

THE REASON SOME PEOPLE ARE OFFENDED BY CHRIST, THE BREAD OF LIFE

JOHN 06:59–71

Introduction

Men are often offended by Christ. Four things in particular offend them.

- I. The disturbing message of Jesus to the synagogue crowd (vv. 59-60).
- II. The idea of eating Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood vv. 51-56 (v. 61).
- III. The ascension and exaltation of Christ (v. 62).
- IV. The teaching that the Spirit quickens or gives life and that the flesh counts for nothing (vv. 63-64).
- V. The fact that God saves man, that man does not save himself (v. 65).
- VI. The conclusion: there were three responses (vv. 66-71).

I. *John 06:59–60 The Disturbing Message of Jesus Christ*

Jesus' message was to the synagogue crowd in Capernaum. Many disciples and followers of His were present, but they had difficulty accepting what He had said. The words *a hard teaching* (*skleros*) mean rough and harsh. What Jesus had said was *hard* and *difficult to accept*, but His words were clearly understood. The people's problem was not in their understanding, but in their hearts. Jesus knew this, so He covered some reasons why men are offended by Him.

II. *John 06:61 Repulsive and Offensive Claims of Jesus*

Men are offended by the claims of Christ and the idea of eating His flesh and drinking His blood (v. 51-56). Men, including counterfeit disciples, are offended and repulsed by what is sometimes called...

- a *grotesque god*, a god who came to earth to impregnate a young girl, becoming incarnated into human flesh, being born half-man and half-god.
- a *bloody religion* or a religion of cannibalism.

Note two things.

1. Jesus claimed to be God *incarnated* in human flesh, but not in a grotesque sense — not half-man, half-god. In very simple terms, He was man, fully man; that is, He had the nature of man, being made of the very same substance as all men. However, there was one difference: He was not born of a human father; He was born of God. God very simply *spoke the Word* and a miracle took place, just as He spoke the Word and created the world.
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There is nothing grotesque about God's speech nor about His willing something to be done and doing it. God did what He always does when He wills something. He simply spoke and the event was set in motion. Very simply stated, Jesus Christ was born *by the Word of God and by human flesh*. He was fully Man, fully God. He came *from God's Word*; He became a Man *by God's Word*. Therefore, all men owe their obedience to Christ.

2. The cross or the blood of Christ *is offensive and repulsive* just as some people feel it is. It represents the awful shame of sin and the death of Jesus Christ, God's very own Son; therefore, it is bound to be repulsive. But it also represents salvation and deliverance from sin and its awful guilt. Therefore, the cross is also the most attractive symbol in all the world (Mt. 16:21-23).

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

1 Pet 3:18 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

The words "take...eat" of Christ are not cannibalism. The words simply mean that a man is to spiritually receive Christ into his life, into his whole being. A man's deliverance from the bondage of sin and death is by *spiritually taking and eating* of Christ's body; that is, the man must spiritually receive, partake, consume, absorb and assimilate Christ into his life. He must allow Christ to become the very nourishment, the innermost part and energy, the very consumption, of his being.

John 1:12 *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

Rev 3:20 *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

III. John 06:62 Ascension and Exaltation of Jesus Christ

Men are offended by the ascension and exaltation of Christ. Why? If a man accepts the ascension and exaltation of Christ, he has to surrender the control of his life to Christ. He can no longer control his own life and do the things he wishes. Note three things.

1. Christ referred to himself as the Son of Man. He is more than what an ordinary man is, more than a son of some man. Jesus is what every man ought to be, *the Son of Man Himself*.

The counterfeit disciple is unwilling to look at Jesus as the "Son of Man," that is, as the Ideal and Perfect Man, as the Pattern for all men to copy (See *Son of Man*, Mt. 8:20). If a man accepted Christ as the Son of Man, he would have to pattern his life after Christ by doing his very best to live as Christ lived. The man would have to diligently seek to be like Christ (see Heb. 11:6).

2. God exalted Jesus as Lord and Master. The counterfeit disciple is unwilling to submit himself under the control and dominion of Jesus. He is adamantly opposed to patterning his life after Jesus.
3. The words “where He was before” point to the fact that Jesus is eternal. He was preexistent: God of very God. Therefore, a man is to believe and surrender to Him as Lord.

Phil 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Pet 3:22 Who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand – with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

MATHEW 08:20 JESUS, THE SON OF MAN

*Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” **Mathew 08:20***

Jesus is not only what an ordinary man is, a son of man; Jesus is what every man ought to be, the Son of Man Himself. He is the Ideal Man, the Representative Man, the Perfect Man, the Pattern, the Embodiment of everything a man ought to be. Jesus Christ is the perfect picture of a man. Everything God wants a man to be is seen perfectly in Jesus Christ (see Jn. 1:14; Col. 2:9-10; Heb. 1:3.)

The title also means the Ideal Servant of man. It stresses His sympathy for the poor, the broken-hearted, the captives, the blind, the bruised, the outcasts, the bereaved (see Lk. 4:18). Jesus is the Pattern, the Model, the Perfect Example of concern and caring. He served and set a perfect example of how every man ought to serve other men.

Jesus calls Himself “the Son of Man” about eighty times. It is His favourite term. The title ‘Son of Man’ is probably based upon the Son of Man in Daniel (Dan. 7:13-14). Scripture also gives a picture of Jesus as the heavenly Son of Man contrasted with Adam as the earthly Man (1 Cor. 15:45-47). Each serves as a Representative Man for the human race in God’s plan for world history.

***Mat 9:6** “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...” Then he said to the paralytic, “Get up, take your mat and go home.”*

***Mat 16:13, 16** When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

***Mat 20:28** “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Mark 8:38 “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

John 5:26-27 “For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.”

Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

John 13:31-32 When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.”

Acts 7:56 “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

Rev 1:12-13 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lamp stands, and among the lamp stands was someone “like a son of man”, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. □

IV. John 06: 63–64 The Holy Spirit Gives Life

Men are offended by the teaching that the Spirit quickens, gives life and the flesh counts for nothing. Note three significant points.

1. The flesh cannot quicken and make a man alive. The flesh can neither profit nor count for a man. Men do not like to accept or think about the *zero value* of the flesh. They do everything they can to keep its youth, attractiveness and stamina. They use cosmetics, clothing and activities to appear young, attractive and physically capable. But before too long, before they ever imagine, the flesh proves unprofitable; it ages, deteriorates and surrenders to the process of decay. The *seed of corruption* within wins, and man dies. The flesh proves its *zero value*; it profits nothing, not eternally. Once a man dies, his flesh is gone forever, never to return, and there has never been an exception to the fact.

Such a thought, such a teaching — despite its truthfulness — offends men. They love the world and the flesh (sinful nature), its pleasures and feelings; therefore, they want the right to feed it. They want more and more good feelings, getting and keeping all the physical and material pleasures they can. They want the...

- worldly ego
- self-centred fame
- fleshy image
- benevolent honour
- human recognition
- stimulating pleasures
- institutional praise
- earthly wealth

2. Only the Spirit can quicken a man and make him alive, giving him abundant and eternal life. How? By receiving the Word of Christ. The words that Christ spoke were Spirit and life. When a man receives the words of Christ into his heart and life, he begins to live: he actually experiences the Spirit of God entering his life and begins to experience real life.

John 10:10 *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

Rom 8:11 *And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.*

Eph 2:1 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.*

Eph 2:4-5 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.*

3. But note what Jesus said. “Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” They did not accept His Words; therefore, they did not have the Spirit of God remaining in them nor did they have life. They were only existing, not living abundantly and eternally. They did not have the knowledge and *unswerving assurance* of living forever. They doubted and wondered, ever hoping, but they were not quite sure.

V. John 06:65 God Draws and Saves Man

Men are offended by the fact that God draws and saves man, that man does not save himself. Christ said: “No one can come to me, unless the Father has enabled him.” Christ was saying:

=> No man can come to Him unless God draws and stirs him to come.

=> No man really belongs to God who has not come to Him.

=> No man is saved unless they have come to Him.

=> All men are lost unless they come to Him.

This fact disturbs people greatly, for most people feel they are good enough and have done enough good to be acceptable to God. Few people think they are lost and doomed to be separated from God; therefore, hearing the fact preached offends them. But note the critical point. The only saved person is a person who has been drawn to Christ by God and who has surrendered to God’s pull and movement within his heart.

John 6:44 *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

John 8:29 *“The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.”*

2 Tim 1:9 *Who has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.*

1 Pet 1:2 *Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.*

VI. John 06: 66–71 Responses to Jesus Christ

There were three responses to the Lord's message.

1. There were disciples or followers who turned back. Note that “*many...turned back, and no longer followed Him.*” They forsook and deserted the Lord. Why? Very simply, following Christ cost too much. It involved the cross, which meant complete denial of oneself.
 - a. Jesus was claiming to be Lord. This meant that a man had to give all he was and had to Christ.
 - b. Jesus was claiming to be the very Son of God, to have come down *out of* heaven. Some just could not receive and accept the fact.
 - c. Jesus was demanding total allegiance and complete self-denial and following Him would just cost too much (See *Cross and Discipleship*, Lk. 9:23).
2. There was the disciple who believed that Jesus was Lord. Note four facts.
 - a. Peter spoke for all the apostles. He was their leader and spokesman.
 - b. Peter called Jesus “Lord,” and he used the title in its fullest meaning (see vv. 68-69). Jesus was recognized to be the sovereign Lord of the universe, the One to whom all men owe their allegiance.
 - c. Peter declared that Jesus' words *were* the words of eternal life. He declared that what Jesus had just proclaimed was true (v. 63). (See *Life in Jesus Christ*, Jn. 1:4; *Life in Jesus Christ*, Jn. 10:10; *Eternal Life*, Jn. 17:2-3.)
 - d. Peter proclaimed that he and the apostles both *believed* and *knew* something: Jesus was...
 - “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (the latest manuscripts read this).
 - “the Holy One of God” (the oldest manuscripts read this).
3. There was the disciple who betrayed Jesus. Note facts.
 - a. Judas was a “chosen” man, chosen not only to be saved, but to be a minister of Christ.
 - b. Judas was called “a devil,” slanderous, a false accuser (2 Tim. 3:3), an adversary, an enemy of Christ.
 - c. Judas was a betrayer, a professed follower, but a hypocrite. ■

LUKE 09:23 CROSS AND DISCIPLESHIP

Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Luke 09:23

People in Jesus' day knew what it meant to "take up" a cross. They saw scores of criminals bear the cross to the place where they were to be executed, and they witnessed scores of crucifixions, some even by the side of the roads that led in and out of the cities.

The cross does not mean merely bearing one's particular hardship in life, such as poor health, abuse, unemployment, invalid parents, an unsaved spouse, a wayward child. The cross is always an instrument of death, not just an object to carry or bear. The Christian is to die mentally and actively. He is to deny himself daily. He is to let the mind of Christ, the mind of humbling himself to the point of death, be in him and fill his thoughts every day (Phil. 2:5-8; 2 Cor. 10:3-5). He is to put his will, his desires, his wants, his ambitions to death. In their stead, he is to follow Jesus and to do His will all day long. Note this is not negative, passive behaviour. It takes positive, active behaviour to *will*, to *deny self*, to *take up* one's *cross*, to *follow* Christ. A person has to act, work, get to it, be diligent, consistent, and enduring in order to die to self.

There are several ways the believer dies to self. Romans 6:11-13 spells out the ways as clearly as they can be.

Rom 6:11-13 *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. (see Rom. 6:2-10)*

1. The believer reckons or counts himself crucified with Christ.

Rom 6:11a *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin.*

Rom 6:6 *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*

Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Gal 5:24 *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

2. The believer reckons or counts himself dead to sin, but alive to God.

Rom 6:11 *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

1 Pet 4:2 *As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.*

3. The believer does not let sin reign in his body.

Rom 6:12 *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.*

Col 3:5 *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

4. The believer does not yield the parts of his body to sin, as instruments of wickedness.

Rom 6:13a *Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness.*

Rom 8:13 *For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.*

5. The believer yields himself to God — as much as those who are alive from the dead are yielded to God.

Rom 6:13b *But rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life.*

Rom 12:1 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship.*

Rom 13:14 *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

6. The believer yields his body members as instruments of righteousness.

Rom 6:13c *And offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

Gal 5:16 *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

It should be noted that one's hardship or burden can bring a person to the place where the Lord can deal with him. It is then that the hardship becomes the cross and denial of self that Jesus is talking about. With an act of self-denial, the Christian can then count or reckon himself alive to God (Rom. 6:13). He can then follow Jesus. This is an act which can be described as committing all that one is and has to Christ. It is an act that needs to be repeated every day (see Mt. 10:38). □

JOHN 01:04 “IN CHRIST WAS LIFE”

“In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.” John 01:04

The simple statement “in Christ was life” means at least three things.

1. Life is the quality and essence, the energy and power, the force and principle of being. Christ is life; He is...
 - the very quality of life
 - the very energy of life
 - the very force of life
 - the very essence of life
 - the very power of life
 - the very principle of life

Without Christ, there would be no life whatsoever. Life is in Him, within His very being. All things exist and have their being (life) in Him.

2. Life is purpose, meaning and significance of being. Christ is life; He is...
 - the very purpose of life.
 - the very meaning of life.
 - the very significance of life.
3. Life is perfection. Life is all that a man must be and possess in order to live perfectly. This is what is meant by life. Life is completeness of being, absolute satisfaction, the fullness of all good and the possession of all good things. Life is perfect love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).

Whatever life is and all that life is, is all in Jesus Christ. Even the legitimate cravings of man that are sometimes entangled with evil — such as power, fame and wealth — are all included in the life given by Jesus Christ. Those who partake of His life shall reign forever as kings and priests (Lk. 16:10-12). This is the very thing that is distinctive about life — it is eternal. It lasts forever and it is rewarding. It will eventually exalt the believer to the highest life and place and position. (Rev. 21:1f.)

Jesus Christ is the source of life: He is the way to life, and He is the truth of life. He is the very substance of life, its very being and energy (Jn. 5:26; 1 Jn. 1:2). □

JOHN 10:10 LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10

Life is one of the great words of the Scriptures. The word *life* (zoe) and the verb *to live* or *to have life* (zen) have a depth of meaning.

1. Life is the energy, the force, the power of being.
2. Life is the opposite of perishing. It is deliverance from condemnation and death. It is the stopping or cessation of deterioration, decay and corruption (Jn. 3:16; 5:24, 29; 10:28).
3. Life is *eternal* (aionios). It is forever. It is the very life of God Himself (Jn. 17:3). However, eternal life does not refer just to duration. Living forever would be a curse for some persons. The idea of eternal life is also quality, a certain kind of life, a life that consistently knows love, joy, peace, power and responsibility.
4. Life is satisfaction (Jn. 6:35).
5. Life is security and enjoyment (Jn. 10:10).
6. Life is found only in God. God is the source and author of life, and it is God who has appointed Jesus Christ to bring life to man. Jesus Christ gives the very life of God Himself (Jn. 5:26; 6:27, 40; 10:28; 17:23).
7. Life has now been revealed. It has been unveiled and is clearly seen in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ shows man what life is (Jn. 1:4-5; 5:26; 1 Jn. 1:2).
8. Life only comes to a man by believing in Jesus Christ. A man outside Jesus Christ only exists. He merely has the existence of an animal. Real life is found only in God. This is to be expected and it is logically true, for God is the creator of life. As the creator of life, He alone knows what life really is and what it is supposed to be (Jn. 3:36; 5:24; 6:47). This is the reason He sent His Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, into the world: to show men what life is. When a person looks at Jesus Christ, he sees exactly what life is, exactly what it involves (Gal. 5:22-23):
=> love => patience => faithfulness
=> joy => kindness => gentleness
=> peace => goodness => self-control ☐

JOHN 17:02–03 ETERNAL LIFE (AINIOS)

“For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” **John 17:02-03**

Life, real life. It is the very life of God Himself. It is the very energy, force, being, essence, principle and power of life. It has more to do with quality and with what life really is than with duration. To live forever in the present world is not necessarily a

good thing. The world and man's body need changing. That changed life is found only in eternal life. The only being who can be said to be eternal is God. Therefore, life — supreme life — is found only in God. To possess eternal life is to know God. Once a person knows God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, that person has eternal life — he shall live forever. But more essential, the person has the supreme quality of life, the very life of God Himself.

John 3:14-15 *“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”*

John 5:24 *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

John 6:40 *“For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

John 3:36 *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.”*

John 11:25-28 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.” And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.”*

John 12:25 *“The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”*

Rom 5:21 *So that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Gal 6:8 *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

2 Tim 1:10 *But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

1 John 3:14 *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.*

1 Jn 5:11-12 *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. □*