

# *Eating Christ's flesh and Drinking His blood?*

**John 6:52-58**

East Berlin Community Church

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## Introduction

- The stories of Amelia Begalia
- Figures of speech are not to be taken literally, but they do express literal truth.
- Jesus expressing himself metaphorically in John 6 as the *"Bread of Life"*
  - John 6:27-- *"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life which the son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal on Him."*
  - John 6:29 -- *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent!"*
  - John 6:35 -- *"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."*
  - John 6:38 -- *"not to do My own will, but the will of him who sent Me."*
  - John 6:40 -- *"everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise Him up at the last day."*
- Those who come to Christ are drawn by the Father.
  - John 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."*
  - 2 Timothy 2:25-26 -- *"God grants us repentance so that we may know the truth and that we may come to our senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."*
  - John 6:47 -- *"Most assuredly I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life!"*
- *"Anyone who eats this bread will live forever, and the bread which I shall give is My flesh"*
  - John 6:48, 51-- *"I am the bread of life... I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever, and the bread which I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."*
- The heated debate that follows.
  - John 6:52 -- *"The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?'"*

## ***Eating Christ's flesh and Drinking His blood?***

- John 6:53-58 -- *"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. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 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."*

### **A. Some take Jesus literally—that is, we physically must eat His flesh and drink His blood.**

#### **1. View of the Roman Catholic Church**

- a. Jesus instituted the Mass at the Last Supper, changing the physical bread and wine into His body and blood. And by apostolic succession, priests today have the power to do so at the consecration of the elements.

- b. Second Vatican Council: *"In the sacrament of the Eucharist Christ is present, in a manner altogether unique, God and man, whole and entire, substantially, and continually."*
- c. The Eucharist is a sacrament of the church, a means of grace by which the faithful obtain sanctifying grace and are further justified. It is the most blessed sacrament for it is Christ Himself whom they are receiving in the elements.
- d. Since the Eucharist helps one obtain eternal salvation, Catholics are encouraged to regularly attend Mass.
- e. Roman Catholic explanation of...
  - John 6:51 -- *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."*
  - John 6:55 -- *"For My flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed."*
  - John 6:53-54 -- *"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. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise Him up at the last day."*

## 2. View of the Jews listening to Jesus

- a. Since Jesus does not correct them, but allows them to continue thinking that He meant physically eating his flesh, Catholic scholars argue that the Jews properly understood what Jesus meant.
- b. But Jesus was often misunderstood without correcting wrong thinking.
  - John 2:19-21 -- *"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."* *"Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you will raise it in three days? But he was speaking of the temple of His body."*
  - John 3:3-4 -- *"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*... *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*
  - John 6:34 -- *"bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world"*... *"Lord, give us this bread always."*

## B. Others take Jesus figuratively—that is, "eating" and "drinking" are figures of speech, not to be taken literally.

### 1. If Jesus is speaking literally, He is asking His followers to do something strictly prohibited in Scripture. But that is something Jesus would NEVER ask us to do.

- a. **Eating flesh with its blood, and drinking blood is strictly forbidden.**
  - Leviticus 17:10-11 -- *"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."*
  - Genesis 9:4 -- *"But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, with its blood"*
  - Acts 15:29 -- *"That you should abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well."*
- b. **At the Last Supper, no hint that Jesus was asking them to drink His blood, thus violating God's prohibition.**
- b. **Worshiping objects violates the second commandment**
  - Exodus 20:4 -- *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."*

### 2. If Jesus is speaking literally, and the bread becomes His flesh, and the wine becomes His blood, then Jesus is asking us to believe something that is not scripturally based nor sensory verifiable.

#### a. The theory of Transubstantiation

- 1) Based on the Greek Philosopher, Aristotle, who taught that all matter consists of two parts: accidents and substance. Accidents are the outward appearance; substance, the inner essence.

- 2) During Mass, at the consecration, the substance of the bread and wine change while the accidents remain the same. The bread and wine still look, smell, taste the same, but their inner essence is Christ.
- 3) A non-verifiable miracle—must be taken strictly by faith in the explanation by the church.

**b. No Biblical Evidence for Transubstantiation**

- 1) The normal words for “miracles” — “signs, wonders, or powers” are not used in connection to the Last Supper.
- 2) No evidence that anything but a natural event with natural elements on which Christ blesses.
- 3) Everyone present understood that Jesus was speaking figuratively.
- 4) Even after consecrating the elements, Jesus refers to them as “bread”, the “cup” or the “fruit of the vine” —not as His body or blood.
  - Matthew 26:29 -- *“But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”*
- 5) After the Lord’s Supper, Jesus tells his disciples that He was speaking figuratively
  - John 16:25 -- *“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.”*

**c. Jesus was speaking figuratively.**

- 1) The “bread” reminds us of the body of Christ that would be bruised and broken for us!
  - Isaiah 53:3 -- *“despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”*
  - Isaiah 53:5 -- *“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”*
- 2) The “cup” is symbolic of the blood of Christ, shed for the forgiveness of our sins.
  - Matthew 26:28 -- *“For this is the blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”*
  - Hebrews 10:4 -- *“it is not possible for the blood of bulls or goats to take away sin.”*
  - Hebrews 9:24-28 -- *“Christ has not entered the holy place made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with the blood of another — He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many!”*
- 3) We are to “remember” what Jesus has done for us, not “re-enact” by Jesus continually offering Himself as a victim to God. One sacrifice, once for all, the finished work of Christ.
  - Hebrews 10:11-12 -- *“Every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.”*

**d. Miracles may defy human explanation as to how they happen, but they do not deny human verification that they did happen!**

**3. If Jesus is literally saying that by physically eating His flesh and drinking His blood at the Eucharist results in eternal life, then He would be contradicting what He has been teaching that eternal life is through believing in Him. Something Jesus would never do!**

**a. “Eating” and “drinking” are metaphors for “the process of understanding, absorbing, assimilating” both in daily life and Scripture.**

- Psalm 34:8-- *“Oh taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who trusts in Him.”*
- Psalm 119:103 -- *“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.”*

b. **Parallelism between John 6:40 and 6:54**

- John 6:40 -- *"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*
- John 6:54 -- *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."*

c. **Jesus is calling on us to "believe" in Him**

- John 6:47 -- *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life."*

d. **Three Promises to those who "believe" in Christ!**

1) **He promises us LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE**

- John 6:53-54 -- *"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."*
- John 10:10 -- *"I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly!"*
- John 5:24 -- *"Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death to life."*

2) **He promises to raise us from the grave**

- John 6:54 -- *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."*
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 -- *"For I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will be no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord!"*

3) **He promises a living, vital, personal relationship with us**

- John 6:56 -- *"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."*

**C. So, if Christ taught that the bread and the wine simply represent His body and blood, but the Catholic Church teaches that they become His body and blood, what difference does it make?**

1. The false hope of salvation by partaking of the Eucharist which hinders them from seeking salvation by God's grace through faith alone!
2. It's one more "work" that they must do to obtain eternal life.
3. Council of Trent proclaims that it is heretical to teach that the Sacraments are unnecessary and that salvation is by God's grace through faith alone
4. I stand this morning with Paul to proclaim that salvation is by God's grace through faith alone.
  - Ephesians 2:8-9 -- *"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*
  - Romans 10:9-10 -- *"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation!"*
  - Romans 10:13 -- *"For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved!"*