

GOSPEL PEARLS

A tough and divisive hardliner

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When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 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. But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him

by the Father." After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6: 60-69)

Jesus is a hardliner in that he proclaims the truth in its entirety without making any concessions, even when His words shock most of the disciples who, in fact, abandon Him. This happens when Jesus begins to talk about His flesh which He would give them to eat in order to obtain eternal life. To the disciples who point out that His language is harsh and divisive, Jesus responds in an even harsher and more divisive manner. His response is harsher because he does not soften his tone, but rather uses direct language while giving a clear ultimatum to His apostles. It is more divisive because Jesus divides people into those who want to follow Him and those who have followed Him but only as long as it suited them and does not go against their opinions.