

## 22. Jesus Taught that He Is the One Who Gives Eternal Life

We saw in our last topic, that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that they received spiritual life at the moment that they believed and received Jesus into their lives. That eternal life is given to each one who receives it as a free gift. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus explained again that He is the One who gives that spiritual life to each one who comes to Him.

Jesus summarized all that He had said to them about the fact that He is the bread of life. John 6:51-52 says, “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.’ The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, ‘How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?’” The previous day, Jesus had fed the five thousand with the bread and fish that came from the lunch of one boy. However, that bread was just the physical bread and the people were hungry again the next day. They had come seeking Jesus because they wanted another free meal for their physical hunger. Instead, Jesus chose to explain that they needed living bread.

Now, Jesus began to summarize His teaching that day by saying, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven.” Jesus made it very clear that He came from the Father. He also said that He is the living bread that can give life to all who come to Him as He said that anyone that eats this bread will live forever. The people listening to Him that day had to make a choice. They either had to believe what Jesus said or they had to reject Him. The bread that Jesus offered was very different than the manna that the people of Israel had eaten while they were in the wilderness.

Then, Jesus said that the bread that He would give was His flesh. Jesus said that He would give His flesh for the life of the world. 1 Peter 2:24 says, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” In this verse, Peter explained how Jesus gave His flesh for the life of the world. He is that sacrifice that makes it possible for us to die to sin and live for righteousness. It was that payment for sin by Jesus that brought spiritual healing to lives that were spiritually dead.

Since the Jews listening that day had not repented of their sin of unbelief, they lacked spiritual understanding and could not understand what Jesus meant. In fact, they started arguing among themselves. They asked, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?” Here, we see that those Jews did the same thing that Nicodemus had done when He talked with Jesus in John 3. John 3:4 says, “Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’” Jesus had given a physical illustration of a spiritual birth and Nicodemus could not understand it. In the same way, Jesus gave these Jews a physical illustration of how He would provide spiritual life and they did not understand what Jesus meant.

Jesus went on to give the Jews a second physical illustration and that illustration caused the Jews to become even more upset. John 6:53-56 says, “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.

Growing Godly Family Series – Helping Our Children Present Jesus as the Son of God 22. “Jesus Taught that He Is the One Who Gives Eternal Life”

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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.” The reason this illustration upset these Jews even more was due to the fact that Leviticus 17:10-11 says, ““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.”” The Jews knew that the Old Testament said that anyone who ate or drank blood was to be cut off from the people of Israel.

At the same time, we see that verse eleven from this passage in Leviticus, perfectly illustrates what Jesus was teaching about His blood. Jesus was going to give His blood on the cross to make atonement for the souls of all people. The word translated “atonement” in Leviticus, means *to cover, purge or make reconciliation*. The blood of the Old Testament sacrifices provided a covering for sin. John the Baptist introduced Jesus in John 1:29, by saying, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” Jesus did more than just cover sin. His blood takes away our sin. We were also reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:18 says, “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.” These things cannot be understood without spiritual understanding.

Jesus then gave a promise to those who would eat His flesh and drink His blood. Jesus promised that He would raise from the dead all who did these things. Jesus was using this illustration to help the Jews there that day to understand that they had to both believe Him and receive Him and they would have eternal life. John 3:36 says, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” John 1:12-13 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Jesus said that those who eat His flesh and drink His blood (believe in His death and resurrection and receive Him) experience spiritual birth which gives eternal life.

Jesus said that His flesh is the true spiritual food and His blood is the blood that gives true spiritual life. Jesus then gave the promise that they would abide in Jesus and He would abide in them. Jesus explained what this promise meant in terms of fruitfulness, to His disciples more fully the night before his crucifixion. John 15:4-5 says, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” In these verses, we see that Jesus used a vine and branches as His illustration. Jesus said that as we abide in Him and He abides in us, He will cause our lives to bear much fruit. It is the life of Christ abiding in us that makes our lives fruitful.

Jesus also said that those who eat His flesh and drink His blood will live forever. John 6:57-59 says, “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.’ These things He said in the

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synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.” Jesus said that it was the living Father who sent Him. The word translated “sent” means *to go to the place appointed*. Jesus used this same word in John 5:36, where He said, ““But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.”” In this verse, Jesus told the Jews that the works that He did were evidence that the Father had sent Him. Jesus said this same thing in the prayer, to His Father in John 17:3, ““And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.””

Jesus also said that those who feed on him will live because of Him. This is a reminder of the fact that the only way that we can have eternal life is through Jesus. Jesus later told Thomas and the other disciples in John 14:6, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” The word that is translated “to eat on” means *to gnaw or to chew as a slow process of eating* and speaks of the habit of spiritually feeding on Jesus. It is similar to the thought in Psalm 1:1-3, which says, “Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, or sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” However, there is also a great difference between the two passages. Psalm 1 talks about meditating on the written Word of God while John 6 talks of meditating about Jesus, the living Word of God.

Jesus is the living bread that came down from heaven. That is why He is so different from the physical bread (manna) that God used to feed the nation of Israel for the forty years that they were in the wilderness. That was physical bread and could only keep physical life alive for a short period of time. All those who ate that bread in the wilderness died. In contrast, Jesus is the living (spiritual) bread that comes down from the Father. All those who abide in Him, are promised eternal life. Jesus later said in John 10:27-30, ““My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father’s hand. I and *My* Father are one.”” Those who receive eternal life will never perish. Jesus taught these things in the synagogue at Capernaum.

We also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others what it means to eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood. We want to help them understand that it means the same things as believing and receiving Jesus. We need to help our children understand that those who lack spiritual life will often need these things explained many times because they lack spiritual understanding. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to patiently explain these things.