

## A Health Implication of a Literal Interpretation of John 6:53-58

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### Abstract

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Transubstantiation and consubstantiation have become popular interpretation of John 6:53-58 and this has led to confusion in religion and science. This paper interpreted the text in context and demonstrates the microbiological implications of a literary interpretation using historical grammatical method of inquiry. The paper discovered that transubstantiation and consubstantiation are foreign to the text. Medically, consumption of blood will predispose humans to so many blood pathogens, microbial contaminants and endotoxins produced by micro-organisms which could lead to death. This paper concludes that literal interpretation and application will cause sickness and bury the exact meaning of the text in context.

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**Keywords:** Transubstantiation; Consubstantiation; Microbiological; Eucharist; Religion

### 1.0. Introduction

The concept of eating the flesh of the son of man, drinking his blood and bread from heaven and related noun used in John 6:53-58 is not peculiar to the text. It could be associated with the Holy Communion also called the Lord's Supper or Holy Eucharist. The Seventh-day Adventist publication captioned Seventh-day Adventist Believe published in 2005 while treating the subject "The Lord's Supper" actually quoted John 6:53, 54 in that respect. The eating of the flesh of the son of man and the drinking of his blood is made a pre-requisite to gaining eternal life. This shows its importance to Christian faith. Several discussion have been going on in theological circles to determine the right method of interpreting "eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the son of man" while the doctrine of Eucharist holds that when the priest consecrates the bread and wine, the whole substance of the bread and wine are converted into the body and blood of Christ. The 'accidents' of the bread and wine, however, remain present on the altar.

Interpreting John 6:53-58 literally present a serious dilemma of ascertaining the medical and microbiological implication of such practice to the physical wellbeing of the believer. This research paper therefore re-reads John 6:53-58 to determine its proper interpretation and discusses the microbiological implication of a literal interpretation. Research method used is exegesis and analysis of the biblical passage within its proper context. At the end, this work seeks to re-appraise the doctrine of transubstantiation and consubstantiation within the context drawn from the book of John and the medical effect of such practice. It concludes by showing the right meaning and interpretation of the text in context.

### 1.1. The Concepts of Transubstantiation and Consubstantiation

The word 'transubstantiation' is used in theology to refer to the belief that upon the consecration of the bread and wine of the Holy Eucharist, by the priest, the Bread and Wine is converted to the whole substance of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ so that while the eyes still sees in appearance, the forms of the bread and wine, the actual reality experience as it is being eaten is the real raw flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. Although the term 'transubstantiation' had existed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it was not widely accepted until after the acceptance of Aristotelian Metaphysics in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, facilitated by the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. This doctrine is believed and taught by the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Church.

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A term close to this is ‘consubstantiation’ used by the Calvinist to characterize Lutheran Eucharistic theology. What this term implies is that “just as Christ is truly man and truly God, so the body of Christ is truly present, while the bread and the wine themselves remain truly present”. This implication is taken from Lacoste, (2005).

The unity of thought in these two theological terms used to describe what takes place on the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist is that there is the real substance presence of the raw body and blood of Jesus Christ, which is what the one who participates in the Holy Communion eat and drink and not the bread and wine that his eyes perceives. The understanding implied in this theological teaching is that the eyes perceives an illusion that appears as bread and wine while the mouth feels, taste and experiences the real feasting on the raw flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, and only by this miraculous reality, is the life and grace of Jesus Christ imparted to the believer to make him fit for eternal life. The difference between these two terms is that while transubstantiation emphasizes the conversion of the bread and wine of the Holy Eucharist into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ after the act of consecration done by the priest, consubstantiation assumes that the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ comes in to possess the bread and wine not at the point of consecration by the priest, but as it is separated for use for the purpose of Holy Communion. The implication of this difference is that, in transubstantiation, it is the priest act of prayer that activates the conversion therefore without the prayer of the priest, the blood and flesh cannot be present. The mortal priest is therefore indispensable for the salvation or quest to have eternal life by the communicants. With this understanding, it becomes a serious issue of eternal dimension, when a communicant is ex-communicated by the priest or Bishop. This belief therefore gives the priest and the Bishops excess power and central role in the quest of the church members to attain eternal life. Lesson from history shows that when men are vested with such a power so as to control the destiny of their fellow men they often abuse it and grow more arrogant and proud. Consubstantiation however assumes that the presence of the flesh and the blood is not by any act of the priest but by the co-operate obedience of the church to observe the Holy Eucharist beginning from the separation of the bread and wine for that purpose. The implication in both is that in observing the Holy Communion obediently, those who believe these concepts become as it were, drink blood and eat flesh.

## **2.0. The challenges against the transubstantiation and consubstantiation in the Jewish religion and culture**

Blood is regarded as sacred in the Jewish religion. It is made to be handled with care. It was forbidden from becoming part of the diet. It is regarded as the most holy element in the sacrificial rituals given to the Jews. According to Harrington (2001), “Holiness is the divine gift of life and thus it requires the life blood of necessarily sacrificial animals to be handled with reverence. In every blood sacrifice, whether for atonement or not, the tradition is very strict about handling the blood from the moment of slaughter to its sprinkling on the altar”. The rules given to govern the priest, Levites and the congregation of Israel forbid the eating of blood and stipulate capital punishment for defaulting this. This does not only apply to the children of Israel alone but includes all strangers within their camp. God warns in Lev. 17:10-14 and says “... I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul”. Therefore I said to the children of Israel no one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood. And whatever man of the children of Israel or of the strangers who sojourns among you who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust for it is the life of the flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel you shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood whoever eats it shall be cut off”. This strictness against the eating of blood was not just an Old Testament Jewish regulation or a cultural regulation meant for them alone. It also applied to strangers who had anything to do with them and with their God as was demonstrated in the upholding of the same instruction within the Christian circle. When issues of Gentile Christians being troubled by certain zealous Jewish Christians to practice the Jewish ceremonial laws as pre-requisite and fundamental to their faith in Jesus Christ came up, the Jerusalem council was convened to deliberate on the matter. The Apostle and all the disciples present agreed with Paul and Barnabas that Gentiles were not to be part of the keeping of Jewish ceremonial laws except those things which are beyond cultural discipline but have far reaching significance either as hygienic principles or as eternal values. Principles such as abstinence from things polluted by idols, abstinence from sexual immoralities, abstinence from things strangled and abstinence from blood.

From the judgement of the first Christian council therefore through faith in the grace revealed in Christ Jesus, a believer's heart is purified and through obedience of the believer to the hygienic principles and the principles of morality that is of eternal values, this purity of the heart is retained and manifested in the sanctity of the body and life (Acts 15:16-20).

With this background therefore, it is unlikely that a Jewish audience or early Christians would subscribe to or accept any teaching that will suggest a literal eating of blood as a Christian ordinance. If this inference is accepted as reasonable and a reflection of the reality prevalent among Jewish people and early Christians, it will be out of place to teach that the Holy Eucharist is the literal flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. Secondly, Jesus celebrated the first Holy Eucharist with the disciples while he was yet living. It seems irrational and illogical to suggest that he ate his own flesh and drank his own blood with his disciples while still alive.

### 3.0. Exegesis of John 6:53-58

The text renders "Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you except ye eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eats my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day for my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He that eats my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him. As the living father has sent me and I live by the Father so he that eats me even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven and not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead, he that eats of this bread shall live forever".

The statements of the problem in this text are:

- 1) What is the meaning of "the flesh of the son of man" and "... his blood"?
- 2) What does it mean to "eat" and to "drink" in this context?
- 3) Who is "the bread that came down from heaven"?
- 4) What is the correct reading of this text?

The literary context within which John 6:53-58 occurs is for the immediate context John 6:22-71. This is the segment that offers a complete appreciation of who it was that was being addressing, who it was that made the statement, what led to the sayings found in the text being studied, the theme of the discussion, and the impact of the text on the audience and the reactions of the audience. Within this block a fair understanding of the text could be adduced.

The larger context begins from John 4 and ends at John 6:71. This is chosen because within it lies some antecedence that relates to the immediate context within which the text being studied is located. Such antecedence will offer great wealth of information that will be helpful in analyzing and interpreting the text being studied. Also it gives us a clear understanding of how some of the imageries found in the text being studied has been used and what they meant in those context so that a co-relationship could be drawn that will be highly used to highlight the meanings of the imageries found in the text being studied.

The genre of the immediate context is a dialogue between the people that were looking for Jesus and Jesus whom they were looking for. This is revealed in the following text John 6:24-26, 28, 29, 30-32. It is also a teaching because the disciples were there to learn from the dialogue (John 6:59-63). It also has many paradox e.g. "whoso eats my flesh... has eternal life" vs. 54, "the flesh profits nothing" vs. 6

### 3.1. Interpretation and Theology

#### A. Bread that Came Down from Heaven

The immediate context of John 6:53-58 is established earlier on, to be John 6:22-71. Within this context it is revealed that the Jews came in search for Jesus from the place he had earlier on fed the multitude with five loaves of bread and two fishes. Their interest was a miracle to meet their material need for food. Jesus penetrated into their motive and employed the very imagery of their interest which was bread to introduce to them God's own solution for the spiritual reality of human need which he depicted as "bread from heaven", "true bread", "bread of life", "living bread". All these imagery was not to be taking in literal sense. Jesus explained to his disciples that he was not talking about material bread that will satisfy the flesh but was speaking of a spiritual word that will save the soul and give it life (John 6:63).

#### B. Meaning of "the Flesh of the Son of Man" and "His Blood"

The contextual use of “the flesh of the son of man and his blood” shows that it was a further explanation and re-emphasis of the same theme of discussion. This is revealed in No. M (ii). In the structural analysis in No. K (v), Jesus interpreted the bread he gives as his flesh which he will lay down to die for the life of the world (John 6:51b).

In other words, his death upon the cross is pictured as Jesus offering of his flesh as meat or food to man (John 6:55). Peter’s confession of Jesus tracks down the two imagery of “fleshes of the son of man and his blood” as “The word of eternal life” and “Christ the son of the living God (John 6:68, 69 cf John 1:1-4, 10-14).

Jesus used the imagery of what makes up a physical man which is “flesh” and “blood” to direct attention to the spiritual offering of himself as “The word of eternal life” and the suffering “son of the living God”. John 1:14, 16 identified the two things that Jesus offered to man by his word and his presence as grace and truth. This position is corroborated in the structural analysis I (V & VI) that “coming to Jesus is by God’s grace and those who receives this “grace” will inherit the truth of the assurance of Jesus, of their acceptance with him (John 6:37). Also in no. K (I & ii) in the structural analysis, it is also re-emphasized as God’s pulling and drawing force or grace and the truth of the hope of salvation (John 6:41a, 42b). In K (iii), it is analyzed that the grace involves or is also pictured as God’s teaching of man and the man learning from God who is invisible.

I John 2:27 describes God’s gift of grace as anointing which teaches truth. This position is supported by Titus 2:11, 14 “for the “grace” of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. Teaching us (the truth) that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works”.

“The flesh of the son of man” in the text therefore means the grace God gave man through the incarnation of his word to become flesh in the person of Jesus Christ and the offering of his flesh to die upon the cross for man to have life. His blood in the context means his eternal word or the truth.

### C. **Eat and to Drink in its Context**

From the structure I (i& ii) reveals that coming to Jesus satisfy hunger as eating food does and believing in him quenches thirst as drinking water does (John 6:35). The act of coming parallels the imagery of eating in the context just as the act of believing correlated to the imagery of drinking. This is supported by John 4:32-34 which renders “But Jesus said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of . . . my meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work” to Jesus, the act of doing is similar to the act of eating. In John 4:13, 14 Jesus uses the imagery of drinking water to canvas the woman of Samaria to believe on him. Paul in Hebrew 13:8-10 used the imagery of eating. His argument was that as man eats material food to satisfy their stomach that those who believe in Jesus Christ (who changes not) have their own altar where they eat sound doctrines to establish their heart with grace. In this context it is concluded that Jesus wanted his audience to have pleasure in coming to him similar to that experienced in eating food and to believe his word as the thirsty drinks to quench his thirst.

### D. **Contextual Rereading of John 6:53-58.**

It could be re-read contextually in this manna “Then Jesus said unto the Jews, verily, verily I say unto you, except you come to me by the grace of God and believe my word as truth you have no life in you, whosoever comes to me being drawn to me by the father and believe that I came from the father and died for his sake has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day, for my grace is sufficient to establish the heart and my word is the truth that sets free. He that comes to me by God’s grace and believes my word of truth dwells in me and I in him. As the living father has sent me and I live by the father so he that comes to me by God’s grace even he shall live by me. I am the one the father has sent from heaven not as your father did eat bread and are dead He that comes to me by God’s grace shall live forever and never be disappointed.

### 4.0. **Theological Deduction**

The book of John demonstrates that in trying to reach all men with his word, Jesus meets each person at the point of his interest or by the things they were occupied with. He takes those imagery of physical interest and occupation and use them metaphorically to reveal their match in spiritual purposes of God that promises eternal life and he uses the same verb that describes man’s response to seek the fulfilment of his material interest and occupation to prescribe exactly the same response and attitude towards God’s spiritual purpose. To the woman at the well, Jesus use the imagery of “living water” and the verb “to drink” (John 4:13, 14).

To his disciples that went to get food, he used the imagery of “food which you know not” (John 4:32). To Nicodemus, whose interest was on issue of eternal life, he used the imagery of “born again”.

Therefore, the imagery of bread, flesh and blood used in John 6 and the verbs such as “drink”, “eat” should not be taking to be literal. It follows this same rule of symbolism that represents spiritual realities established earlier (John 6:63).

Other deductions and applications harvested from the structural analysis are that multitude who are in various churches may be seeking for Jesus for the wrong reasons and motives that revolves around temporal interest and material needs and often may misunderstand hard teachings of truth that seeks to raise their mind from temporal things to spiritual reality and from personal purpose to God’s eternal purpose. The misunderstanding of the difficult teachings of the scriptures alienate the heart of many from believing the truth and misinterpretations of such truth produces those who betray Jesus just as Judas did and mislead others to have erroneous spiritual experience which will make them to be offended with Christ at the end and lose out from the hope of salvation. It is also established in this study, the principle that God is the true provider for man’s spiritual need as nature offers food to meet his physical need. Just as man receives and consumes the physical food to have strength so does God expect him to receive his son and believe in the truth he teaches to obey it as he eats food and drinks water with desire and likeness in order to have life eternal.

Many Christians look for signs and wonders or for miracles just for the satisfaction of their material and physical need and not interested to look beyond those miracles to behold Jesus the miracle worker and believe in him for the salvation of their souls. Jesus in the context being studied clearly elevated the act of believing to be of greater importance than looking for signs. This makes it clear that the miracles Jesus performed in his ministry on earth was not aimed at just meeting the material need of man and displaying the powers of God but was aimed at revealing the love of God so that man will be drawn by it to believe in the one God sent and cooperate with him for their spiritual emancipation and ultimate restoration with God. Therefore if miracle does not achieve this goal, it has failed. If miracle does not seek this goal, it is counterfeit. Yet miracle should not neglect the pressing temporal need while seeking its ultimate eternal goal, else it will be seen as irrelevant and unable to connect the people from where they are to where God wants them to be. It could also be noticed that the use of what the people were interested in or were seeking for or were doing or were desiring or were asking for as imageries used to point to its spiritual parallel of what God was offering them as solution to their true need is a similar effort to connect men from their level to God’s level for their eternal emancipation and ultimate restoration just as the miracles. Therefore the teaching of truth must connect man from where they are to where God wants them to be and from what they are used to, to what God wants them to know in order to be meaningful. An Evangelist should therefore be meaningful in the way he expresses truth, to connect the audience from what they know to what God wants them to understand and in the manifestation of the spirit and power of God, he should try to be relevant in meeting the people’s need while using that opportunity to lead them to believe. Jesus Christ showed intentionality, when he noticed that the miracle he performed raised a false hope and could not lead beyond material temporal desire. He employed those things they seek as imageries to introduce the truth he was seek to lead them to. He demonstrated how evangelist should blend the use of miracles and teaching together to win souls to come to seek him and to believe in him.

#### **4.1. Blood and the Microbial/Medical Implication of Its Consumption, In Vampires and Cannibals**

The blood of a human being and blood of higher animals travels through the blood vessels and organs such as the heart to the lungs back to the heart and then to the arteries that takes it through other cells of the body and flows back to the heart through the vein. It transport nutrients, waste and other important biological molecules and does not come into direct contact with other body tissues. In this way, it is set apart as an important transportation fluid in the human and animals.

Blood performs many functions. These include:

- A. Transport of digested food from the small intestine to various parts of the body where they are stored or used and from the area of storage to the site of usage, such as transport of glucose to the liver and muscle cells for metabolism and storage. Stored glucose in the form of glycogen from the liver and skeletal muscles can be degraded back to glucose for transport through the blood to other tissues of the body.

- B. Transport of soluble excretory materials to organs of excretion. Urea is synthesized in the liver and transported through the blood to the kidney for excretion. Carbon dioxide is produced by cells and transported by blood to the lungs to be excreted.
- C. Transport of hormones from the glands where they are produced to target organs, for example transport of insulin from the pancreases to the liver and skeletal muscles. This facilitates effective cell to cell communication within the body.
- D. Distribution of excess heat from the internal organs. This helps to maintain a constant body temperature.
- E. Transport of oxygen from lungs to all parts of the body and transport of carbon dioxide produced by the tissues to the lungs for excretion.
- F. Maintenance of a constant blood pH balance as a result of plasma protein activity and other metabolites present in the blood. This is achieved because plasma protein and hemoglobin in possess both acidic and basic amino acids. Other metabolites possess either basic or acidic functional groups. They therefore act as buffer system.

Blood clots as a defensive mechanism to prevent blood loss when the blood vessel ruptures. In this way, blood is prevented from the tissues.

Blood has mechanism of fighting against invading microorganisms which find their way into the blood stream, such mechanism as phagocytosis performed by neutrophils, monocytes and macrophages provides immunity. Immunity is also achieved by antibodies and lymphocytes.

In spite of these separation and fortification which naturally present within the body to protect and defend its own blood from external contamination and infection, blood which has been liberated from its circuit and vessels is a serious target of many pathogenic and toxic microbial contaminants. Some of the most serious blood borne pathogens are DNA virus that causes Hepatitis B. The virus that causes Hepatitis C and a retro-virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Virus known as HIV. These viruses are either transmitted through sexual intercourse, blood transfusion or contact of blood with the mucous membrane of an individual's body through the mouth, eyes or nose, etc. Apart from these viruses, protozoa such as plasmodium that causes malaria, microfilaria that causes filariasis, *Trypanosoma brucei rhodesiense* and *Trypanosoma brucei gambiense* which causes sleeping sickness in Africa, *Trypanosoma cruzi* that causes cutaneous, mucocutaneous and visceral leishmaniasis commonly known as oriental sore, esputia and kala-zar respectively. They are transmitted by sand-fly and affect chiefly Americans. When blood is exposed outside the body, many micro-organisms thrive in it.

Blood as it exists in the human body system therefore has three different presences within it. These are:

1. Useful elements and nutrients being transported for the body's use.
2. Waste element and carbon dioxide being transported from the cells to free the body from toxicity.
3. Microbial infections as a variable presence. Even without the third presence, blood is rendered unwholesome for consumption as food because of the presence of toxic waste in the blood. Microbial presence in the blood only exacerbates its unwholesomeness. An intake of blood makes the one taking it vulnerable to infections where microbial organisms are present and where they are absent, several toxic waste present in the blood is a potential hazard to those who eat blood.

Radford (2016) in his research on Vampires and Cannibals investigated on the reality of vampires and on the safety of drinking blood. He published his finding on Science Newsletter. He reported that the existence of vampire was real. Some vampires he interviewed claimed they were old in the practice and needed to drink blood to stay alive. In his research on the safety of drinking blood, he said, "in very small amount (say a few teaspoons) and if the blood is free from pathogen (such as the many blood borne diseases) blood might not harm. Beyond that, watch out: the strange fact is blood when drunk is toxic". He explained that when blood is confined to its usual places such as the heart and blood vessels, it proves to be essential for life. But when ingested through the mouth as vampires does by drinking blood, it becomes a contrastively different issue. It becomes toxic because of its iron content. Radford maintains that why he stated that small intake of blood such as teaspoon may not because harm is because all toxins have doses and just a tiny bit of poison won't necessarily harm someone. But he insisted that the more a person eats or drinks blood, the greater the damage done.

Putman (2002) in analyzing the work of John Edgar Browning of Georgia Tech, the work suggested that thousands of people in the US drink blood for various reasons. Some says the oxygen and iron enriched substance gives them energy and none of the drinkers interviewed by Browning had any ill-effect from their behaviour.

But Radford maintains and agrees with Putman that blood ingestion is toxic by appealing to the works of Katherine Ramsland in her book "The Science of Vampire". He said, "Unlike humans the bodies of animals that digest blood have adapted specialized digestive mechanism.

The vampire bat requires an enormous intake of iron which are required in the synthesis of hemoglobin for carrying oxygen from lungs to other body tissues. But for humans such iron excretory mechanism is not evolved. The result therefore is that iron not in the blood vessel becomes highly toxic to humans making drinking of blood to result in killing those who practice it continually.

In the US, bacterial contamination of blood is considered the second most common cause of death, from transfusions with mortality rate ranging from 1:20,000 to 1:25,000. Estimate of severe morbidity and mortality ranges from 100 to 150 transfused individuals each year. According to Blajchman (2002), so many researches in blood and its transfusion have acknowledged the presence of bacterial contaminants in blood meant for transmission and have related it to so many death cases in the United States. The presence of bacteria in blood product has been a problem for many decades and currently it is probably the most common microbiological cause of transfusion associated morbidity and mortality. He maintains that majority of contaminated blood may contain only few bacteria that could be fatal while others, large numbers of virulent bacteria as well as endotoxins, and their transfusion may be associated with significant morbidity and even lethal to the recipient. There is no clear link between the transubstantiation and consubstantiation of Eucharist and microbial contamination of blood. Expand on these areas to make this paper richer.

## 5.0. Conclusion

This paper submit from the finding of this work and propose that John 6:53-58 is not and should not be read with a literal interpretation. The book of John has many imageries use as metaphors such as "The Light" used in describing Jesus (John 1:4, 10) "born again" used in teaching conversion and spiritual regeneration (John 3:2-5), "living water (John 4:10). "He was a burning and a shining light" used to describe John the Baptist (John 5:35). "I have meat to eat that you know not" used to describe the opportunity that called to convert the Samaritan woman (John 4:32). "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work" (John 4:34). All these are clearly not literal. Various paradoxes also occur in the book of John such as "word that is God who does not die becoming flesh and dying. "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life". Yet "the flesh profits nothing". It is clear that there is a deeper meaning beyond literal understanding in these texts. It is unlikely that in a book filled with such imageries and symbols that John 6:53-58 will be isolated and given a literal interpretation Drinking of blood was an abomination for Judaism and forbidden for Christian religion (Acts 15:6-11, 19-21; Lev. 17:10-14). **Again**, iron intoxication is dangerous to human health. Human beings do not have iron excretory mechanisms as vampire bat does and a continuous ingestion of blood could lead to death of humans. The consumption of blood will predispose humans to so many blood pathogens, microbial contaminants and endotoxins produced by micro-organisms which could cause death.

Therefore it is only logical that the right way to interpret John 6:53-58 is to look at it symbolically. Transubstantiation and consubstantiation cannot be substantiated in John 6:53-58 and is unlikely to be upheld by any other portion of the scripture. From the context, the theme of John 6:53-58 is that God sent Jesus to save man and restore him to eternal life upon two conditions, that men will come to Jesus as one given to them by God and believe in him. This conclusion is supported in the larger context of the study by John 5:24, 36-47 "verily, verily I say unto you, he that hears my word and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life".

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