

*He Loved Me . . .*

*He Loves Me Lots*

*The Gospel of John*

Text

John 6:41-59

Topic

The Jews are offended when Jesus insists,  
"The one who eats my flesh and drinks  
My blood remains in me, and I in him"

Title

**"You Are Who You Eat"**

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Against my better judgment, I submitted my 23and Me DNA swab to learn more about my ancestry. I found out that a distant relative of mine in Sicily was a cannibal who ate five people.

**It was a lot to digest.**

It was no laughing matter the early Christians were accused of cannibalism. Haters took Jesus and His disciples literally when they heard the teaching, "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (v53).

**Jesus was not advocating cannibalism He was speaking metaphorically.**

Jesus came as God in human flesh to offer Himself as the once-for-all sacrifice for the sins of the world. We partake of His flesh by *believing*.

**Believing is how you eat Jesus' flesh and drink His blood.**

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Jesus Came As God In Human Flesh To Be Your Suitable Sacrifice**, and **#2 Jesus Came As God In Human Flesh To Be Your Spiritual Sustainer**.

**#1 - Jesus Came As God In Human Flesh To Be Your Suitable Sacrifice (v41-51)**

Benjamin Buford 'Bubba' Blue expounded his dream to Forrest saying, "Shrimp is the fruit of the sea."

"You can barbecue it, boil it, broil it, bake it, sauté it. There's shrimp-kabobs, shrimp creole, shrimp gumbo. Pan fried, deep fried, stir-fried. There's pineapple shrimp, lemon shrimp, coconut shrimp, pepper shrimp, shrimp soup, shrimp stew, shrimp salad, shrimp and potatoes, shrimp burger, shrimp sandwich."

Hopefully the Israelites in the Exodus from Egypt had their own Bubba who could suggest recipes. "The children of Israel ate manna **forty years**, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan" (Exodus 16:35).

Christian singer/songwriter Keith Green suggested "manna waffles, manna burgers, manna bagels, fillet of manna, manna patty, and everyone's favorite, bamanna bread.

Jesus had miraculously fed a multitude numbering upwards of ten thousand (including women and children). He walked on the waves, coming to the aid of the twelve who were caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee.

It was the next day and some from the multitude He had fed boarded boats to find Jesus in Capernaum. We are picking up in the middle of a dialog about the bread of life that took place as Jesus taught in the synagogue (v59).

Joh 6:41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from Heaven."

Joh 6:42 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'?"

Mr. Incredible thinks a super hero's identity is the most valuable thing. People are always skeptical when they discover their neighbor or coworker is from Krypton, not Smallville. Jesus had relocated from Nazareth to Capernaum. His neighbors thought they knew Him. They were shocked to hear Him claim He came from Heaven.

Joh 6:43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves."

Murmuring, grumbling, complaining. These indicate a lack of contentment with the Lord. We think it's our spouse, or our kids, or our fellow workers, and that since they are so lame, it's OK to murmur, grumble, and complain. It is, in fact, sin.

To quote Tom Hanks, "Are you murmuring? *There's no murmuring in Christianity.*"

The apostle Paul wrote, "Do all things without murmurings... Learn... to be content" (Philippians 2:14KJV & 4:11).

"But Pastor Gene, what about the way I'm being treated?" G. Campbell Morgan writes, "*If you have no opposition in the place you serve, you're serving in the wrong place.*"

It's not uncommon for a person to have a heart murmur. It can be an indicator of underlying heart disease. It is always an indicator of spiritual heart disease.

Joh 6:44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

As far as I can tell, all Christians agree that “no one can come to” God unless they are “drawn.” God must take the initiative in our salvation and do the work.

The question that remains is, “Who does God draw?” We answer by quoting Jesus: “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, **will draw all peoples to Myself.**” This He said, signifying by what death He would die” (John 12:32-33).

There are theologies that limit the word “all” by saying it is only those predestined to be saved, or only some from all of the world’s people groups. *Strong’s Concordance* says this word “all” means *every, whosoever*.

### **If your theology limits God, maybe it’s time to reevaluate it.**

There is no single system of theology that is the correct one. Major Ian W. Thomas writes, “To so many people, the Lord is in danger of being no more than a patron saint of their systematic theology instead of the Christ Who is our life.”

If you are going to adopt a systematic theology, why not adopt one that is an inclusive, “whosoever will” theology, rather than one that condemns the vast majority of human beings to eternal conscious punishment?

“All” are drawn by the influence of Jesus’ death on the Cross. However, you shouldn’t think of being drawn as an irresistible force compelling you against your will.

Dr. Charles Xavier has vast mental powers and can compel others to do his will. God doesn’t draw you by invading your mind and compelling you. It is possible to resist the grace of God. Stephen, moments from martyrdom, told the Jews, “you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you” (Acts 7:51).

All are drawn, but it does not follow that all will be saved. Those drawn *who believe* are secure in the Lord with His promise, "I will lift him up [resurrect him] at the last day."

Joh 6:45 It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT BY GOD.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

Jesus quoted Isaiah from a passage addressing Jews in the future Kingdom of God on Earth. Knowledge of the Lord will be everywhere. There won't be any resistance to posting the Ten Commandments, or to school prayer. Most of the topics that we discuss *ad nauseam*, e.g. politics, will be replaced by discussions about the Lord. There will be one political party, the Jesus Party, and no elections. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord.

When the Jews rejected the offer of the Kingdom, it was put on hold. The mystery of the church was revealed. We live in the gap until Jesus comes to resurrect and rapture us.

Joh 6:46 Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.

Daniel LaRusso got beat-up by the Cobra Kai and told his mom, "I gotta take karate. Not at the Y... a good school." Mister Myagi stepped in. Daniel could not have asked for a better teacher.

We want to learn from the best. Often there is a long wait list to be taught by the best, or it is simply too expensive. We end up at the Y.

**You can only learn about God the Father from one Person, Jesus, who has "seen the Father"**

There is no wait list, and He has paid your price. All you do is "come."

Joh 6:47 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.

Could it be any plainer? Believe and you have everlasting life. Jesus didn't say, "Believe AND eat My flesh and drink My blood." He didn't say it *because believing **is** eating.*

Beware of those who add *anything* to believing. Typically we cite baptism as something certain groups believe necessary for salvation. It isn't.

I came across a list of more subtle things that people add to the Gospel:

- Legalism - Seeking to achieve righteousness by following God's commands through a rigid list of do's and don'ts.
- Formalism - This is the outward show of being a Christian with no inward change. It's having a form of godliness without power.
- Mysticism - Requiring the Gospel to produce dynamic emotional and spiritual experiences.
- Activism - Distorting the Gospel by insisting that an important but nonbiblical issue is the ultimate issue.

Joh 6:48 I am the bread of life.

Joh 6:49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

It came from Heaven, but manna could not impart eternal life. It was meant to be symbolic of the future bread of life from Heaven that would impart eternal life.

Joh 6:50 This is the bread which comes down from Heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.

I like the way one commentator put it: "The *manna-bread* that came down has been replaced and fulfilled by the *Man-bread* who has also come down."

Joh 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

Jesus summarized, claiming He fulfilled the metaphor. But then He added something new, saying, "I shall give... My flesh."

What? Who said anything about dying? Dying was the plan all along:

- In the Garden of Eden the Lord preached the Gospel to the first human sinners. He would come, the Seed of the woman, and be wounded in a winner-take-all confrontation with the devil.
- A few minutes later, the Lord gave them some indication of the seriousness of the wounding when He killed animals to provide covering of their nakedness. It also served to teach them that their sin could only be atoned for by the shedding of blood of an innocent, substitutionary sacrifice.
- A few chapters later, you read about the near-sacrifice of Isaac by his father, the father of our faith, Abraham. It was a type, prefiguring the sacrifice of Jesus by His Father on the very spot.

I think you get it. The Lord worked out the plan of salvation progressively in human history.

**D**uring the holidays, the Fox Theater requires not money but a donation of food as the ticket price. An expired can of Sufferin' Succotash won't get you in the rest of the year. You must always have the suitable form of payment.

God in human flesh voluntarily dying in our place is the one, the only, suitable sacrifice.

## **#2 - Jesus Came As God In Human Flesh To Be Your Spiritual Sustainer (v52-59)**

Did you hear about the cannibal who converted to Roman Catholicism?

## **He only eats fishermen on Friday's.**

Jesus' comments about eating His flesh and drinking His blood have caused no small controversy. A Roman Catholic resource says,

*Something happened at that last meal that Jesus celebrated with His disciples, something that had never happened before: Ordinary bread and wine were transformed into the body and blood of Jesus, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. At every Mass, bread and wine become Jesus - His body, blood, soul and divinity.*

John Trapp writes,

*The Fathers commonly expounded this part of our Saviors sermon as spoken of the sacrament of the Lord's supper; and so fell into that error, that none but communicants could be saved; wherefore they also gave the sacrament to infants, and put it into the mouths of dead men.*

We reject this doctrine, called Transubstantiation. The communion elements have no literal or mystical connection to Jesus' physical body.

We hold what scholars call a memorial view of the Lord's Supper that sees its celebration as a *remembrance* of what Jesus did on the Cross. The apostle Paul quoted Jesus saying to us, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (First Corinthians 11:24&25).

We can't simply say the elements are metaphorical. We need to *show* they are. We can do that. One commentator writes,

*In John 6:40, Jesus says, "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." The requirement for eternal life is to behold the Son and to believe in Him. The promised results are that a believer has eternal life and Jesus will raise him up on the last day.*



*In John 6:54, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." These are exactly the same results as in verse forty, but instead of beholding the Son and believing in Him, Jesus substitutes eating His flesh and drinking His blood.*

***Since things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, eating Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood refer to believing personally in His death on the cross as your only hope for eternal life.***

Augustine, in the fourth century wrote, *Crede, et manducasti*, "Believe, and you have eaten."

He went on to write, "figuratively [Jesus] is in the bread and wine, and spiritually He is in them that worthily eat and drink the bread and wine; but really, carnally, and corporally He is only in Heaven."

The words 'eat' and 'feed' are found in verses 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, & 58. They are metaphors, not magic or mysticism.

Joh 6:52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?"

The Jews were like Drax in *Guardians of the Galaxy*. They took literally Jesus' obviously metaphorical statement. Their thoughts drifted to cannibalism.

Joh 6:53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

Joh 6:54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

This sounds very communion-y, but it isn't. Jesus did not initiate what we call the Lord's Supper until at least a year after the events in this chapter.

Joh 6:55 For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.

Coca-Cola claims, "It's the real thing." Jesus' flesh and blood, His body, sacrificed for you, is the *real* "real thing" when it comes to salvation.

Joh 6:56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

As a kid reading comics I was always fascinated by codes and decoder rings you could purchase. Earlier we said that "eating is believing." It sounds like an **enigma**, but what if we use it as a code?

If we did, a paraphrase of verse fifty-six would be, "If you want an intimate, abiding relationship with Me, **believe** that by the sacrifice of my flesh and blood on the Cross you are saved, and I will abide in you, enabling you to abide with Me."

Joh 6:57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.

The word "sent" reminds us that, for the purpose of saving us, Jesus took upon Himself a body of flesh, adding humanity to His deity. He subordinated Himself to His Father and was sent by the Father.

Let's use our decoder ring again: "The living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who **believes** on Me will live because of Me."

Joh 6:58 This is the bread which came down from Heaven - not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

Jesus claimed to be superior "bread." Moses and their ancestors all died, but Jesus and His followers "will live forever."

Manna was a type of Jesus, sent from Heaven to be your sacrifice. "He who **believes** this bread will live forever."

Joh 6:59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

It was a more formal dialog. A few commentators point out that earlier in the chapter the hearers are called "the Jews," which often is a title given to the religious authorities among the Jews.

The Gospel remains the same in any setting. Formal or informal, academic or casual, friend or stranger, it must not be diluted. You can certainly target your audience, be contemporary, but in the end, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and... He was buried, and... He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (First Corinthians 15:3-4).

**S**peaking of bodies and flesh... Jesus spoke of "the last day" four times in this chapter (v39, 40, 44 & 54). You will be "raised up at the last day." For us, the last day is the resurrection and rapture of the Church. You will receive a glorified, resurrection body, suitable for eternity with Jesus.

You can be "confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

J. I. Packer writes,

**"For the Christian, the best is always yet to be. Our Father's wealth is immeasurable, and we will inherit the entire estate"**

Jesus "abides" in you by the gift of God the Holy Spirit given to you when you believe and are saved. He is your spiritual supply. He is your empowering to endure.

Let's finish with these words of R. A. Torrey:

*The Holy Spirit is the person who imparts to the individual believer the power that belongs to God. This is the Holy Spirit's work in the believer, to take what belongs to God and make it ours.*