

You Choose: Eternal Promise or Temporary Pleasure?

Have you ever heard someone say something and thought to yourself, "I must have heard them wrong because they could not possibly have said what I heard." I believe there are times in the Bible when something is said and the hearer has that exact feeling. I am going to share three of them, but I am going to focus only on one of them in this blog.

The first example is in Ezekiel 4 when G-D speaks to the prophet and tells him to eat his barley cakes baked on human dung. Just for a moment, imagine what went through Ezekiel's mind when he heard those words. After all, Ezekiel knew that Torah forbade doing what he was being told to do. G-D explained in the text following that He was showing Ezekiel just how bad things were going to be for Israel in their exile. Also, it is important to note that Ezekiel doesn't eat barley cakes baked over human dung.

The second example is when G-D, in a vision, tells Peter to eat unclean animals in Acts 10. Imagine once again what thoughts you would have had if you were Peter. After all, G-D was telling Peter to eat something the Torah forbids. However, once again, when we read the text, we find that the interpretation of what Peter was being shown and told was that he should not hesitate to go and share the Good News with Gentiles, because what G-D has made clean he was not to call unclean. Once again, it is important to note that Peter didn't eat any of the unclean animals.

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The third example, and the one I want to focus deeper on, is

one that Yeshua (Jesus) says Himself and one that even the text tells us shocked and confused the people who heard his words. We find those words in John 6:53:

“So Yeshua said to them, ‘Amen, amen I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves’” (John 6:53, TLV).

Just imagine for a moment what was going through the minds of those who were listening to Yeshua speak on that day. After all, the Torah is very explicit in its prohibition against cannibalism. How could Yeshua be saying unless those listening ate of His flesh and drank of His blood they had no life in them?

However, when we read the context of this moment, we find that Yeshua had just finished telling the thousands of people that the reason they were following Him was because of the bread He was providing them. In His words, Yeshua said, “Don’t work for food that spoils, 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 put the seal of approval” (John 6:27).

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When Yeshua spoke the words of verse 53, He was speaking them to people who were only after a meal because they were hungry. When we read these words in context, our minds should immediately cause us to think about another biblical event in which someone was hungry and was willing to give up something eternal for food that spoils: Esau, who willingly traded his eternal covenant for some bread and some “red stuff” (see Gen. 25:29-34). Notice the symbolic connection between “My flesh,” the bread of life, Yeshua, and the red stuff.

This connection between what Yeshua said and meant in John 6 comes further into focus when Yeshua sits down at His final Passover Seder with His disciples and says in Matthew 26:26-28:

"Now while they were eating, Yeshua took *matzah*; and after He offered the *bracha*, He broke and gave to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And He took a cup; and after giving thanks, He gave to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the removal of sins.'"

As Yeshua speaks the words in Matthew 26, we find Him once again connecting the bread and the red wine to His body and blood. This time, He explains further that this bread and wine (red stuff) is connected to "the covenant."

We can see that Yeshua's words to the crowd that day were not an invitation to violate Torah by becoming cannibals; rather, they were a reminder to them that they should not trade their covenant inheritance for a temporary meal as Esau did. Unfortunately, as we read on in John 6, we find that many of His disciples left and quit walking with Him (John 6:66).

If Yeshua's words were meant symbolically and connected to the first time someone traded their covenant relationship with G-D for foods that will spoil, then you and I are being asked to make the same choice today. We can either partake of the bread of life and His life-giving blood, or choose some bread and red stuff that will go stale and spoil. Our choice is between eternal and temporary.

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