

JESUS: I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Jesus "I AM" (13)

Banska Bystrica, 26 October 2014

John 6:1-71 After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ² And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. ³ Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ⁵ Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. ⁷ Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii¹ would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹ "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." ¹³ So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" ... ²² On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. ²³ Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴ So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" ²⁶ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷ Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." ²⁸ Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ³⁰ So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?" ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." ³⁵ Jesus said to them, "**I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.** ³⁶ **But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.** ³⁷ **All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.** ³⁸ **For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.** ³⁹ **And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.** ⁴⁰ **For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.**" ⁴¹ So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" ⁴³ Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me - ⁴⁶ not that anyone has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ **I am the bread of life.** ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ **I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.**" ⁵² The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵³ 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 you.** ⁵⁴ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ **Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.** ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so **whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.** ⁵⁸ **This is the bread that came down from heaven**, not as the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." ⁵⁹ Jesus¹ said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. ⁶⁰ When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "**This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?**" ⁶¹ But Jesus, knowing

in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this?" ⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ **It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail.** The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father." ⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." ⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him.

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0. INTRODUCTION:

0.1. THE CONTEXT

- feeding the multitude → Jesus for the throne!

0.2. JESUS' "HARD SAYING"

- **John 6:60** "This is a hard saying (σκληρός ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος οὗτος); who can listen to it?"

0.3. THE PROBLEM OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

- ...it happens that in the writings of the fathers of this period we meet with passages which speak distinctly of *signs*, and at the same time with others which speak openly of a *real participation* in the body and blood of Christ.¹

THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE MIDDLE AGES - Several factors come into view when discussing the medieval debates over the eucharist. Throughout this time, two general views developed: the **metabolic** and the **symbolic**. The metabolic view thought that the bread and the wine actually became the body and blood of Christ. In the eucharist, a perpetual sacrifice occurs for the remission of sins. The symbolic view does not see a transformation of the elements, but rather views the eucharist as a memorial to the finished work of Christ and the elements as symbolic of Christ's body and blood. – These general categories are developed through the history of the church as theologians try to explain the practice and apply it to the church. **CYRIL OF JERUSALEM** held to a metabolic view. He saw the eucharist as a sacrifice that remitted sins and would be beneficial for the sanctification and purgation of the believer. We see the overlap between the eucharist and the medieval doctrine of the Christian life at this point. **DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE** proposed a three

¹ HAGENBACH, K.R. *History of Doctrines I*, New York : Sheldon & Co. 1867, s. 204

phase Christian life that moved from illumination to purgation and then to union. CYRIL and others apply the eucharist to purgation. Later, **RADBERTUS** develops this idea. He proposes a metabolic view, but just like CYRIL, does not provide an explanation for how the bread and wine transform into body and blood. CYRIL and RADBERTUS are in ways **proto-transubstantiation thinkers**. However, they did not have access to **ARISTOTLE** and were not working with those particular philosophical categories. It was not until **THOMAS AQUINAS** in the 13th c. that the metabolic view had a philosophical explanation. **RADBERTUS** was focused on the miracle, but this proved to be unsatisfactory to many. – **JEROME**, who thought the best way to facilitate purgation was by separation from the world, saw the eucharist as helping this process along. He, however did not see the eucharist metabolically, but as a symbolic memorial. Later, **RATRANUS** followed this thinking in rejecting **RADBERTUS'** metabolic formulation. As **CYRIL** and **RADBERTUS** can be seen as proto-transubstantiationists **JEROME** and **RATRANUS** might be viewed as proto-Zwinglians. For them, the memorial is helpful for the believer's life, but no real union or presence of Christ exists in their conception of the eucharist. – **BERENGERIUS**, however, developed a third strand of thinking. Though not holding to a metabolic view, he nevertheless saw a real union and presence of Christ in the Supper. This might vaguely be seen as a proto-Calvinist formula. What is interesting here is that the conception of union progresses beyond **DIONYSIUS'** scheme so that it at least occurs alongside purgation/sanctification. This notion of the eucharist appears more compliant with the later Reformed doctrine of soteriology. Once the Reformation occurred, real union can occur even prior to sanctification. – These controversies became especially important because worship became sensible. **BERENGERIUS'** rejection of **RADBERTUS'** scheme was based on empirical categories. For **BERENGERIUS**, if the elements tasted like bread and wine, that is what they were. Given the lack of education and the unfamiliarity with Latin (the language of the worship service), the common churchgoer needed worship to incorporate elements that appealed to the senses. Icons and relics appealed to the sight, incense to the smell, and music to the hearing. The eucharist, then addressed taste and touch. Along with various thoughts on the Christian life, it can be seen how the debate becomes much more than philosophical and doctrinal.²

- LUTHER-ZWINGLI – Marburg Colloquy – 1st–4th October 1529
- CALVIN: A sacrament: "...a testimony of God's favour toward us, confirmed by an outward sign, with a mutual testifying of our godliness toward him."³

The author is convinced that the Sacramental teaching of Zwingli is much richer than is generally acknowledged, and he denies that the Zurich Reformer taught a doctrine of "mere commemoration." It is well known that Calvin formulated his theory independently. On the other hand, it is now generally accepted that teaching similar to that which he propounded was already prevalent in the Eucharistic works of Melancthon, Oekolampadius, Bucer, and Brenz. Modern research has also proved that the roots of Calvin's mediating testimony are to be found in such documents as the Swabian Syngramma (1525), the Tetrapolitan Confession (1530), the Wittenberg Concordia (1536), and the Pre-Calvin Swiss Confessions.⁴

1. JESUS: THE BREAD TO WORK FOR

- "bread" the metaphor for "living" – we all need to make effort/work in order to earn for bread which we need to survive physically – in the same way we need Jesus to survive spiritually
- **Nu 14:9** Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for **they are bread** for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

1.1. THE PRIORITIES OF THE LIFE IN THIS WORLD

- Jesus' first temptation in the wilderness
- The three big "informants" of politics and life: (1) economy, (2) social anthropology, (3) psychology = we tend to take these things more serious than we take serious Jesus – on Sunday, He is important to us, on Monday, finances are important to us

² BUCEY C., May 10th, 2009: <http://feedingonchrist.com/the-lords-supper-in-the-middle-ages/>

³ CALVIN, J. *A Treatise on the Sacraments*, Edinburgh : John Johnstone, 1837, p. 1.

⁴ BARCLAY, A. *The Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*, Glasgow : Jackson, Wylie, 1927, p. vii.

1.2. GET SERIOUS ABOUT JESUS!

- Jn 6:27 Do not labor for the food that perishes (μὴ τὴν βρώσιν τὴν ἀπολλυμένην), but for the food that endures to eternal life (ἀλλὰ τὴν βρώσιν τὴν μένουσαν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον)
- **Mt 22:5** ...they paid no attention (ἀμελήσαντες ἀπήλθον) and went off, one to his farm, another to his business
- (1) not just his *words*, (2) not just his *deeds* (3) not just his *life* (4) → love HIM for who He is
- **Phil 3:8-10** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord (τοῦ κυρίου μου). For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω) ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith - ¹⁰ that I may know him (τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτόν) and the power of his resurrection, and may share **his sufferings**, becoming like him in his death,...

To have a master and to be mastered are not the same thing, but diametrically opposed. If I have the idea that I am being mastered, it is a sure proof that I have no master. If I feel I am in subjection to someone, then I may be sure that that someone is not the one I love. To have a master means to have one who is **closer than a friend, one whom I know knows me better than I know myself**, one who has fathomed the remotest abyss of my heart and satisfied it, one who brings me the secure sense that he has met and solved every perplexity of my mind—that, and nothing less, is to have a master.⁵

2. JESUS: THE BREAD TO LIVE ON

- **John 6:51** And the bread that I will **give for the life of the world** is my flesh

2.1. FOR SALVATION

- Jesus as the High Priest –sacrificed his own body as an offering to God
- The church – the body of Christ
 - **1Cor 12:13** For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

2.2. FOR SANCTIFICATION

- **Gal 2:20** It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- **Rom 8:11** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies (ζωοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν) through his Spirit who dwells in you
 - It is vital to have a surrendering relationship with Jesus, a relationship without boundaries, yet full of freedom = a deliberate surrender

3. JESUS: THE BREAD TO “DIGEST”

- Lord’s Supper understanding: *symbolic?* or *metabolic?* → symbolic is too *rationalistic* and metabolic is *sacramental*...
 - **John 6:35** ...whoever **comes to me** (ὁ ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ἐμὲ) shall not hunger
 - **John 6:37** All that the Father gives me will **come to me**, and whoever **comes to me** I will never cast out.
 - **John 6:44** No one can **come to me** (ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με) unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.
 - **John 6:45** Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father **comes to me** (ἔρχεται)
 - **John 6:65** "This is why I told you that no one can **come to me** (ἐλθεῖν) unless it is granted him by the Father.

⁵ CHAMBERS, O. *So Send I You*, p. 1311.

- **Mt 11:28** **Come to me**, (δεῦτε πρός με) all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest
- “mystical union” with Christ → “Come to me!” → closeness – openness – trust – guidance
- “We are not said to be acquainted with any person, unless we have had intimate converse with him.”
- AUGUSTINE: “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, shall not die for ever,” But this is what belongs to the virtue of the sacrament, not to the visible sacrament; he that eateth within, **not without**; who eateth in his heart, not who presses with his teeth.”⁶
- **John 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the **flesh is of no avail**.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus’ <i>physical</i> body [the cross] → for our <i>spiritual</i> life – faith, love-identification, new life • Jesus’ <i>spiritual</i> body [resurrected] → for our <i>physical</i> life – obedience, discipline, living |
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- **1Co 6:17** But he who is joined to the Lord (κολλώμενος) becomes one spirit with him.

3.1. ROM 6

- **Rom 6:8-13** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must **consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus**.

3.2. EPH 3

- **Eph 3:14-19** For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being (κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον), ¹⁷ **so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith** (κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν) - that you, being **rooted and grounded in love**, ¹⁸ may have **strength** to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
- We need to pray and ask that God would give us more and more strength, that He may dwell in our hearts through faith

4. CONCLUSIONS

- Jesus is more important to you than your daily bread or anybody and anything in the world.
- To *believe* in Jesus is to lovingly identify with the person of Jesus in everything he was, he did and he said.
- The spiritual union with Jesus requires the power of the Holy Spirit working on our inner being.

⁶ AUGUSTIN *Homilies in John XXVI*.