

Numbers Surrounding the Crucifixion and the Lord's Supper

INTRODUCTION:

A. **1 Corinthians 11:23-25** – "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

24 and when He 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."

25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

B. About the text:

1. Jesus said that we are supposed to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him. The Lord's Supper becomes meaningless if we do not think about our Lord's death, burial, and resurrection.
2. In our publicly led prayers including those surrounding the Lord's Supper, we often pray for God to help us to remove all worldly distractions as we worship and as we partake of the great memorial feast. There are numerous distractions to tear our minds away from what we are doing.
 - a. We worry about our finances.
 - b. How our children are doing in school.
 - c. Whether or not my boss is going to give me a good evaluation.
 - d. Will I be able to meet that pressing deadline.
 - e. Is my spouse happy with me.
 - f. Is Aunt Millie going to make it through surgery okay.
 - g. Are my children behaving during the prayer.
 - h. Etc.
3. What can we do to keep the Lord as our focus in the Lord's Supper?
 - a. We might have someone speak a few words about what the Lord's Supper means.
 - b. We might have a scripture reading.
 - c. We might mediate on an appropriate song pertaining to our Lord's Death.
4. While these may be good suggestions . . . no one can worship for us.
 - a. We must use our own mind to remember Jesus during the Lord's Supper.
 - b. Perhaps some simple numbers might help us to focus better.
 1. **One** Lord.
 2. **Two** Thieves.

3. **Three** Crosses
 4. **Four** Parts of the garment.
 5. **Five** Wounds.
 6. **Six** Hours.
 7. **Seven** Sayings.
- c. Let's study each of these in more detail.

ONE LORD

A. Jesus is Lord!

1. Jesus is Lord of all men!
2. Jesus is Lord of all the earth!
3. Jesus is Lord of all the universe!
4. Jesus is My Lord . . . Jesus is your Lord . . . Jesus is our Lord.
5. **1 Corinthians 8:6** – “Yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.”
6. **Ephesians 4:5** states that there is “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

B. But why did the Lord have to die on the cross?

1. Because man is a sinner under the penalty of spiritual death.
Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
2. **Romans 6:23** – “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
3. There is nothing that man can do to redeem himself. Alone, he is powerless to appease the Perfect God of Heaven and earth. **Psalms 49:7-8** – “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, Nor give to God a ransom for him — **For the redemption of their souls is costly.**”

C. For man to be redeemed, God had to take upon Himself the burden of sin.

The sinful reach of man could not begin to reach as far as the sinless reach of Almighty God.

1. He chose to accomplish our redemption through His only Begotten Son who became a perfect sacrificial Lamb for our iniquities. **John 1:29** – “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”
2. The sacrificial blood had to be pure in order to satisfy the justice of God and to pay the penalty of sin.
 - a. And He and it were!
 - b. **2 Corinthians 5:21** – “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
 - c. Only Heaven could provide a Lord like the One we so desperately needed . . . and it did!

D. And so, let us remember during the Lord's Supper that there was **One Lord** at Calvary.

TWO THIEVES

A. Jesus was literally at the center of attention that Friday, April 7, 30 A.D.

1. **Matthew 27:38** – “Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.”
2. **Mark 15:27-28** – “With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left.

So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘And He was numbered with the transgressors.’”

- a. it is not coincidental that the two thieves are mentioned in the narrative.
- b. Jesus died the death of a common criminal for common men . . . and common criminals died beside Him.
- c. The two thieves further emphasize that Jesus paid the penalty of sin in that we should have died non that cross that day just like those common criminals.
 - a. Their sins nailed them to the cross.
 - b. Their sins and ours nailed Jesus to the center cross.

B. Jesus was indeed the center of attention that day.

1. He was the center of the Jewish leader's attention . . . They wanted him dead.
2. He was the center of the Roman governor, Pilate's attention . . . He chose not to prevent it.
3. He was the center of Pilate's wife's attention . . . She knew He was just and righteous.
4. He was the center of the Roman soldiers' attention . . . They were charged with a duty for which they were accountable with the lives.
5. He was the center of Mary's attention . . . he oldest Son was being executed.
6. He was the center of the apostle's attention . . . most of them in absentia.
7. He was the center of the two thieves' attention . . . for misery loves company.
8. He was the center of God's attention . . . almost 4,000 years had gone into preparing for this moment. **Galatians 4:4** – “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.”
9. The question becomes:
 - a. Is Jesus the center of our attention?
 - b. Is Jesus the center of our lives?
 - c. Is Jesus the center of our faith?
 - d. Is Jesus the center of our thoughts and meditation during the partaking of the Lord's Supper?

C. The two thieves represent all of mankind in that:

1. Both thieves initially.

- a. **Matthew 27:44** – "Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing."
 - b. No wonder the apostle Paul would later write I 1 Corinthians 1:18 - "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."
2. One thief represented us in that he repented and sought salvation.
 - a. **Luke 23:39-42** – "Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."
 - 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?
 - 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.'
 - 42 Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.'"
 - b. This thief died **from** sin.
3. One thief was unrepentant. That thief died in sin
 - a. All mankind can be found in one of these two categories:
 1. Dying in sin . . . lost forever.
 2. Dying to sin . . . saved eternally.
 - b. Listening friend, in which category do you reside. Which thief represents your soul's condition before Almighty God?
- D. And so, let us remember during the Lord's Supper that there were **Two thieves** at Calvary . . . and one resembles me and my sins.

THREE CROSSES

- A. **Luke 23:33** – "And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left." Anyway you count them there were three crosses in use at Golgotha that day.
 1. One for one thief on the right side.
 2. One for the other thief on the left side.
 3. And a cross between the two thieves for our innocent Lord.
- B. The cross was Rome's solution to the problem of capital punishment.
 1. It was used by various nations for about 800 years.
 2. Constatine ended its use in the fourth century.
 3. Crosses were rather simple devices composed of two wooden beams that crossed each other.
 4. In the case of our Lord's crucifixion, His hands were nailed to the horizontal beam and His feet to the vertical beam.
 5. Publicly displayed crucifixions only added to the humiliation of the event.
- C. As our Lord began to carry His own cross, physical strength failed Him.

1. **John 19:17** – “And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.”
 2. **Luke 23:26** – “Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.
 3. **John 19:19** – “Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. “
 4. **John 19:25** – “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.”
 - a. Mary saw Jesus when He was given earthly life . . . And she saw Him when that earthly life was taken away.
 - b. No mother should ever have to see her son scourged and then crucified.
 - c. Her love for Him necessitated that she be as near as she could.
- D. And so, let us remember during the Lord's Supper that that day there were **Three Crosses** at Calvary . . . when there should have been only two.

FOUR PARTS OF THE GARMENT

- A. **John 19:23-24** – “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.
- 24 They said therefore among themselves, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,’ that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: ‘They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.’ Therefore the soldiers did these things.”
1. Those who were crucified were stripped of their remaining dignity.
 2. Their last remaining possessions were taken from them and given as payment to the soldiers whose dirty job it was to make sure they died.
 3. Jesus' outer cloak was torn into four parts so that it could be easily divided.
 4. The inner coat, however, was without seam, making it more valuable. So instead of tearing it, the soldiers gambled for it.
- B. All of this was done in fulfillment of prophecy.
1. Even the actions of Jesus' enemies fulfilled God's prophecies.
 2. Written some 1,000 years before Jesus died, **Psalms 22:16-18** states:

“For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;
 17 I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me.
 18 They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”
- C. This incident reminds us that our Lord lived a life of poverty while on this earth. All of His worldly possessions were these two pieces of clothing.

1. **Matthew 9:20** – “And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’”
 2. Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 8:9** – “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”
- D. Let us remember that there were four parts of the garment.

FIVE WOUNDS

- A. Jesus was crucified with three nails. One through each hand and one that was driven through both feet. This made four large wounds in His body.
1. We well remember the words of Thomas in **John 20:25** – “. . . Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”
 2. Some have suggested that the nails were likely placed in what we would call the wrists between the two bones so that the hand would not tear away.
 3. The nails in the feet likely pierced between the metatarsals in the middle of the top of the foot.
- B. Jesus' side was pierced with one spear. This was the fifth wound.
1. In **John 19:34**, John writes, “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately **blood** and **water** came out.”
 - a. The pericardium is a closed sac encasing the heart and is lubricated by a small amount of fluid (about a spoonful) to facilitate the motion of the heart.
 - b. Question: How could John distinguish such a small quantity of water?
 - c. Permit me to read a quotation from Mallory and Wright's *Pathological Technique*: “The normal amount (of pericardial fluid) is about a teaspoonful, but may be increased to 100 c.c. (24 teaspoonfuls) where the death agony is prolonged.”
 - d. The last wound offered to our Lord's body proclaimed both purification and redemption, for the very spear that pierced His side drew forth His blood to save and the water wherewith to reach it.
- C. His flesh was broken . . . His body was torn . . . and His blood flowed out.
1. **Hebrews 10:20** – “By a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,”
 2. The veil of the temple was torn in two when Jesus died on the cross. **Mark 15:38** – “Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”
 - a. The veil separated The Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.
 - b. A new accessibility to God was now being provided.
 - c. We are recipients of what was provided through these actions.

SIX HOURS

- A. Jesus was suspended between heaven and earth for six long hours.
1. **Mark 15:28** – "Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him." (9:00 a.m.)
 2. **Matthew 27:45** – "Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land." (From 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.)
- B. During those six hours
1. Every few moments He would push down on His legs and lift Himself up to breath.
 2. He had to endure the pain from the crown of thorns on His head.
 3. He had to endure the reopening of the scourge wounds on His back as His Back rubbed against the wood of the cross.
 4. He had to endure the jeering and mocking from the passing crowds.
Mark 15:29-32 – "And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days,
 30 save Yourself, and come down from the cross!
 31 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save.
 32 Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.' Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him."
- C. Let us remember that Jesus was on the cross for six hours.

SEVEN SAYINGS

- A. The final words of our Lord before His death were spoken while He was nailed to the cross.
- B. Bearing in mind that (1) Jesus was place on the cross at 9:00 a.m. (2) He was there until a little past 3:00 p.m. (3) There was daylight during His first three hours on the cross and darkness for the remaining three hours.
1. His first three utterances (sayings) were spoken while it was daylight.
 2. His last four utterances (sayings) were spoken under the guise of darkness.
 3. We will endeavor distinguish them.
- C. Sayings during the three hours of regular daylight.
1. The utterance of **FORGIVENESS**: **Luke 23:34** – "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots. "
 2. The utterance of **SALVATION**: **Luke 23:43** – "And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'"
 3. The utterance of **HUMAN CARE**: **John 19:26-27** – "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"

27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

D. Sayings during the three plus hours of darkness.

4. The utterance of **ANGUISH**: **Matthew 27:46** – “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’”
5. The utterance of **PHYSICAL SUFFERING**: **John 19:28** - “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" NOTE: HE addressed the world's needs before considering His own.
6. The utterance of **TRIUMPH**: **John 19:30** – “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.
7. The utterance of **TRUST & REUNION**: **Luke 23:46** – “And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, ‘Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ Having said this, He breathed His last”

E. Let us remember there were seven sayings while Jesus was on the cross.

CONCLUSION:

A. The centurion that was standing by said it all: “Truly this man was the Son of God.” **Mark 15:39**

B. When we remember the Lord during the Lord's Supper, let us remember:

1. **One** Lord
2. **Two** Thieves
3. **Three** Crosses
4. **Four** Parts to the Garment
5. **Five** Wounds
6. **Six** Hours
7. **Seven** Sayings

C. God's Plan for Man's Slavation

1. **Romans 10:17** – “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. “
 - a. Will you hear?
 - b. Will you have faith?
2. **Hebrews 11:6** – “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”
 - a. Believe with all your heart.
3. Repent of your sins.
 - a. **Luke 13:3** – “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

b. **Acts 17:30** – “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”

4. Confess Jesus as the Son of God. **Matthew 10:32-33** – “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”

5. Be baptized for the remission of sins. **Mark 16:16** – “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.
D. If you have previously obeyed the gospel, but are not living faithfully, will you repent and return to faithfulness today?

E. God's Plan for Man's Salvation