

1 Discredited substances

- Is our faith really the substance of things Hoped for?

2 Discredited Substances

- Have you heard of any of these things?
 - Phlogiston,
 - Orgone
 - Luminiferous ether
 - Alkahest
 - Miasma
- Chances are, with the possible exception of miasma, you haven't, and there's no reason you should have, because they are nothing -- or, to explain more fully -- they are the names of substances once thought to exist but which have since been fully discredited.

3 Phlogiston

- Phlogiston, for example, was coined in 1667 by Johann Joachim Becher.
- Becher, a German alchemist, described what he believed was the essence of fire.
- Phlogiston is a substance purportedly present in all combustible material and is released as a flame during combustion -- but we now know phlogiston is so much rubbish.

4 Orgone

- Orgone was proposed in the 1940s by psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich to describe sexual energy that could be collected for medicinal purposes.
- In 1954 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration successfully sought an injunction to prevent Reich from making medical claims relating to orgone, which (among other stipulations) prevented him from shipping "orgone devices" across state lines.
- Woody Allen's 1973 comedy science fiction movie Sleeper features an orgone collecting machine.

5 Luminiferous Ether

- Luminiferous ether comes from the 16th-century philosopher and mathematician René Descartes.
- It was developed to name a supposed medium "more subtle than air" through which light and gravity travel, but its existence has since been disproved by Einstein's theory of relativity.

6 Alkahest

- Alkahest was the name given by the 16th-century alchemist Paracelsus to what he believed was a universal solvent.

- It was thought to be an ingredient of the fabled "philosopher's stone" that was said to be capable of turning base metals such as lead into gold or silver.

7 Miasma

- Miasma is a word that might be familiar to you since it has made its way into English to refer to a noxious atmosphere (such as cigarette smoke), a foul smell (such as arising from a swamp) or the toxic influence of bad company (such as being with people filled with hate for others).
- But its original meaning -- a bad smell that spreads diseases -- came from the ancient Greeks and has been debunked by the discovery of bacteria and viruses.

8 Questionable Substances

- Speaking of questionable substances, there arose a major controversy during Jesus' ministry when He introduced two questionable substances, His flesh and His blood.
 - Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. (John 6:56–59 NIV)
 - On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you?" (John 6:60–61 NIV)

9 Context of Event

- Leading up to this event, Jesus was at the height of his popularity.
 - He had just fed 5,000 people with with five small loaves of bread and two small fish.
 - After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." (John 6:14 NIV)
 - After Jesus hides and slipped away—having to walk on water to join up with His disciples at night, the crowd caught up with Jesus near Capernaum, but Jesus was not impressed with their enthusiasm.
 - He knew they followed Him not because they wanted to be His disciples, but because they wanted more free food. (See John 6:26–27, NIV)
 - "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." (John 6:27 NIV)

10 The Response

- Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” (John 6:28 NIV)
- Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” (John 6:29 NIV)
- So far so good, but then Jesus dropped a bomb shell on everyone and told them about two substances of faith that they must partake, in order to have eternal life.
- Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” (John 6:53 NIV)
- Upon hearing this many turned away!

11 Followers of Jesus

- Jesus had several levels of followers.
 - The Crowds – Those who followed Him out of need or curiosity.
 - The Disciples – Those who were genuine followers of Jesus, but not part of Jesus’ inner circle.
 - The Twelve – 12 men who were part of Jesus’ inner circle.
 - The Three – Peter, James, and John who were members of the Twelve, but also received special attention from Jesus’.
- So when Jesus brought up the need to drink His blood and eat His flesh, who did He ask if they wanted to leave too?

12 Peter’s Response

- Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:68-69 NIV)
- What Peter was saying was very important.
- Basically, he was saying that while I don’t have all the answers and some of the things you are saying don’t make full sense, we’re still willing to do what you say because God is indeed with you.

13 Essence of Faith

- The essence of Jesus’ teaching that day was that to be His disciple it is not easy and to be His follower is going to require real commitment.
- The use of the phrases, “drink my blood” and “eat my flesh” were metaphors—figures of speech to draw a comparison that we are to consume ourselves with Jesus’ life, ministry, and teaching.

- If we do, we will have life through Him—even eternal life.
- So what happens when we are consumed with Jesus’ life and teachings?
 - We product much fruit – If a man remains in me (consumed with carrying out my teachings) . . . he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5 NIV)
 - Answered prayer – If you remain in me and my words (teachings) remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. (John 15:7 NIV)
 - Bring glory to God – This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15:8 NIV)

14 False Teachings

- The commandment to “eat Jesus’ flesh,” and “drink His blood,” is a hard teaching.
- However, thanks to false teachers, we have alternative interpretations in which to consider.
 - Some teach that “eating Jesus’ flesh,” and “drinking His blood,” is something that happens when the priest gives us communion.
 - Others simply ignore the command and go on with teachings on grace that don’t apply to this context.
- The truth of the matter is that being a real disciple of Christ takes a total commitment to the teachings of Jesus.

15 The Words of God

- . . . man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. (Deut 8:3 NIV)
- How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Psa 119:103 NIV)
- When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty. (Jer 15:16 NIV)
- “But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.” (Ezek 2:8 NIV)

16 The Words of God

- And he said to me, “Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel.” (Ezek 3:1 NIV)

- I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. (John 6:48-51 NIV)
- “The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.” (John 6:63 NIV)

17 Communion

- Tonight we are going to be celebrating the covenant that God has given to us through Jesus Christ, His Son.
- It is called Communion or the Lord’s Supper and is represented by eating bread and drinking juice from a cup.
 - In doing so,
 - we memorialize Jesus’ death and commitment to us,
 - by partaking of the elements, we show our faith and commitment to His life and teaching.
- Those who have faith that Jesus brings from God the words of life are free to show their commitment to Him by coming forward to partake of Holy Communion.

18 Conclusion

- Consuming the words of life is an act of faith.
- If anyone has doubt they can consider the following statement from Jesus . . .
 - “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.” (John 7:16-18 NIV)
- Let us leave tonight as people of truth who are out to bring glory to God’s name and not to ourselves. People who promote the teachings of Christ and live them out.