

Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc.

1789 Iglehart Ave

St. Paul, MN 55104-5215

www.dtminc.org

Ph. (651) 283-0568

John 6:46-71 -- Gnawing on the Bread of Life

Notes:

Vs. 46 -- A claim to Jesus' unique qualification to tell us about spiritual truth. Note especially His claim to having come from God.

Vs. 47 -- *Truly, truly* -- Important statement coming. *he who believes has eternal life* -- Literally, the Greek says, "the (one) believing/trusting [ongoing continuous state or action] has/possesses age-type life". Note that this is a present reality, not just a future hope.

Vs. 48 -- *I am the bread of life.* -- A restatement of the claim of vs. 35.

Vs. 49 -- *Your fathers ate... manna... and died.* -- The beginning of an important contrast to explain the meaning of His claim to be the bread of life.

Vs. 50 -- On the other hand, the bread of life is "the (one) coming down [ongoing] in order that [purpose clause] anyone might eat [at a point in time] out from him and might not die [point in time]." In vs. 47 Jesus said that the one believing ongoingly in Him has eternal life. Now He says that if you ever truly partake of Him (even one time), you will not die. This is an incredible statement! What can He mean?

Vs. 51 -- *I am the living bread that came down from heaven* -- Now Jesus changes the tense to emphasize that His coming occurred at a point in time, literally, "having come down" or, "coming down [at a point in time]". We are the visited planet. *if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever* -- The Greek is "if anyone might eat [at a point in time]... he will live unto the age/eternity". All that is necessary for eternal life is a one-time partaking of the living bread. *and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh* -- Up to this point, this strange line of teaching was curious, but bearable. Now it seems to take a turn toward the distasteful, bringing up images of cannibalism.

Vs. 52 -- Jesus' comment started an argument among His listeners, "How is it possible This [One] to give [point in time] to us His flesh to eat [at a point in time]?"

Vs. 53 - *therefore* -- Jesus responds to their quarreling to explain more. *Truly, truly* -- Another solemn declaration about to drop on them. *unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.* The verbs, "eat" and "drink" are both one-time events. "If ever y'all might not eat... and drink..., not do you have/possess (ongoing state of being) life". To get life, you must consume Jesus in some fashion. To the Jews, this line of teaching was becoming horrifically distasteful. They had been taught from childhood that they were not to consume blood (Lev. 7:26,27). Meat that had not been carefully drained of blood and washed was unclean. Now they were faced with a man who was telling them that they must not only eat His flesh, but they must drink his blood to get life in themselves. We must also remember that no one had ever heard of the Christian ordinance of communion, nor did Jesus institute it as a result of this teaching. They had no way to process what He was saying, and it was becoming increasingly morbid. One bit of OT information that was in their data banks that may have helped them somewhat was that it was clearly stated that "the life of the flesh is in its blood" (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:10-14). From this perspective, what He could have been saying was that they needed to "ingest" His life, life from outside themselves, so that they would have life.

Vs. 54 -- *He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood* -- There is a definite shift in Jesus' teaching here that does not come out in the English. First, He chooses to use a different word for eat. He changed from the generic word for eating to a word meaning "to chew/gnaw on", a word that conveys a powerful picture of chewing on over and over to get all the sustenance. He uses this word throughout the rest of His message (vss. 54-58). Then, He strengthens the image even more by using participles, "the (one) gnawing on [present continual, ongoing action] My flesh and drinking [present continual, ongoing action] My blood". It is easy to see that if the Jews were offended by the morbid imagery before, this would really come across as distasteful (Oops, sorry for the pun.). *has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day* -- The one truly "masticating" on Jesus as his/her source of sustenance presently possesses age-type life, and will be among those raised from death.

Vs. 55 -- Why? *For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink* -- The word for "true" can also mean "genuine", or "real". The word for "food" is the same as in vs. 27, completing the thought about "food that endures to eternal life".

Vs. 56 -- *He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.* -- "The (one) gnawing on... and the (one) drinking... presently abides/lives in/dwells in/remains in Me, and I in him". Note the difference between the teaching in vss. 50-53 and that of these verses. There the message was that if anyone would eat one time of Jesus, and drink one time of His blood, he would have/receive eternal life. This seems to be about one's legal standing before God. Now, however, the emphasis is on the present experience of the one partaking of Jesus. If one is drawing life from Him moment by moment, then he or she experiences the reality of Jesus' indwelling presence, with all the benefits that come with Him.

Vs. 57 -- An important comparison is made in this next statement: "According as the living Father sent Me [at a point of time], and I live on account of the Father, also that (one) gnawing on Me will live on account of Me". In other words, "as the Father is My source of life, I will be the source of life to you". This is an important insight into the dynamic that Jesus operated by, i.e., He lived by virtue of the Father's leading, empowering, and sustaining. He promises a similar life dynamic for those who consistently partake of Him.

Vs. 58 -- A final contrast between Himself as the true bread "having come down out from heaven", which imparts eternal life to those who gnaw on it, and the manna which their forefathers ate, but which was unable to preserve them from death. Again, the enormity of His statements tends to escape us because we are familiar with the idea of Him being God in the flesh. For these listeners, the words he uttered must have seemed incredible. Imagine if anyone you knew were to make statements like these.

Vss. 60-62 -- *Many of His disciples* -- There were many more than "the twelve" who considered themselves to be disciples, or followers, of Jesus. *This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?* -- They were offended by the shocking imagery and/or the dramatic claims He was making. *Jesus conscious that His disciples grumbled* -- The word translated as "conscious" in the NASB is literally, "knowing/having observed in Himself". The recognition of their reaction did not come from their outward behavior, rather from some awareness within Himself, i.e., the voice of the Spirit. Does He back down or attempt to soften His claims? No. Instead He pushes them even farther, "What then if you should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before?" It is as if He said, "Does this blow your minds? What if you were to witness My returning to My heavenly glory?"

Vs. 63 -- *It is the Spirit who gives life* -- In 5:21, it was the Father and the Son who gave life, or makes alive, now it is described as the Spirit's job. Cf. II Cor. 3:6. *the flesh profits nothing* -- The Greek is stronger, "the flesh does not profit, not even at all/not one thing". We may have heard this verse quoted out of context, and hear the word flesh as meaning self-effort apart from God's leading. What does the word flesh mean *in this particular context?* Is it not Jesus' flesh that He had been preaching about? What does this statement mean? Jesus is clarifying the "stumbling block" aspect regarding "eating flesh". He is saying that spiritual life comes from the Spirit of God, not from eating flesh. No one's flesh (not even Jesus') is capable of making someone spiritually alive by eating it. *the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life* -- The concepts communicated by Jesus' teaching will, if responded to, be spiritually invigorating and life-giving. The essence of what spirituality is can be discerned in the words used to describe the relationship of Jesus to the believer. The words themselves are no more magic than the flesh would be, however, so we must not treat them as incantations to incite spiritual growth. Jesus used the Greek word for "personal words", or "personal directives", rather than the word meaning merely the idea or thought. Jesus' statement implies response on the part of the listener.

Vs. 64 -- *But there are some of you who do not believe* -- The negative reaction of some was due to the lack of genuine faith. *For Jesus knew from the beginning who... did not believe* -- The Greek says that Jesus knew by observation/had seen the (ones) not believing (ongoing, continuous state) and who is the (one) betraying (point in time) Him. This is descriptive of a process of recognition, not the result of omniscience.

Vs. 65 -- Jesus' final comment is to remind them that none is able to come to Him unless the Father had given the awareness and desire to him.

Vss. 66-69 -- Many of His disciples quit following Jesus as a result of this encounter. The twelve, however, continued with Him, believing that He spoke the truth and had been sent from God.

Vss. 70,71 -- Already by this time Jesus knows who His betrayer will be. He had hand picked them, yet one of them was a devil. Cf. Lk. 6:12-16.