

25. Jesus' flesh and blood

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Christianity can be misunderstood easily and satan is doing everything within his power to make sure that the spiritually naive and ignorant people stay in the misunderstanding of fog and maze.

Let me give four examples of misunderstandings:

1) Unlike other religions of the world, the God of Christianity doesn't require any human work for salvation which goes against people's mindset. Because they tend to think that they have to earn salvation in order to enter into heaven and it also gives them bragging rights to boast about their work rather than God's grace and mercy. Additionally, Christianity claims that not all the roads lead to its God and as a matter of fact, there is only one way to get to heaven – by accepting Jesus into one's heart which means to become a born-again. It seems a very narrow minded way.

2) Christianity insists that there are three unique persons in their Godhead, yet they believe in one God who can do all things; knows all things; and can be everywhere at the same time. It is not possible and logical in human mind.

3) Christianity says, "You must die to live." It sounds oxymoron; doesn't make sense. It sounds more like someone's riddle than the truth.

4) Jesus even teaches about eating His flesh and drinking His blood to His followers. Many people, somewhat, might go along with the first three, but the fourth one would make many people's hair on their neck stand straight. It sounds that Christianity has gone too far and too gross. Many don't want anything to do with it.

That is exactly how the multitude around Jesus felt when they heard Him saying that they had to eat His flesh and drink His blood to be saved.

A. COMPLAIN, COMPLAIN, COMPLAIN

John 6:41-43 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 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?'" 43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves.

The Jewish religious leaders were leading the pack in complaining and grumbling against Jesus and what His said to whomever they could find.

The word 'complain' and 'murmur' are the same word in Greek – "goggyzo". When you repeat it several times fast, it sounds like murmuring and complaining.

These people thought they knew Jesus – who He was and where He came from. Yes, Jesus was the oldest Son of Joseph the carpenter. Of course, He was the legal son of Joseph, but not a natural one, since He was born of a virgin. The Jewish religious leaders thought that Jesus was from Nazareth, but in reality He was born in Bethlehem. If they did a little bit of fact finding research, they would have known the true identity of Jesus the Messiah.

B. NO ONE CAN COME TO JESUS UNLESS THE FATHER DRAWS HIM

John 6:44-46 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 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. 46 Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.

Maybe I am not sophisticated enough or smart enough to complicate this divine predestination and human responsibility issue like many theologians and believers who'd love to argue. I suggest you that you think about it in this way: Humans have their own will to choose which side they want to go – God's way to heaven or their own way to hell. And God, in His foreknowledge, knew who is going to follow His way so He predestines a person's future and one's eternal destination – heaven or hell according to one's future decision.

From God's viewpoint, divine predestination and human responsibility integrate beautifully without a hitch, but we bring them down to our limited thinking – yes, there are a lot of conflicts.

Here Jesus explains to us how a sinner can come to God: through the truth of His Word.

Isaiah 54:13 All your children shall be taught by the Lord, And great shall be the peace of your children.

It is through the teaching of the Word that the Father draws people to the Savior, His Son. The sinner hears, learns, and comes as the Father draws him.

Today, many churches would rather give their congregation pep talks than the truth from the Word of God from the pulpits; some heavily rely on another men's books, such as "Purpose Driven Life" instead of the Bible; some preach about hellfire and brimstone time after time but never how to live an authentic and holy Christian life. There are not many churches teaching the Word of God straight as is in an expository method.

Consequently, the majority of believers of Jesus Christ in America in the 21st Century are lacking in the truth of God from the Bible in their hearts and very weak spiritually even though they've been attending their churches 10 to 30 years.

Hebrews 5:12-14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Actually, it is basically the same message Jesus gave after He had healed the man who was sick 38 long years at the Pool of Bethesda. The carnal crowd wanted to see some miracles as a piece of entertainment, but what they really needed was to learn the truth of Jesus the Savior.

Then, a person might wonder why everyone does not come to Jesus so that they can have eternal life.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

As you already know, many intellectuals scoff, laugh, and ridicule the faith of Christians, because they think that they have the answers for everything until something happens in their lives that is completely beyond their control. Then, they realize that they don't know the truth of God because they choose not to be spiritually discerning.

V46 can puzzle believers' minds because they have read some of the OT verses that mention the appearances of God to many people. They not only had seen the Lord and even carried conversations with Him. How are we going to explain that? There is a fancy theological word for that – "Christophany". It is a physical appearance of Jesus in His pre-incarnate state during the OT. It is Jesus they had seen, not the Father just as Jesus described here.

It is by the Word of God that we 'see' God and receive the faith to come to Christ and trust Him.

C. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:47-50 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.

When Jesus called Himself "the Living Bread," in v48, He was not claiming to be exactly like the manna. He was claiming to be even greater.

The manna only sustained life for the Jews, but Jesus gives life to the whole world. The Jews ate the daily manna and eventually died; but when you receive Jesus Christ into your heart, you live forever. When God gave the manna, He gave only a gift; but when Jesus came, He gave Himself. There was no cost to God in sending the manna each day, but He gave His Son at the greatest cost. The Jews had to eat the manna every day, but the sinner who trusts Christ once is given eternal life.

Any Bible student who has been studying the Bible for some time would have noticed that 'manna' was a piece of the typology that points to Jesus Christ. It is correct, because it is not difficult to see in the manna a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here are some connections that we must notice:

- The manna was a mysterious thing to the Jews; in fact, the word 'manna' means "What is it?".
 - Jesus was a mystery to those who saw Him externally only.
 - The manna came at night from heaven.
 - Jesus came to this earth when sinners were in moral and spiritual darkness.
 - The manna was given to a rebellious people; it was the gracious gift of God. All they had to do was stoop and pick it up. If they failed to pick it up, they walked on it.
 - The Lord is not far from any sinner.
- All the sinner has to do is humble himself and take the gift that God offers.

D. EATING HIS FLESH, DRINKING HIS BLOOD

John 6:51-59 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." 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"

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. 54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 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. 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." 59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

Let's clear the air here. Jesus is not a cannibal, nor does He encourage us to be one. Of course, Jesus was talking about eating His flesh and drinking His blood in a figure of speech. All Jesus said was, "Just as you take food and drink within your body and it becomes a part of you, so you must receive Me within your heart so that I can give you life."

In later days, Roman Emperors used this comment of Jesus to frame Christians as cannibals and the enemies of the state.

Some interpreters tell us that Jesus was speaking about communion, and that we eat His flesh and drink His blood when we partake of the elements at the table – the bread and the fruit of vine. Jesus did not have it in mind when He spoke these words.

From this, the Eastern Orthodox practices the custom of infant communion. They believe infants will not be saved unless they partake in communion. However, we don't do it according to the context of the Scriptures. Nor do we do infant baptism, though it would make the parents and grandparents feel special.

The reason why we do not do either communion or baptism for infant is due to the lack of infant's own decision capability. Generally, infants do not understand Scriptures, nor do they make a decision proclaiming one's allegiance with Jesus publicly at his or her baptism. The same goes for the communion. But we do children's dedication to the Lord Jesus as it was done for Jesus when He was an infant.

Never anywhere in the Bible, do Jesus and any of His disciples teach us that we must take communions in order to be saved. Nowhere.

The last reaction of Jesus' opponents was prompted by the apparent impossibility of his statement. They took literally the figure of eating His flesh. Unless one has spiritual perception, spiritual truth makes no sense whatsoever. Nicodemus could not comprehend the new birth, either in chapter 3. Now the Jews considered the Lord's words to be utter nonsense. Cannibalism and drinking blood were banned according to the Mosaic Law. Besides, Jesus made it clear that He was not speaking in literal terms in v63. He was using a human analogy to convey a spiritual truth.

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.

Seeing a loaf of bread on a plate will not satisfy our hunger. Knowing the ingredients in the bread will not satisfy our hunger. Taking pictures of the bread will not satisfy our hunger. Telling other people about the bread will not satisfy our hunger. Selling the bread will not satisfy our hunger. Playing catch with the bread will not satisfy our hunger. Nothing will satisfy our hunger except actually eating the bread.

Reading the Bible and singing praise songs will not make you be a Christian. Knowing how to become a born-again Christian will not make you be one. Praying to God everyday will not make you be a born-again. Telling other people about Jesus and how to get saved will not make you be a true follower of Jesus. Nothing will satisfy our inner spiritual hunger except actually receiving Jesus into our hearts as the Savior and Lord.

Faith in Jesus is not compared with tasting or admiring, but with taking Him into our lives. We must dig in. Jesus says that we must have Him within us, and we must partake of Him.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) It is by the Word of God that we 'see' God and receive the faith to come to Christ and trust Him.

2) Faith in Jesus is not compared with tasting or admiring, but with taking Him into our lives.