

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

**John 6:52-58 (p. 1229)**  
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"
- "Anyone who eats this bread will live forever, and the bread which I shall give is My flesh" (John 6:51)
- "How can Jesus give us His flesh to eat?"—the heated debate

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

### **A. Some take Jesus literally—that is, we physically must eat His flesh and drink His blood. 6:52-58**

#### **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 6:51-58

#### **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; 3:3-4; 6:34

### **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; Genesis 9:4; Acts 15:29
- b. Worshiping objects violates the second commandment- Exodus 20:4

#### **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” is 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
    - 5) After the Lord’s Supper, Jesus tells his disciples that He was speaking figuratively—John 16:25
  - 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, 5
    - 2) The “cup” is symbolic of the blood of Christ, shed for the forgiveness of our sins. Matthew 26:28; Heb. 10:4; 9:24-28
    - 3) We are to “remember” what Jesus has done for us, not “re-enact” by Jesus continually offering Himself as a victim to God. Hebrews 10:11-12 One sacrifice, once for all, the finished work of Christ.
  - 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.
  - b. Parallelism in John 6:40 and 6:54
  - c. Jesus is calling on us to “believe” in Him—John 6:47
  - d. Three Promises to those who “believe” in Christ!
    - 1) He promises us LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE—6:53-54  
John 10:10; 5:24
    - 2) He promises to raise us from the grave—6:54  
-- the “Blessed Hope” of the Believer—1 Thess. 4:13-17
    - 3) He promises a living, vital, personal relationship with us—6:56
- 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?**