**SPIRITUAL REALITIES**

**John 6:48–63 (ESV)** 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 like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” **59** Jesus 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 no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

**John 6:48–51 (ESV)** **I am the bread of life** **[Jesus begins this discourse by making His point very clear: “I am the bread of life.” He continues...]** **49** Your fathers ate **the manna** in the wilderness, and **they died** **[so in making a connection to Him being the bread of life, Jesus returns to the subject of manna...]**. **50** This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and **not die. [though He brings up manna, we know He can’t simply be referring to manna because He just got through saying that those who ate the manna are all dead, and yet there is bread from heaven that when one eats of it, they will 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**.”

**Previously in the same chapter, Jesus was already talking about manna**. And after responding to criticism from the religious leaders, **Jesus returned to the subject of manna** and said again that **the manna (as a physical object) was meant by God to be a spiritual symbol that pointed to Him**.

**But this time He added something that shocked His listeners including His own disciples.** He said, **verse 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.”

**In Verse 51, Jesus takes His point even farther...** “the bread which I will give **for the life of the world** is **My flesh**.”

**To understand what He is saying, we must also understand the timing of this message.** This gathering in the synagogue in Capernaum was **taking place just before Passover** (Jn 6:4), and at this point **He switched from the image of the manna** in the wilderness **to the bread used in the Passover meal**. By saying in **verse 51**, “the bread which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh,” **He was now comparing Himself to the sacrificial lamb that is eaten during a Passover ceremony.**

**The New Testament states in very plain language...**

**1 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)** ...Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

**Verse 52** The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” **[His words ignited angry emotions in the religious leaders who were in the crowd. They began to openly fight against what He was saying by loudly asking one another, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?”]**

**Verses 53-58** 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 like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”

**Verses 59-62** Jesus 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?

**The following year during a Passover meal in an upper room in Jerusalem** (Jn 13), **Jesus would make this same comparison between Himself and the Passover lamb**, only this time there would be no confusion over what He meant. He would hold up a portion of the unleavened bread which is used in the meal and say, “This is My body which is given for you, do this in remembrance of Me” (Lk 22:19). Then later in the meal He would hold up the cup of wine, which is called the “cup of redemption,” and say, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Lk 22:20). By eating the bread and drinking the cup which He passed to them, His disciples would be saying to Him, “I believe in You. You will give your body in death. Your life’s blood will be poured out. By eating and drinking I receive by faith what You will do for me on the cross. Like manna, You came from heaven to give us life, and like the Passover lamb, You will die to deliver us from death.”

**But when He preached in that synagogue in Capernaum a year before the last supper, no one understood what He meant**, neither His declaration that He had come from heaven, nor that He was the true Passover Lamb. **In fact most of His listeners were so confused and offended by what he said that it caused them to turn away from Him.** There were others besides the Twelve who had been following Him as disciples, and even many of those said, “This is a hard word, who can listen to (accept) it?” (literal). They didn’t challenge Him openly after the synagogue service dismissed, but Jesus knew what they were whispering to each other. So He said, “Does this cause you to stumble in your faith in Me? Will you still doubt when you watch the Son of Man ascend back into heaven to where He was at first?” (paraphrase). **Looking forward to the day when He would physically ascend into heaven with hundreds watching** (Lk 24:50-51; Ac 1:9-11), He warned them that the day would come when they would see proof of His claims with their own eyes. They would watch the Son of Man (Da 7:13-14) rise into the air and return home.

**Verse 63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. **[Jesus explained why it was impossible for Him to have meant that people should literally eat His flesh or drink His blood. He said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.” In other words, under no circumstances can a physical ritual bring spiritual life to anyone].**

**What about Communion?**

**1 Corinthians 11:23–29 (NKJV)** For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; **24** and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” **25** In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” **26** For as often as **you eat this bread** and **drink this cup**, you **proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes [notice that communion not only points to Jesus death on the cross and the new covenant, but also on His return. The end times] 27** Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. **28** But **let a man examine himself**, and **so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup**. **29** For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner **eats and drinks judgment to himself**, not discerning the Lord’s body. **[not perceiving and evaluating carefully the Lord’s body]**

**Water Baptism being another...**

**Romans 6:1–4 (NKJV)** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? **3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life **[so we see that water baptism is intentionally designed by God to point to spiritual truth].**

**In verse 63**, **Jesus says** “...the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (Jn 6:63, literal).

**So here’s the question each of us must answer:**

Are you and I able to perceive spiritual realities all around us?

**Mark 4:12 (ESV)** ...‘they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand...’

**God, knowing this limitation in mankind after the fall**, interacted with human beings in such a way to produce **physical and natural manifestations of His power and glory**. Such as the ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea . . .

And He instituted **physical ceremonies and symbolism pointing to spiritual truth**, such as Passover, the Day of Atonement, the Bronze Serpent, the city of Jerusalem, and Yes, even Scripture.

. **. . and even Nature** itself speaks to the glory of God

**Romans 1:20 (NLT)** For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

**Psalm 19:1–4 (ESV)** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. **2** Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. **3** There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. **4** Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world...