHN 6:41-59
THE BREAD OF LIFE!
PART 2

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 6 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

If you remember what this chapter is all about, we saw how Jesus fed 5,000 men plus women and children with five barley crackers and two small, pickled fish.

Prior to the feeding Jesus was teaching them all day about who He is and what He came to do.

And now it is late in the day and Jesus asked Philip if he knew of a place where they could buy food for some 15,000 to 20,000 people!

Keep in mind that Jesus was not looking for Philip, and really the rest of His men to come up with some kind of answer to this problem that was based on what they could do, how they could obtain all this food. Which was an impossibility!

And the other Gospels tell us that the answer that they came up with was to send the people home.

The interesting thing is that not one of them thought to ask Jesus to provide this food for them. They saw Him heal a lame man who was not able to walk for thirty-eight years! But not one of them thought to ask Jesus.

And Jesus did provide for them, so much so that the huge crowd was stuffed and they had twelve baskets of left overs that his men took in the boat with them when Jesus told them to cross over to the other side.

And I am sure that this crowd was blown away by what they saw. The problem was that this crowd was more moved by what they were fed than what they heard. And thus, the next day they followed Jesus to the area of Capernaum and as they gathered in the synagogue Jesus taught them once again.

You see, they came for physical food, they wanted to be fed again. But Jesus explains to them that you will hunger again by partaking of that bread, and then He launches into a teaching showing that He is – ***THE BREAD OF LIFE!***

This is the first of the seven “***I AM***” statements that Jesus made, and John recorded for us. Jesus was saying that He is Almighty God, the voice from the burning bush, the All-Becoming One!

And I love their response to what Jesus said, “**... ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’**” John 6:34.

In other words, “***Lord, give us this bread that we may no longer hunger again. You did it once, keep on doing it!***”

Again, they are thinking physical, and Jesus was speaking spiritual.

And I love how Jesus responds to them. He tells them, “**... ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’**” John 6:35.

Yes, we need to take in physical food to stay alive, but we also must take in spiritual food, the Bread of Life if we want to spend eternal life with Him.

Also, think about how our needs are met in Jesus.

He is the bread of life and thus, our needs for spiritual food are met in Jesus. He satisfies that longing in our soul. He fills us with all we need to grow and mature in the faith.

Not only that, but He also says that we will never thirst in Him.

Remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria in John 4:13-14, “**Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’**”

Jesus is speaking of drinking in the Spirit, spiritual things, that is where true satisfaction and lasting satisfaction is found.

And if we try to satisfy this God-created inner thirst with other things instead of Jesus, we will continue to thirst, we will not be satisfied.

I like the way that Spurgeon sums this up for us. He wrote, “*What does a thirsty man do to get rid of his thirst? He drinks. Perhaps there is no better representation of faith in all the Word of God than that. To drink is to receive-to take in the refreshing draught-and that is all. A man’s face may be unwashed, but yet he can drink; he may be a very unworthy character, but yet a draught of water will remove his thirst. Drinking is such a remarkably easy thing, it is even more simple than eating.*” (Spurgeon, **Good News for Thirsty Souls**)

So we see that in Jesus our spiritual hunger and our spiritual thirst are met!

As we will see this morning, there is another group of people that have gathered there in this synagogue in Capernaum. This other group are some of the Jewish religious leaders and, as we will see, they are going to put their two cents in, and they are going to condemn Jesus for what He was saying.

They just could not believe that Jesus is the Messiah and even worse, that He, being a man, claimed to be Almighty God, equal with the Father!

Remember what we read in John 5:18, the response of these Jewish religious leaders to Jesus claiming to be equal with God the Father, and this is from The Amplified Bible and we are told, **“This made the Jews more determined than ever to kill Him [to do away with Him]; because He not only was breaking (weakening, violating) the Sabbath, but He actually was speaking of God as being [in a special sense] His own Father, making Himself equal [putting Himself on a level] with God.”**

And that hatred towards Jesus by these Jewish religious leaders will continue to grow and grow until they finally have Him put to death by Rome!

But isn't it easy to condemn things that we have already made a judgment on, even though the evidence is overwhelming that we are wrong? Of course it is.

And sometimes we are given only part of the evidence.

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. It was from a Facebook post.

There was a picture of this dog with this sheep in his mouth and it looked like it was killing him to eat him. You know, lamb chops! Sorry.

But that was only part of the picture.

You see, as you saw the whole picture the dog was pulling the sheep from downing in the water. Same picture but when you have all the information, it clears the misconception up and that is what Jesus is going to try to do, give them all the information!

Ray Stedman shared this regarding things that we look at and can easily condemn because the truth sets us free, but in regard to these Jewish religious leaders, they ignored the truth to believe what they wanted.

Ray wrote,

When Jesus announced to the crowd at the synagogue at Capernaum that he was the “bread which had come down from heaven,” they must have been very startled by his remarkable claim. But it is no wonder they were puzzled by what he said.

I well remember an evening some months ago when I was teaching a seminar on prophetic matters, and a young man came up and stood beside me and announced that he was Elijah returned from heaven.

I was a bit startled to say the least, especially when I realized he was perfectly serious about what he was saying. He wanted to take over the meeting and teach us because he was convinced he was Elijah.

Our reaction, of course, was to disregard his claim. We recognized that he was a troubled and disturbed young man who needed help, and we gently removed him from the meeting so we could go on.

Perhaps some of the people listening to Jesus at Capernaum felt like doing that.

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But, like I have said, there is a difference between what this young man did and what Jesus did. He did not just state that He is the Messiah, that He is Almighty God in the flesh, but He gave Scripture to support His claims and it was something that they could check to verify, but they didn't as we will see.

He also gave the testimony of witnesses who spoke of Jesus being Almighty God, but again, they ignored the truth because they could not handle the truth. Or maybe better put, they did not want to handle the truth because it went against what they wanted to believe, even though it was not true!

We are in Part 2 of our study – ***THE BREAD OF LIFE!***

And in the verses that we will be looking at this morning I have broken them down into four main points and they are as follows,

THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONDEMN JESUS – JOHN 6:41-42

JESUS REBUKES THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS – JOHN 6:43-51

THE CONFUSION OF THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS – JOHN 6:52

JESUS SUMS IT UP – JOHN 6:53-59

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 6, beginning in verse 41 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word, and we look at this topic – ***THE BREAD OF LIFE!***

JOHN 6

VERSES 41-42

Think about this for a minute. After all they saw Jesus do, they were still murmuring, grumbling, but why?

Because they just could not believe what Jesus was saying even though the things that Jesus did proved who He said He was!

In fact, *“Six times in this immediate context Jesus says that he ‘came down from heaven’ (6:33, 38, 41, 50, 51, 58). His claim to heavenly origin is unmistakable.”* (Tenney)

As I have said in previous studies, this term **“the Jews”** is not referring to all the Jewish people who were there, but specifically to the Jewish religious leaders who were there.

That is who Jesus is speaking to now. The Jewish people were there as well, but Jesus is specifically speaking to these Jewish religious leaders. And these guys followed Jesus around trying to find fault in Him, something that He said that they would eventually use against Him in the Jewish religious court system.

They were not interested in the truth, and when the truth hits you smack in the face, what do people tend to do? They complain, they murmur, they fight back. And we see them complaining and murmuring here.

What made them so upset this time? We don’t have to guess because we are told, **“. . . He said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven.’”** John 6:41.

Why did that bother them so much? Why did these words of Jesus trouble them so much?

Again, we don’t have to guess because John tells us, **“And they said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven’?’”**

You see, this bothered them so much because, once again, Jesus was declaring His divinity, that He was God who came down from heaven, God Incarnate! And they were unwilling to accept that, and it caused them to groan and complain!

They are thinking on the physical level. They knew His father and mother so in their minds it made no sense that He said He came down from heaven. He was born like everyone else, at least in their own minds they were thinking this.

But Jesus was speaking to them about spiritual things. And they could not hear or see what Jesus was saying because they were carnal and focused on the physical instead of the spiritual!

Again, their own Scriptures spoke of this child who was to be born, their Messiah, who was to be born in Bethlehem and that His going forth was from everlasting or beyond the vanishing point. In other words, the Scriptures spoke of the Messiah being eternal!

That is found in Micah 5:2, and again, their own Scriptures, and yet, they had their own ideas about the Messiah, that He was to be a man like Moses and not God, and thus, they rejected Jesus and would eventually put Jesus to death!

Also, like Moses, this Messiah would deliver them from their Roman persecution just as Moses delivered them from their Egyptian persecution!

So, they knew what He was saying, but again, they just refused to believe!

Because of that, what we have seen here, is that – ***THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONDEMN JESUS!***

But, as we read on, we will see – ***JESUS REBUKE THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS!***

VERSES 43-51

Please understand that what we see here is that – ***JESUS REBUKES THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS!***

He tells them to stop murmuring and He nails them by telling them they are not saved by physical birth, but only if the Father has drawn them!

Now some feel that this is teaching what Reformed Theology is teaching. That God has chosen some and others He has not!

That is not what is being spoken of here. Jesus is rebuking them because they have heard the truth, but they do not understand the truth because this is a choice that they have made. God did not harden their hearts or make them not hear what He was showing them, not at all!

In fact, what they were doing is a fulfillment of prophecy. Remember what we are told in Matthew 13:13-14, **“Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’”**

This was a problem for these Jewish religious leaders. They heard with their ears but their hearts were hardened to what was being said and they rejected it. Pride and unbelief caused them to be insensitive to the things of God, it was a choice on their part as I have said.

Now I know that with Reformed Theology they believe that God has predestined some for heaven and some for hell, but that is not what the Scriptures teach. And I am going to share a little on this because it is important.

We are told in II Peter 3:9, **“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish *but that all should come to repentance.*”**

God's gift of salvation is open to all because God is **“not willing that any should perish but that ALL should come to repentance.”**

But listen again to John 6:44, which says, **“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”**

Now Reformed Theology or Calvinism uses this verse to show Irresistible Grace, which is part of their acronym to prove their point – *T. U. L. I. P.* (*Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints*)

So what do the Scriptures teach us regarding this issue of irresistible grace or that you have no choice in the matter. If God is going to save you there is nothing you can do about it. And, on the other end of the spectrum is that if you want to be saved, and you are not part of the elect, there is nothing you can do to be saved!

Remember what Peter said, that God desires *ALL* to go to heaven!

But do we see in other parts of the Scripture where God is desiring to save all of mankind?

You bet we do.

In John 3:16-17 we are told, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

God loved the people of this world, mankind and that is seen in what He did, He sent His Son into the world to save them, all of them.

The key here in this salvation is **“whoever believes in Him.”** That is every person who is born has an opportunity to be saved and yes, God knows who that is because He is God, but God did not create man for Hell, man chooses to go there by His rejection of Jesus.

We see in I Timothy 2:5-6 where we are told, **“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all . . .”**

How is the atonement limited when Jesus Christ **“gave Himself a ransom for all”**? I will let you in on a little secret, ***“all”*** means ***“all”***!

And listen to what we are told in I John 2:2, **“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”**

The sacrifice that Christ made was not sufficient only ***“for all the sins of all whom God brings to faith.”*** No, John said, **“not for ours only but also for the whole world.”**

Also, in II Corinthians 5:19 Paul tells us, **“. . . that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”**

Now that seems pretty straight forward but one writer sees this verse a little differently. And the reason he does is because he believes Reformed Theology is right. But listen to what he has to do to prove his point, how he has to twist what the Scriptures are saying and that is never a good thing.

He wrote, ***“The word ‘world’ should not be interpreted in any universalistic sense, which would say that everyone will be saved, or even potentially reconciled.”*** (John MacArthur)

Here is an interesting question, ***“Why doesn’t the word ‘world’ mean world?”***

Because it would go against Reformed Theology, so they have to change the meaning of that word to fit into their doctrine and that is exactly what we are not to do, like I have said!

Just one more regarding how this gift of grace, salvation is extended to all to receive by faith, and this is from I Timothy 1:15 where we are told, **“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . . .”**

Let me ask you this question.

Are you a sinner?

If you are, and you are, then Christ came into this world to save you, He came to save me; He came to save the sinners of this world!

And think about it, the Gospel means *“good news”* and it could be any good news but the message of Christ’s life, His death and His resurrection from the dead for the forgiveness of our sins is great news in a world that is dark, discouraging, without hope many times!

But if this message was limited, if it was just for those whom God has elected, predestined, then this would not be good news for everyone because they don’t have a choice to receive it! That would be horrible news, but it is not because Jesus came to save sinners, all of us, but we do have a choice to make.

But what about this predestination, this election of God, how does that fit in?

Again, we can’t ignore this point because we like the other one better, our free will! Here is what I believe the Scriptures are saying.

It is 100% predestination!

It is also 100% free will!

And you are thinking, ***“Hey, wait a minute, that is 200% and it does not add up!”***

You are right and I am not copping out here, this is just the reality.

Let me explain like this and I think you will understand how this works.

Think of railroad tracks running side by side. Both tracks are needed to move the train forward and to get it to the destination that it is going. Now picture one of the tracks being the Sovereignty of God, the election of God, predestination and the other track being man's free will.

The tracks run parallel to each other, they never intersect each other but as we place our lives on these tracks, as we are saved, these tracks will lead us to our destination, Jesus and heaven!

To me that is the simplest way to explain it.

Listen to how George Bryson sums this up for us, it will drive home the point. He wrote,

The difference between the Calvinist and the non-Calvinist (i.e., Biblicist) view is not in the fact that Calvinists say that God irresistibly enables us to believe the Gospel. Rather, it is that they say God irresistibly makes us (the elect) believe, or, if you prefer, makes us believers. The Calvinist view is also differentiated in two ways. Calvinists deny that many sinners are enabled by God to believe. They also affirm (by implication) that some are decreed by God to unbelief and its horrible consequences for all eternity.

To help make this very important distinction as clear as possible, consider the following analogy.

Suppose there is a man stranded on an island without water or food. Suppose that the pilot of a plane flies over the island and drops (by parachute) water and food to the stranded man. Without the water and food supplied by the pilot, the stranded man would have died in just a matter of a few days.

Without the help of the pilot, the stranded man is not able to drink or eat. With the help of the pilot, the stranded man is able to drink and eat. The ability of the stranded man to drink and eat is directly related to and dependent upon the provisions dropped onto the island by the pilot.

If the stranded man is to benefit from those provisions and live, however, he must choose to drink the water and eat the food. The fact that he can do so does not guarantee that he will do so.

This is how the non-Calvinist views the offer of salvation. All lost men can believe and be saved and in fact are called upon to do so. Happily some do and tragically some don't.

Now suppose, there is a man in a hospital unconscious and dying of dehydration and starvation.

In such a helpless state, the doctor on duty decides to rehydrate and feed the man intravenously. Only after this man is revived is he able to drink and eat on his own.

This is how the Calvinist views the salvation process. You do not choose to believe but you are chosen to believe.

According to Reformed Theology, if a man believes it is because he was chosen to believe. The choice a man makes to believe is merely the effect of which the prior choice by God is the cause.

- George Bryson, *The Dark Side of Calvinism*, pp. 175-176

Again, I teach what I believe the Lord is showing me through the Scriptures and if you believe in Reformed Theology great, I just don't think the Scriptures support it.

I know that God knows who is going to be saved because He knows all things. But He also gives us a choice to make and thus, a person going to Hell can never blame God for not choosing him.

Now, when Jesus said that "**No one can come to Me unless the Father . . . draws him**" Calvinists interpret the word "**draws**" as "*drags.*"

In other words, “*No one can come to Me unless the Father drags them*” and the idea here is that God is forcing them to come to Christ thru irresistible grace.

However, Dr. Leighton Flowers, himself once a committed Calvinist, said that the Greek word translated “**draws**” could also be translated “*enables.*”

Thus, this verse can be read as, “**No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me enables them, and I will raise up those who come at the last day.**”

The bottom line is this regarding this verse here in John 6:44. God the Father, working through the Holy Spirit, invites us or as Jesus said, “*draws*” or “*enables*” us and that drawing by the Holy Spirit is upon all men to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior.

As Jesus said in John 12:32, “**And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.**”

Praise God that this gift is for all to receive by faith!

William MacDonald sums this up for us like this, “*Man in himself is utterly hopeless and helpless. He does not even have the strength to come to Jesus by himself. Unless the Father first begins to work in his heart and life, he will never realize his terrible guilt and his need of a Savior. Many people have difficulty with this verse. They suppose that it teaches that a man may desire to be saved and yet might find it impossible. This is not so. But the verse does teach in the strongest possible way that God is the One who first acted in our lives and sought to win us to Himself. We have the choice of accepting the Lord Jesus or refusing Him. But we never would have had the desire in the first place if God had not spoken to our hearts. Again, the Lord added the promise that He will raise every true believer up at the last day. As we have seen before, this refers to the coming of Christ for His saints (the rapture), when the dead will be raised and the living will be changed. It is a resurrection of believers only.*”

Now in John 6:46 Jesus tells us that no one has seen the Father except Jesus!

How can that be?

It is simple.

Because He was eternally in heaven, one with the Father, and then sent to earth by the Father, the Son can speak authoritatively about the Father. No one else can rightly make such a claim. Thus, only the Son is qualified to speak firsthand about the expectations of the Father and the truth of salvation.

Then, in John 6:47-51 we see that Jesus is recapping what he had already declared about Himself and we talked about that in our last study, that Jesus is the bread of life!

Why does He recap this?

Because He is speaking specifically to the Jewish religious leadership and not just the Jewish people!

Now, what Jesus is speaking of in these verses is everlasting life!

Think about that for a minute. Everlasting life is what people are looking for and they have all kinds of ideas of what that everlasting life is all about and how to obtain it.

And once again we see that Jesus says that if you want this everlasting life with the Father, then you must **BELIEVE** in Him, repent and receive Him as Lord and Savior of your life.

I know, it does not say that we have to repent and receive Him but as you look at the Scriptures, that is exactly what they say, and we can't edit them to fit what we want.

This belief is a total change of life. You were moving away from God and now you have turned to Him in belief, and you are following Him – that is what **REPENTANCE** is all about!

It is as Paul said in Romans 5:19-21, **“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

He is the bread of life, everlasting life if you would only partake of Him; receive Him into your life!

Then, in verses 49 and 50 Jesus speaks of the manna that God fed the children of Israel in the wilderness. You see, this met their physical needs, but their bodies still died.

Now when we speak of physical death we are talking about the separation of our consciousness from our bodies.

When we speak of spiritual death we are talking about a separation of our consciousness from God. And that is what sin has done and because our sin has separated us from God, and we see that Jesus came to restore that separation by paying in full the penalty for our sins.

Peter put it this way, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

I Peter 3:18.

You see, we can enjoy that relationship with God now by coming to Christ and when our physical bodies go back to the dust of the earth, we will go to be with the Lord.

If we reject Jesus, our spirits are already dead, separated from God, and when these physical bodies go back to the dust of the earth, they will remain separated from God for eternity!

I like what Spurgeon had to say regarding this. He wrote, *“Every man feeds on something or other. You see, one man getting his Sunday newspaper; how he will feed on that! Another goes to frivolous amusements, and he feeds on them. Another man feeds upon his business, and upon the thought of his many cares! But all that is poor food; it is only ashes and husks. If you did but possess true spiritual life, you would know the deep necessity there is of feeding upon Christ.”*

And in verse 51 many see this speaking of communion and the eating of Jesus’ flesh! Not at all.

What is the context of what we have been reading?

Everlasting life by believing that Jesus is Almighty God, the Savior. And if the children of Israel all ended up dying in the wilderness because the manna was only physical food, why do we think that eating the flesh of Jesus would give us eternal life? That is crazy and it is very wrong.

I realize that some may be offended by that. But the point that Jesus is making when He says that the bread that He is giving to us, that we must partake of **“is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world”** He is speaking of dying on the cross of Calvary!

Bruce put it like this, *“To give one’s flesh can scarcely mean anything other than death, and the wording here points to a death which is both voluntary (‘I will give’) and vicarious (‘for the life of the world’).”*

And Clarke wrote, *“Here our Lord plainly declares that his death was to be a vicarious sacrifice and atonement for the sin of the world; and that, as no human life could be preserved unless there was bread (proper nourishment) received, so no soul could be saved but by the merit of his death.”*

That just flows with what Jesus is saying and not some man-made doctrine that has come into the church.

Remember what Paul said in II Corinthians 5:21, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

And for those who still think this relates to communion, Morris should dispel that kind of thinking as he wrote, *“When a man once takes it (‘eat’ is in the aorist tense, of the once-for-all action of receiving Christ) he will not die.”*

Again, we receive Christ once into our lives and then we grow in Him and that is exactly what Jesus is saying here.

Now, think about what is going through the mind of these Jewish religious leaders. They think that Jesus is speaking of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. And the conclusion that these Jewish religious leaders came to, because they were not hearing the voice of God, is that Jesus is speaking of a physical partaking, cannibalism you might say and as we will see, they will be horrified by this.

Look at how they respond – ***THE CONFUSION OF THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS!***

VERSE 52

Now think about this. These Jewish leaders are quarreling and saying, ***“How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?”***

Now did they just bring this up to discredit Jesus. It is possible because they knew that this was not something that any Jew was to do.

And the reason it may be just a ploy to get the rest of the Jews to come against Jesus is that in John 6:51 He just spoke of the bread being His body and that He would give His life as a sacrifice for the life of the world.

They twisted what Jesus said and gave the people the idea of this bizarre cannibalism to obtain eternal life!

Now the problem with that, if that is what Jesus was saying, is that it went against what God said in His Word.

Do you really think that the Word, Jesus, would tell them to do something that was contrary to the Word? Of course not.

In Leviticus 17:10-14 we are told, **“And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.’ Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.’ Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.’”**

I think that is very clear.

What is the blood for?

To make atonement for our sins.

What did Jesus do for us?

He shed His blood to make atonement for our sins. So, there is no way that Jesus would tell them to drink His blood!

Morris puts it like this, *“Eating Christ’s flesh and drinking His blood point to that central saving act described otherwise in, say, John 3:16. Christ’s death opens the way to life. Men enter that way by faith. . . . Eating the flesh and drinking the blood represent a striking way of saying this.”*

And Jesus is going to hit them hard as He answers them, and I have called these verses – ***JESUS SUMS IT UP!***

VERSES 53-59

As you read John 6:53-58 it does seem to say that Jesus is speaking of partaking of His actual body and blood. Eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

But this is a picture that Jesus is talking about and not a literal eating His body and drinking His blood, which would break the Law and Jesus did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it.

Think about it. When Jesus says that He is a Rock, or the Bread of Life, or the Door, is He speaking literally or figuratively?

Figuratively of course and that is what He is doing here as we are to receive Jesus into our lives by faith, partake of Him spiritually speaking.

And even if that is not good enough for you, listen to what Jesus is going to say in John 6:63, **“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”**

He is not speaking of physically partaking of His body and blood.

How can I be so sure?

Because He says that the flesh profits nothing. That means, if we could actually partake of His flesh and blood Jesus is saying that it is meaningless, it does not profit us at all.

That means that Jesus is talking spiritual, receiving Him, receiving His Words into your life, partaking of Him and you will have life!

Let's not make the Word of God fit into what we want to believe, let God speak for Himself and if we do, I think it is very clear in what He is saying!

But the Roman Catholic Church has taken this, and they have made it into exactly opposite of what Jesus was saying.

They believe that the wafer in communion actual becomes the body of Christ, and the wine becomes the actual blood of Christ. Thus, in communion, in the Roman Catholic Church, you are eating the body of Christ and drinking His blood!

These words that Jesus spoke here in John chapter 6, as well as what Jesus said in Matthew 26:26-28 saying that "**This is My body**" and "**This is My blood**" they believe are literal!

This process of changing these elements from bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is called **TRANSUBSTANTIATION** and it means "*change of substance.*"

And then this becomes a new sacrifice of Christ, and this is done at every Mass! Jesus is sacrificed at every Mass, or so they tell us.

Also, these transformed elements are placed in a chamber called a **monstrance** and they are to be worshipped just as we are to worship the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, because they believe it is Jesus in that display case!

You may think that I am taking what they believe out of context, so let me share with you from a Catholic website what they believe. We are told,

The question of exactly when the eucharistic gifts become Christ's Body and Blood has commanded attention and debate for centuries.

From the supper at Emmaus, disciples have cherished the Eucharist as the clearest sign of the Risen Lord's abiding presence.

Yet, beginning in the Middle Ages, for a thousand years laypeople in the West seldom received Communion, and even then only under the form of bread. For that reason knowing when Christ became present at Mass was a key to spiritual life, since the ordinary way of worship was looking at the consecrated Host raised high over the priest's head rather than eating it.

Medieval scholars-all priests-naturally looked at the Eucharistic Prayer and the cherished memory of the words and deeds of Jesus at the Last Supper, called the "Institution Narrative."

The winning answer in the debate was keyed to the words of the priest: "This is my body." (*Hoc est enim corpus meum.*)

Today, the answer can be found in the Catechism, but also by observing the liturgy. The Catechism says that as soon as the Institution Narrative begins, the Lord is present in the elements of bread and wine.

That is why the universal law of the church directs the assembly to kneel for this part of the Eucharistic Prayer, even though in the United States we are already kneeling at that point.

The ritual direction in the sacramentary says that after the Institution Narrative, the “priest holds the consecrated host and shows it to the congregation.” The postures and gestures and texts of the liturgy are clear that the transformation is already complete midway through the Eucharistic Prayer.

The same question never captured the attention of the Eastern Catholic and Orthodox traditions. For them, the critical moment has always been the epiclesis, or the calling down of the Holy Spirit on the gifts of bread and wine and the assembly. The priest extends his hands over the gifts and asks the Holy Spirit to “change them for us into the Body and Blood of Christ.” For an Eastern Christian, that’s the critical moment.

There is a deeper, more personal question. At what point do we become the Body and Blood of Christ?

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There are many problems with this but think about this. How many times is Christ sacrificed for our sins?

Just *ONCE!*

In I Peter 3:18 we are told, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

Did you see that? He suffered **“once for sins.”**

Also, in Hebrews 10:10 Paul tells us, **“By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”**

Notice that Jesus offered His body for the payment of our sins “**once for all.**” Not over and over and over again!

Again, Paul tells us in Hebrews 9:28, “**so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.**”

He was offered “**once**” and not over and over again as I have said.

And in John 19:30 we are told, “**So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.**”

In other words, the payment for our salvation was paid in full and thus, there is no other sacrifice needed for our sins! Jesus was sacrificed once for our sins and the Scriptures are very clear on this!

Then what does it mean when Jesus said, “**This is My body**” and “**This is My blood**”?

In knowing what the Scriptures teach. In knowing what Jesus has been teaching on this subject, it is as simple as this. “***This bread represents My body***” and “***This wine represents My shed blood.***”

And again, we must look at what this chapter has to say and John 6:63, as we have read, clearly shows what Jesus is speaking of. In fact, it proves that Jesus wasn’t speaking literally of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. He was speaking figuratively, metaphorically!

Communion is done to remember the work that Jesus has done for us, something we are not to forget or take lightly!

Spurgeon commented on this as he wrote, ***“Our Savior was, however, led to make these remarks from the fact that the ignorant Jews, when he talked about eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, really thought that he meant that they were to turn cannibals, and eat him up. You may well smile at so ridiculous an idea; yet you know that the idea is still prevalent in the Church of Rome. The Romish priest solemnly assures us that the people who eat the bread and drink the wine, or the stuff he calls bread and wine, do actually act the part of cannibals, and eat the body of Christ, and drink his blood.”***

Folk’s, what Jesus is saying or really, He is illustrating for us, is that just as you need to take into your physical bodies food and water you must also receive into your spirit Jesus, for He alone can give life! And in a few verses Jesus is going to clear that misunderstanding up for us about physically, literally eating His body and drinking His blood. And we will look at this more closely next time, but it is what Jesus said in John 6:63.

Keep in mind that these teachings took place in the synagogue in Capernaum, so there were many Jews and Jewish religious leaders there listening to this and remember, they did not like Jesus, the Jewish religious leaders didn’t like Jesus, so they looked for ways to discredit Him.

Jesus has spent a long time sharing that He is the bread of life and apart from partaking Him into your life by faith, you will not be raised up, but you will be separated from Him for eternity. But it truly is a choice on your part, to receive Him or reject Him.

You need to understand that God loves you more than you will ever know, and His desire is for you to enter into eternal life with Him. It is an invitation to come and partake of the bread of life!

I will close with these words from Jesus, where He said, “... ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.’” John 6:35-36.

God has done this for us, but then it is our choice if we will receive Him into our lives and be satisfied in Him or reject Him and never be satisfied like you can in Christ. And in the end, apart from Christ, you are dead in your trespasses and sins, you will be separated from Him for eternity!

As we are told in Acts 2:38-39, “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’”

God is calling, may we listen and obey!