

John 6:55

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

Analysis

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. The Greek 'alēthēs' (true/real) modifies both 'food' and 'drink,' contrasting true spiritual nourishment with all counterfeits. This is not metaphorical food but true food—Christ Himself is the real, substantial nourishment souls need. Physical food and drink merely sustain biological life temporarily; Christ sustains eternal life definitively. Reformed soteriology emphasizes that all religious activity, moral effort, and covenant privilege are false foods that cannot nourish the soul. Only Christ Himself, appropriated by faith, provides the nourishment that satisfies and sustains eternally. The verse also anticipates the Lord's Supper, which dramatizes this spiritual feeding. Calvin taught that believers truly feed on Christ by faith in communion, receiving His benefits spiritually though not carnally.

Historical Context

Jesus continues to provoke His audience with shocking language. The rabbinic tradition spoke metaphorically of 'feeding on Torah' or 'eating words of wisdom,' but Jesus claims His own flesh and blood are the true sustenance. This personalizes salvation entirely in His person, not His teaching, example, or movement. First-century hearers understood food as that which sustains life—Jesus claims to be the sustenance that produces and maintains spiritual life. The early church's practice of communion led to accusations of 'Thyestean feasts' (cannibalistic meals) by pagan critics like Pliny and Tacitus. Yet the church maintained both the shocking language and careful explanation that communion signifies spiritual feeding on Christ by faith.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What false 'foods' do people attempt to feed their souls on instead of Christ?
2. How does Christ as 'true food' satisfy in ways nothing else can?
3. What is the relationship between the spiritual reality (feeding on Christ) and the sacramental sign (communion)?

Interlinear Text

ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ μου ἀληθῶς ἐστὶν βρῶσις καὶ τὸ αἷμα
G3588 **For** **flesh** **my** **indeed** **is** **meat** **and** G3588 **blood**
G1063 G4561 G3450 G230 G2076 G1035 G2532 G129

μου ἀληθῶς ἐστὶν πόσις
my **indeed** **is** **drink**
G3450 G230 G2076 G4213

Additional Cross-References

John 15:1 (Parallel theme): I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

John 8:31 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

John 8:36 (Parallel theme): If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

John 1:9 (Parallel theme): That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

John 1:47 (Parallel theme): Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

Hebrews 8:2 (Parallel theme): A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

John 6:32 (Parallel theme): Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

Psalms 4:7 (Parallel theme): Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

1 John 5:20 (Parallel theme): And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

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