



"Beware of the man who won't be bothered with details."  
—William Feather

26-Apr-19

## Was Jesus Christ's Body Broken? (Part Two)

In Part One, we saw that the word "broken" does not actually appear in the oldest and perhaps best Greek manuscripts of [I Corinthians 11:24](#): ". . . and when [Jesus] had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is *broken* for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (emphasis ours throughout). This manuscript evidence seems to be confirmed by the accounts in the Synoptic Gospels, none of which include any reference to Christ's [broken body](#). Luke's account is closest to what Paul writes in I Corinthians 11: "This is My body which is *given* for you; do this in remembrance of Me" ([Luke 22:19](#)). While the bread still represents His body, He makes no mention of it standing for a broken body. The bread was broken simply so it could be shared (compare [Matthew 14:19](#); [Acts 2:46](#); [27:35](#); [I Corinthians 10:16-17](#)).

We also saw that, after Jesus was crucified, the Roman soldiers broke the legs of the two felons crucified with Him to hasten their deaths, "But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs" ([John 19:33](#)). And in leaving Christ's legs unbroken, another scripture, [Psalm 34:20](#), was fulfilled.

Psalm 34 is a psalm of praise for God's watchfulness and deliverance, and in verse 20, David writes, "[The LORD] guards all his [the righteous man's] bones; not one of them is broken." God's watchfulness is absolute. It is similar to Israel leaving Egypt under God's care, during which not even a dog barked ([Exodus 11:7](#)).

As John watched [the crucifixion](#) (or later reflected on it), he realized that even with all that Jesus had suffered, [God](#) had spared His bones. Jesus was beaten, He was bruised, He was scourged, He was pierced, He was marred more than any man—yet God kept intact the bones of this righteous Man and helped John to make the connection for us: "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken'" ([John 19:36](#)).

There are a couple of reasons why Christ's bones had to remain unbroken, in addition to identifying Jesus as *the* Righteous Man. We find one of them in the instructions for the [Passover](#) sacrifice. In [Exodus 12:46](#) and [Numbers 9:12](#), God stipulates that the bones of the Passover were to remain intact. He does not mention bones in any other sacrifice, but with the Passover lamb, He specifies that care must be taken to keep the bones unbroken. Jesus is our Passover ([I Corinthians 5:7](#)), and God worked things out perfectly to ensure this requirement was met. Another way of looking at it is that because Christ's death was ordained from the foundation of [the world](#) ([Revelation 13:8](#)), the Passover instructions were written to foretell and reflect what God had already appointed to happen to the Messiah.

Another reason Christ's body had to remain intact appears in the covenant God made with Abraham:

Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. . . . And it came to pass, when the sun went down and

it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land. . . ." ([Genesis 15:7-10](#), 17-18)

In English, we speak of "making" a covenant, but the Hebrew in verse 18 indicates "cutting" a covenant (compare [Jeremiah 34:18](#)). The covenant God made with Abraham is what is called a self-maledictory oath. A malediction is a curse—literally, "evil speech." In a self-maledictory oath, a person promises harm to himself if he fails to perform his end of the agreement.

In this case, God swore that what had just been done to the animals would happen to Him, too, if He failed to fulfill His promises—perish the thought! By passing through these divided animals, the God of all creation swore that He would be cut asunder if He failed to accomplish what He promised. Since He could not swear by anything greater, He swore by His own existence when He cut this covenant (see [Hebrews 6:13-18](#)). God was as earnest and serious as He could be, and undoubtedly, Abraham was awestruck at what happened. This agreement was no small matter.

It has deep links to Jesus Christ's crucifixion. Some wonder why Jesus was not crucified at the beginning of the fourteenth of Abib when God commanded the Passover lambs to be killed in Egypt ([Exodus 12:6](#)). Instead, "at twilight" ([Leviticus 23:5](#); [Numbers 9:3](#)), Jesus observed the Passover with the disciples and was not crucified until the afternoon of the fourteenth. The day and time of His death do not coincide with the killing of the lamb but instead coincide with the day and time of God's covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15. Christ's blood sealed the New Covenant, one built upon God's covenant with Abraham. It may seem as if what God promised Abraham only concerns land, but when we consider everything God said, significant spiritual aspects appear.

Since Christ's death lined up with the covenant with Abraham, had His body been divided, it would have implied that the self-malediction had come to pass. It would have signified that the Covenant-Maker was now paying the price for *failure*. It was imperative, then, that the Savior's blood be shed to seal the New Covenant, but it was equally essential that His body remain *unbroken* to satisfy His [promises to Abraham](#). In His sovereignty, God

worked it out perfectly, accomplishing the second imperative without violating the first.

Part Three will consider what the bread of the Passover ritual symbolizes and why a broken body is inconsistent with its meaning to us.

- David C. Grabbe

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[Christ Our Peace](#)**

by Martin G. Collins

Columnist Thomas Sowell noted that peace demonstrations do not bring peace, but war. Submitting to the over-arching government of the United Nations in terms of disarmament and a blue-helmeted UN police force will not bring peace, but will instead place modern Israel in jeopardy. The nations of the world are grossly ignorant about the true causes of war, as described in James 4:1-4. Paul suggests that Gentiles not grafted into Christ (become Jacob's spiritual children) are aliens and enemies of God, not yet naturalized into the Commonwealth of Israel. The enmity (and alienation) from God and man has been caused by breaking God's law. Billions of people (or billions of "I's") all placing their own selfish egos before God create billions of self-centered idols. Only by seeing ourselves humbly in relationship to God can we achieve peace with other people. We do not have the ability to bring peace to the world; only Christ can do that, first reconciling people to God and then reconciling people with other people. In order to become part of the Commonwealth of Israel, immigrants (called-out ones) had to put aside their pasts, assimilating as in a melting pot into the new entity, namely the body of Christ, the church, the Israel of God. The idyllic setting in Isaiah 32 depicts the peace of God's reign, a time God's called-out ones will assist in the peace-keeping mission that will succeed.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

**[The Offerings of Leviticus \(Part Four\): The Peace Offering](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The peace, fellowship, praise, or thank offering was the most commonly given in ancient Israel. John Ritenbaugh explains that it represents God, the priest, and the offerer in satisfying fellowship.

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