

GOD CARES WHAT WE EAT

David Halbrook

A forgotten question today is “What did God say about...?” Many people today do not look for God’s approval in decisions, assuming that unless God said “Do not ___” then it must be okay. Do you believe that? If so, apply that thinking to the question from last week—does God permit us to eat human flesh?

No Scripture in the New Testament specifically forbids cannibalism—does that mean it is acceptable? No. God has given us permission to eat plants and animals (1 Tim. 4:1-5; Acts 10:13-16; Rom. 14:2-3). Having permission from God to eat plants and animals makes it right. We have no permission from God to eat human flesh, so it is wrong. Neither Jesus nor the apostles mentioned cannibalism, but God’s Word thoroughly equips *us for every good work* including what we may eat (2 Tim. 3:17).

God has forbidden the eating of blood in the past and present (this occurs today in other counties), proving again that we must seek God’s permission for all that we do, even what we eat (Gen. 9:4; Acts 15:20; Col. 3:17). Do you?

-- *Editor’s Note:* This article seeks to illustrate that even in the most basic activities of life, God has spoken, and we must listen. Though cannibalism is not acceptable in our culture, use our *Arkansas Weekly* article to help someone to realize there is a higher reason to reject it--God never approved of it.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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WHO ARE WE?

David Halbrook

(This article appears on our website, to give visitors a brief explanation of who we are. Due to the thinking that is common today when people ask about a church, it is also necessary to inform others of who we are *not*. Do you understand who we are?)

“What Kind of a Church Are You?,” you might be asking, if you are visiting our website. First, we would ask you to think about this question, and how it would have been answered by Peter, Paul, Timothy, and other saints who lived and labored when the gospel was first being preached in all the world. After you’ve thought about that, then we are glad to tell you about ourselves. If at any point in reading this, you have questions—please contact us with your questions.

Who We Are

The word “church” refers to a group of people who are “called out” for some purpose. In the New Testament, it does not always refer to a group of religious people. In Acts 19:40, there was a disorderly “church,” or gathering. Here, people were “called out” of their daily routine in order to join the riotous crowd. But what does it mean when referring to spiritual matters?

Jesus said “I will build My church” (Matthew 16:18). Jesus was speaking of His “called out” people. Who are they? Those who are “called out” of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of Christ are “My church” (Colossians 1:13). God calls each saved individual a Christian (Acts 11:26), disciple (Acts 11:26), and saint (Ephesians 2:19). As a group, the saved are the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13), the family of the living God (1 Timothy 3:15), the body, or church, of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). These are not different kinds of religious groups. These are the “one body” (Ephesians 4:4; 1:22-23). He purchased His church (His saved people) with His blood (Acts 20:28; Revelation 1:5; Matthew 26:28). Every member

of the church has believed the gospel and by that faith, been baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Colossians 2:12).

By God's design, Christians have always "continued steadfastly" (committed to work together) with other Christians in the place where they live (Acts 2:47; 11:26). God calls these groups the churches of Christ (Romans 16:16). These are not different kinds of religious groups for there should be the same kind of teaching "everywhere in every church" (1 Corinthians 4:17). By being a church of Christ, we are identified with Jesus Christ our Savior, instead of with some other man or man-made religious group, hierarchy, movement, association, or board. We are content to be identified by our Savior, both individually and as a group.

Who We Are Not

It would be nice if Satan would just let the truth be the truth and leave it alone, but He has never done that. He always adds other ideas which only adds to confusion. Since Christ built His church, men have taken the word "church" and used it to mean something completely different. For example, some people refer to a physical building as "a church." The Bible never uses it that way.

Also, sometimes when people hear the word "church" today, they immediately wonder "what kind of church" or "which denomination" is being referred to. The word "denomination" is absent from the Bible. What does that word mean? "A large group of religious congregations united under a common faith and name and organized under a single administrative and legal hierarchy" (www.dictionary.com). Do you see that the idea of denominations is different groups each having a unique faith, name, and organization? That does not resemble the word or concept of "church" in the New Testament.

When Jesus said "I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18), to which denomination was He referring? Did He mean "I will build the Baptist Church?" "I will build the Methodist Church?" Did He mean that He was going to establish many different groups of congregations, each having a unique faith, name, and organization? No, Jesus was speaking of His "called out" people.

Those who are His church do not have faiths, names, and organizations differing from others who are His church. In fact, His word shows us the faith, name, and organization for His church (His people).

Paul said that there is one faith, not many faiths (Ephesians 4:5). The one faith is the one revealed message of truth, sound words (Jude 3; 2 Timothy 1:13). There are not "many truths," there is one faith.

Instead of wearing names which identify us by a day (Pentecost, Seventh Day) or a common man (Luther, John), we must wear the name of our Savior (1 Corinthians 1:13; Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16).

Regarding organization, God set Jesus to be head of the one church (Ephesians 1:22-23). When Paul was preaching, each local church used qualified men to serve as elders (pastors, bishops), who ensured that the church there followed God (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1). There was never a "Senior Pastor," "Reverend," or nation-wide Bishop who led groups of congregations. If you think that organization isn't an important matter to God, then ask yourself if it's okay to let the parents submit to the children (Ephesians 6:1-4). God's organization matters.

So—what kind of a church are we? I hope you can see that question is VERY different than "Which kind of denomination are you?" Since we want to please God, we reject the idea of being a denomination. By teaching and following the one faith, wearing our Savior's name, and being organized as God revealed, we will not become a new "kind" of church. We will simply and gladly be a church of Christ.

WHY SHOULD I TRUST THE BIBLE?

Larry Rouse (The Auburn Beacon, June 17, 2012)

1. To determine if the Bible is from God or man is an issue that can be tested and the truth known. I appeal to you to at least read the Bible with an open mind and then test what you read. This is the appeal of Jesus Christ himself (**John 8:32; 7:17**).
2. Take the time to consider the historical and archeological accuracy of the Bible. History tells us of many recent scholars, such as Sir William Ramsey, who because of their archeological studies of the Bible lands came to respect the Bible as one of the most accurate sources of ancient history. This tells us that the Bible is no myth but rather was written by men in the times claimed and written in a careful manner.
3. Consider the identity of Jesus Christ - who is He? The appeal of the apostles in the book of Acts is that they witnessed Jesus as one who was raised from the dead (**Acts 2:32; 3:14-15; 5:30-32; 10:39-42; 13:27-31**). Is this testimony valid? What was the motive of men like the Apostle Paul in making such an abrupt change from persecutor to preacher? History bears testimony that all these witnesses, save one, died a martyr's death for this truth (**1 Cor 15:30-32**). Did they die for a lie?
4. Finally, consider the powerful evidence of fulfilled prophecy. In the death of Christ there are several detailed accounts of His death hundreds of years before the event (**Psalms 22, Isaiah 53**). How can this be?

Why not begin your examination of the Bible today?