

- B) Jesus takes the metaphor of His flesh, and in stunning foreshadowing style, lays down a foundation for His death and resurrection, and subsequently a clear understanding of what is involved in Christian communion (6:53-58).

- C) Springboarding from the Jews literal view of Christ's flesh, Jesus gives a distinctively spiritual explanation which connects eating (His flesh) and drinking (His blood) for physical life (spiritual life) (6:53).

- D) Jesus clarifies that it is "eternal life" He has in mind which "true food" and "true drink" can deliver (6:54-55). From Jesus' perspective, the "true" food and drink are those things which provide eternal life (spiritually). The abiding principle is 'what you do in this life has an eternal effect on the next life' ("I will raise him up..." -- 6:54).

- E) Jesus brings forward the idea that the person who totally 'consumes' Him will abide in Him and that Jesus will abide in them (6:56). This idea of "abiding" will be developed further in John 15.

- F) The "abiding" life of the Christian finds its source in the "living Father" (God) who has "begotten" (3:16) Christ and gives Christ life (eternal generation[†]). This life from God is for the one who believes (eats/consumes) Jesus Christ (6:57) and will lead to life "eternal" (6:58).

† The early church father Origen (185-254 AD), developed the idea of "eternal generation" which is the 'eternal and changeless activity in the Godhead by which the Father produces the Son without division of essence and by which the Second Person of the Trinity is identified as an individual subsistence of the divine essence. This generation is not voluntary, but natural, necessary and eternal.' Simply put (if that is possible) this eternal generation means that "the Father did not beget the Son and set Him free after He was begotten, but He is always begetting Him." The primary concern here is that Christ not be considered -- in any way -- subordinate to God the Father. The activity of the Trinity is co-equal and eternal (Various sources).

Eat Or Die

Long Beach Alliance Church • October 24th, 2004 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**SO JESUS SAID TO THEM, "TRULY, TRULY I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS YOU EAT THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, YOU HAVE NO LIFE IN YOURSELVES. HE WHO EATS MY FLESH AND DRINKS MY BLOOD HAS ETERNAL LIFE, AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP ON THE LAST DAY. FOR MY FLESH IS TRUE FOOD, AND MY BLOOD IS TRUE DRINK.
~JOHN 6:53-55 (NASB)**

1) A Prophet Has No Honor...

- A) The Jews, like the Israelites in the desert who were following Moses (Exodus 15:24, 16:2, 7-9, 12, 17:3, Numbers 14:2, 27, 29, 36, 16:41, 17:5, 10, Deuteronomy 1:27), grumble against Jesus Christ (John 6:41).

- B) As with the Israelites, 'the Jews' were dissatisfied with God's provision. They had general and (at times) very specific expectations of what deliverance through the Messiah would be like. When those expectations were not met, it brought out their most aggressive attitudes (note John 5:18, progression to this episode, then to John 7:1, 8:22).

* These were not representative of all Jewish people, but did represent the Jewish religious leadership (cf. notes on Pharisees and Sadducees from 7/11/2004 sermon).

- C) The Jews question Jesus' credibility to be the Messiah (cf. John 4:44), based on His local upbringing (note the proximity of Capernaum to Nazareth, roughly 20-25 miles away) by Joseph and His mother (Mary -- 6:42).

2) Salvation Is A "God-Thing"

- A) Jesus, in typical form, ignores the question of His credibility and cuts straight to the heart of the issue. The Jews are paying more attention to their interpretations than to God (6:43-51).
- B) The Jews are attempting to reason (note "They were saying" in vs. 42) their way into understanding Jesus. Jesus points out to them that this kind of reasoning is pointless.
- C) Jesus begins to turn the heat up on the Jews by telling them:
- i) Don't worry about Me, I'm sent by God. No one can come to Me unless God draws them. I will save all who God draws to Me on the last (judgment) day (6:43-44).
 - ii) Just like it says in 'the prophets'^Ω, God Himself will teach

^Ω"The Prophets" was a division of the Hebrew Bible with which the Jews (broadly speaking) would have been familiar. The Hebrew Bible is assembled differently than our English Bibles are today. The Hebrew Bible (known as the TANAK) had three primary divisions. The first is the TORAH, the second is the NEVIIM, and the third is the KETUVIM. The name TANAK is the Hebrew abbreviation for the first Hebrew letters/sounds for each section, or TaNaK. The Torah is composed of Moses' books of "the Law." The Neviim is composed of "the Prophets" (both the early and later prophets). The Ketuvim is composed of "the Writings." In John 6:45, when Jesus said "It is written in the prophets..." He was referring to the Neviim section of the Hebrew Bible. Specifically, He was referring to Isaiah 54:13 or Jeremiah 31:34, both in the Neviim section of the Hebrew Bible. Chart #1, included as an insert this morning, has a helpful visual breakdown of each book of the Old Testament (Tanak) organized as the Jews would have understood it in Jesus' own time.

all of His (chosen people) about Me (6:45).

- iii) Nobody has actually seen God the Father (in case you think I meant that I am the Father). Of course, the One who is sent from the Father has seen the Father (6:46).

Summary: Don't worry about Me, I've been sent by God to save every single person God draws to Me. If you were God's people you would be listening to His voice. Of course, you're not listening to God because I am His voice, and you won't listen to Me. I'm not the Father, but I've seen the Father. You won't be able to see Him though, because you aren't looking for Me (Summary of John 6:43-46, CLV).

3) Let's Start Over, I Am The Bread Of Life...

- A) After Jesus' indirect (but pointed) rebuke of the Jews, He starts over with them. Jesus re-explains what He has already taught to the people, but without any kind of "dressing up" (6:47-51).
- B) At the very end of Jesus' bold-faced explanation of Himself, He adds the foreboding phrase "My flesh" (6:51). This sends the Jews into a frenzy of literalist confusion (6:52).

4) Eat My Flesh, Drink My Blood -- Or Die!

- A) Noting the Jews' tendency to literalize anything they could when it served their purposes (they also would allegorize anything they needed to in order to justify their practices), Jesus overwhelms the Jews (and His own disciples) with His words (6:53-58).

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) In John 6:41 (along with lots of passages from the OT's Exodus account, see outline) it says that different religious people "grumbled" against God and His ways/provision. What draws the people of God to 'grumble' against Him? Discuss a time in your own life when you have "grumbled."
- B) The real question for us is this, are you truly content with what God is doing in your life? If not, why is that? Do you have the "right" to question what God is doing? Are there examples of others who question God? What was the outcome?
- C) Jesus Christ paints the picture (in John 6:41-58) of totally consuming and being consumed by His own life. Are there areas of your life with Christ where you feel other "food and drink" have polluted your spiritual nourishment? Like with physical food, when we eat the wrong stuff, it usually manifests itself (somehow) in our lives. How about you?
- D) Some people have made out these verses in John 6:53-58 to mean that you must receive communion in order to be saved. Others have said that the bread and juice served at communion actually 'turns into' the physical body and blood of Jesus Christ when consumed. Is this what the passage teaches? What would you say to someone who believes this kind of teaching?
- E) John 6:41-58 clearly teaches that the focal point of our faith is the complete "abiding" of Christ in us and us in Christ. Are there some areas of your life where Christ is not abiding? Share some of these areas with your group and ask them for accountability in "apprehending/consuming/being consumed" by Christ in these areas of your life. Be vulnerable and fearless in your "self-evaluation" as you inspect your own life (Note the caution in 1st Corinthians 11:27-34 on the Body & Blood).

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Chart #1 ~ The Hebrew Bible (TaNaK)

The Tanakh - Cross Reference Hebrew to English Book Names and Order

English Book	Hebrew	Transiteration	Translation
Group 1	תורה	torah	instructions
Genesis	בראשית	b're-sheet	beginning
Exodus	שמות	sh'mot	names
Leviticus	ויקרא	vayikra	He called
Numbers	במדבר	b'midbar	wilderness
Deuteronomy	דברים	d'varim	words
Group 2a	נביאים	n'vi-im	prophets (earlier)
Joshua	יהושע	Y'hoshua	salvation
Judges	שופטים	shofetim	judges
I/II Samuel	שמואל	sh'muel	heard of God
I/II Kings	מלכים	mal-khim	kings
Group 2b	נביאים	n'vi-im	prophets (later)
Isaiah	ישעיהו(1)	y'sha'yah(u)	God has saved
Jeremiah	ירמיהו(1)	yirmyah(u)	God will rise/be exalted
Ezekiel	יחזקאל	y'chez'kiel	God will strengthen
Hosea	הושע	hoshea	deliverer
Joel	יואל	yoel	God (is his) God
Amos	עמוס	amos	burdensome
Obadiah	עבדיה	ovad'ya	serving God
Jonah	יונה	yonah	dove, wine?
Micah	מיכה	michah	who is like God
Nahum	נחום	nachum	sigh, to be sorry, pity, rue, repent, comfort
Habakuk	חבקוק	chavakuk	embrace, clasp hands
Zephaniah	צפניה	ts'fanyah	God has secreted (hidden, denied)
Haggai	חגי	chagai	festive
Zachariah	זכריה	z'char'ya	God has remembered
Malachi	מלאכי	malachi	ministrative, messenger
Group 3	כתובים	kituvim	writings (Hagiographa)
Psalms	תהלים	tehilim	psalms
Proverbs	משלי	mashali	proverb, parable, maxim
Job	איוב	iyov	persecuted (hated)
Song of Songs	שיר השירים	shir hashirim	song (of) the songs
Ruth	רות	rut	close friend, mate (an additional one, grasping)
Lamentations	איכה	eichah	how
Ecclesiastes	קהלת	kohélet	assembly
Esther	אסתר	ester	(of Persian derivation)
Daniel	דניאל	dan'yiel	judge of God
Ezra	עזרא	ezra	aid, help
Nehemiah	נחמיה	n'chem'yah	consolation of God (same root as Nahum)
Chronicles	דברי הימים	dabri hayamim	things of the day

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