
Words of Truth

Was Jesus' Body Broken For Us?

By: Brian A. Yeager

In correcting perversions of the Lord's Supper in the church of Christ in Corinth, Paul wrote this: *"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: **this is my body, which is broken for you:** this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another"* (I Corinthians 11:23-33).

The Lord's Supper is the communion of the body and blood of Christ (I Corinthians 10:16). Jesus said: *"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; **this is my body**"* (Matthew 26:26). We are all reasonable enough to understand that Jesus gave His disciples unleavened bread to eat (Matthew 26:17), not literally a piece of His flesh. Later, Jesus said: *"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; **For this is my blood of the new testament,** which is shed for many for the remission of sins"* (Matthew 26:27-28). Again, we are all reasonable enough to understand that they were not literally drinking blood, but rather were drinking the fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:29).

We just looked at Matthew 26:26-28 to show that sometimes things are stated figuratively, not literally in the Scriptures. When we partake of the Lord's Supper we know we are not cannibals. We are not literally eating Jesus' flesh or literally drinking His blood. Such would be sinful in itself (i.e. Acts 15:29 and Acts 21:25). The reason we have briefly studied that is because we are going to have to understand that the Scriptures do not state clearly that Jesus body was broken. Jesus was smitten, spit upon, mocked, given a crown of thorns, etc. (Matthew 27:29-31, Mark 15:15-20, and Luke 23:8-11). Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:33-35, Mark 15:24-25, and John 19:18-24). However, a careful study of each context about the death of Christ does not reveal a point in time where it is stated that His body was broken. Actually, there is information we find in studying about the death of Christ that should cause us to use caution in how we teach or state I Corinthians 11:24.

A Scriptural Statement To Consider About What Broken Means/Does Not Mean

The only time I can find in the Scriptures that state Jesus' body was broken in any way is found in I Corinthians 11:24. Clearly, the context is talking about the breaking of the bread in remembrance of the death of Christ. The context is not discussing the details of the death of Christ. One could accurately argue that Jesus' flesh was nailed to the cross and his side pierced, thus His flesh was broken in this way (John 20:24-25). However, there is another consideration that should at least cause us to clarify things we state in this regard lest we give the wrong impression about what did happen on the cross. Let's consider this for a moment.

The Scriptures record this about Jesus not being broken: *“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, **they brake not his legs:** But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, **A bone of him shall not be broken.** And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced” (John 19:28-37).*

We now have a Scripture that refers to the broken body of Christ (I Corinthians 11:24) and a context, which we just read, that specifies Jesus did not have a broken bone in His body. What Paul wrote can easily be seen to be figurative. What John penned was literally what did NOT happen. It is important to note that the reason Jesus did not have a broken bone was to fulfill a prophecy to confirm who He was/is (possibly Psalms 34:20). This should make us cautious. When quoting or citing I Corinthians 11:24 we have to make sure we are not saying such in a way that contradicts what did not happen on the cross to our Lord.

Studying the Scriptures requires diligence in rightly dividing those Scriptures (II Timothy 2:14-18). Teaching the Scriptures requires great caution in being plain and clear in what we teach (Nehemiah 8:8 and II Corinthians 3:12). We do not literally eat or drink the flesh and blood of Christ though statements figuratively suggest such. Similarly, Jesus' body was not literally broken, though an inspired statement figuratively says such.

Conclusion

Let's not get lazy and leave someone to be confused about what actually happened on the cross. This study should provoke thought and consideration regarding this particular subject as well as others. It shows how we have to be cautious in not stating one Scripture without considering all the Scriptures on a subject matter. The bread was broken, not the body of Christ.

Milkshakes

Was Jesus Just Merely A Man While He Was In The Flesh?

By: Brian A. Yeager

As Jesus was teaching in the temple He said this: *“And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins”* (John 8:23-24). From the words of Christ we have just read, we see that our salvation requires that we believe that He is not like us. We must believe that He is from above and not of this earth.

Most will agree that Jesus was God before He came in the flesh (John 1:1-5, John 8:56-58, and Hebrews 1:8-12). Some ignore the fact that He was still God after His return to Heaven (Acts 20:28 and Titus 2:13). Many struggle with understanding His deity in the flesh because He took on the form of a man. It is certainly a fact that Jesus came to this world in the form of a man (Romans 1:3, Philippians 2:5-8, and Hebrews 2:9-18). To deny such is to be an antichrist (II John 1:7). However, though He took on the form of a man, He did not cease from being God. He certainly was not the Father or the Holy Spirit. They have/had separate works and identities at the time Jesus was in the flesh (i.e. Matthew 3:13-17). Jesus did not cease to be God when He was in the flesh. He was God just as the Father and the Holy Spirit were at that time.

The difference of Jesus was that He took on human form. Yet, even in human form, notice what the Scriptures say of Him: *“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us...** I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, **who is over all, God blessed for ever.** Amen.”* (Matthew 1:23 and Romans 9:1-5).

When you consider what Jesus did while He was on earth that too confirms He was deity. For example, He was able to forgive sins (Mark 2:1-10). Jesus also accepted worship while He was in the flesh (Matthew 8:1-4, Matthew 9:18, Matthew 28:9, Matthew 28:17, Luke 24:49-53, and John 9:35-38). The significance of that is, as Jesus Himself taught, only God is to be worshipped (Matthew 4:9-10).

Jesus is the “express image” [5481: “the exact expression (the image) of any person or thing, marked likeness, precise reproduction in every respect, i.e facsimile” (Thayer)] of the person of God (II Corinthians 4:3-4). This is why Jesus declared that if anyone had seen Him, they had seen the Father (John 8:19, John 14:8-11, and John 15:24). These undeniable truths prove the Jesus was, is, and always will be God. He didn’t change who He was when He came in the flesh (Hebrews 13:8).

Old Testament prophecies prove the deity of Christ (Isaiah 9:6). New Testament statements do as well (I John 5:20). Let’s never fail to realize that Jesus is God and that He never gave that up to be in the flesh!