

JOHN 6 (Part iii Notes)

JOHN 6:53-71

Where are we now? *Still in Capernum.* Jesus is apparently not going to win a popularity contest (despite what we saw at the beginning of the chapter). Offended and disillusioned people are leaving him in droves. Even the disciples are deeply concerned. What was the hard saying that they struggled with? Does Jesus expect them to understand it?

(6:53-54) *So Yeshua said to them, '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.'*

How do we go about understanding this 'hard saying' from a Jewish perspective?

- Jewish mindset: Literal or symbolic? They knew their scriptures inside and out!
- Read **Leviticus 17:10-12** "the life of the flesh is in the blood..."
- The consummation of blood was always thought of as vile. It was the oldest dietary prohibition (Genesis 9:4). It was an older and weightier prohibition than even the ten commandments.
- Kosher: It is a Jewish practice to drain the blood from meat at slaughter (and again at salting). **Deuteronomy 12:20-29.**
- The method of slaughter is a quick, deep stroke across the throat with a perfectly sharp blade with no nicks or unevenness. This method is painless, causes unconsciousness within two seconds, and is widely recognized as the most humane method of slaughter possible.
- Israel's neighbors had no problem with drinking or eating of blood. There is no such prohibition recorded anywhere else in the Near East. Therefore: It was not a world-wide taboo (like murder) but rather a deliberate and reasoned enactment from Yahweh to Israel. Why?
- Men (sons of Noah) are conceded the right to eat meat - if they drain the lifeblood - which belongs to the Creator alone.

1. Ancient Middle Eastern Society was profoundly physical.

- Western mindset: Spirit inhabits the body. They are two separate entities.
- Eastern: Body and souls weren't separate things. The human body was fully associated with the person to whom it belonged.
- (ie. Psalm 30:9 David's *whole self* goes down to the grave (not just his body...))

2. What was the ancient understanding of sacrifice?

- Animal blood poured out on alter was meant to be consumed by the god alone. A holy consumption offered to a nation's god.
- The slaughtered sacrifice was meant to symbolize a fully dedicated life offered to the deity worshipped.
- Read **Leviticus 17:10-12**: "I have given (the life-blood) for you on the alter to make atonement for your souls..."
- The Torah instructed you could not drink blood as the life-blood (life) was reserved for God alone.
- Not just for Yahweh: **example: 2 Kings. 3:26-27** After the time of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel split up into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. Sometimes they collaborated to fight enemies or invade new land. When the kings of Israel and Judah were waging their invasion against the Moabites, the Moabite king made a burnt offering of his oldest son. ²⁶When the king of Moab saw that the battle was going against him, he took with him seven hundred swordsmen to break through, opposite the king of Edom; but they could not. Then he took his eldest son who was to reign in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there came great wrath upon Israel; and they withdrew from him and returned to their own land.
- For Israel, the slaughtered lamb's blood was poured out on alter and then cooked/burned up and then the family would feast.

What is his life-blood of Jesus? What is he pouring out on the alter? What does it mean to drink his blood? Eat his flesh? What does it mean to drink this cup?

John 6:35 "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of my Father...."

John 6:36 "And this is the will of He who sent me: That I should lose NOTHING of all that he has given me - but raise it up on the last day..."

John 6:37 "And this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him will have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day..."

"Believes in him?" What does this mean? It means that one must believe that Jesus is Yahweh's authorized representative. He is the only way. He is the perfect and acceptable lamb. The one whose innocent and pure blood, poured out on the alter, can atone for the sins of the whole world. TEMPLE WORSHIP NO LONGER REQUIRED.

What is his life-blood of Jesus? Eternal life. Love. Doing the will (obedience) of his Father.

What is he pouring out on the alter? His own will. His own life-blood offered wholly to God.

What does it mean to drink this cup? Forgive them. Into your hands I commit my spirit.

What does it mean to drink his blood? To enter FULLY into the person of Christ alone. To forgive them. To enter his suffering and temptations. To submit our own will. To obey. To follow his patterns and teachings. To honor the Torah. To offer our own life-blood on the alter to God alone.

(6:55-60) *"For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who eats of me will also live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not like the bread your fathers ate, and then died. He who eats this bread will live forever. When his disciples heard this they said, "this is a hard teaching. Who can listen to it?"*

- 1) Did Jesus expect his disciples to understand this hard saying, or "just believe"?
- 2) ONE: Was it the eating of flesh and drinking of blood that was most offensive?
- 3) TWO: Was it that Jesus was saying that HE was the only real thing that mattered in communing with Israel's God. No Jerusalem temple. No High Priest. No Sanhedrin.
- 4) I think it was the second option...and I think Jesus did expect his disciples to understand.

"But Yeshua knew his disciples were murmuring, so he said to them, Does this offend you?"

- It offended Judas Iscariot! But not for the reasons we might expect.

(6:63-66) *"It is the Spirit the that gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some among you who don't believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. and he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father". After THIS many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.*

Coming to Jesus (65) and staying with Jesus (66) are connected.

- One cannot *truly* come and then leave.
- If people were with him and then "left", that indicates they had not truly come to him at all.

- They had not “fed” on him as the life-giver and life-sustainer.

The Prophets of the Bible divided the world into three categories:

1. Those outside the covenant
 2. Those inside the covenant and not keeping it (as good as pagans)
 3. Those inside the covenant and keeping it
- Those who remained with Jesus were the faithful remnant of Israel; however, even those who stayed with him would soon fail. Peter says, “LORD, where will we go? You are the Holy one of Israel.” And it is Peter also denies Christ three times: “I don’t know him!”

What happens on the cross is that the faithful remnant of Israel is reduced to one person.

- Only Jesus would remain faithful to God’s covenant to the end.
- Jesus would remain alone, becoming a new foundation, under a New Covenant, for the new Jerusalem.
- It is upon him - and him alone - that God would begin the rebuilding and restoration of the people of Israel - drawing them, and all the nations of the world to himself.

(6:67-71)

“So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well? Sion Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words to eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” Jesus answered them, “Did I not chose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil. He spoke of Judas the Son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

Was Judas Iscariot a SICARRI?

- An ultra-zealous movement (like Al Qaida or ISIS) that used daggers to kill Jews who endorsed Roman occupation (Herodians?), when they were in public squares.
- When Judas saw Jesus consistently making all the wrong steps to bring about the Jewish revolt against the Romans, he grew restless.
- He continued to believe that Jesus was the Messiah who would free Israel from oppression,
- He had witnesses miracles and saw them as signs pointing to Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah - but disagreed with Jesus as to his methods and vision.

Passover was the traditional time for starting revolts. Everyone knew that.

- The word “betray” means “to hand over” (not the traditional idea of ‘selling’).

- Judas did not do what he did for \$. He was fully convinced of Jesus's divine powers. He thought that when the arrest happened, Jesus would have to show his divine power, God would intervene, and the land of Israel would be liberated.
- It was a deeply NATIONALISTIC desire that drove Judas to his actions.
- How is it that we try and force God's hand?

The sin fo Judas was seeking to force Jesus to do his will.

- Jesus did not resist. He allowed himself to be crucified.
- When people stand against the will of God, resisting it and trying to force God's hand, they commit the terrible sin of Judas.
- It is the opposite of "Your will be done...on earth as it is in heaven...."
- Compare and contrast Jesus and Judas.

