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The Broken Body of Christ

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As the apostle Paul was correcting the improper use and mindset of some Christians in Corinth concerning the Lord's supper, Paul said "*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*" (1 Cor 11:23-24).

The "broken" body of Christ as recorded by Paul appears in the Greek text known as the Textus Receptus or the Received Text but it is not found in the majority of Greek manuscripts. Some manuscripts have "given," and yet another uses a milder word for "broken," as though to avoid any contradiction of John 19:36 (Pulpit Commentary), which says, "...A bone of Him shall not be broken."

It is not my desire to defend any Greek manuscript over another in this article, but only to help us understand that a body can in fact be broken without the breaking of bones. When we hear one pray or speak about the "broken body of Christ," we can and should know that inspiration has made it crystal clear that no bones of our Lord were broken. We know that the two thieves had their legs broken to hurry their death. "*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*" (Jn 19:32-34). Jesus had already given Himself to die upon the cross when the soldiers came to hurry along death. They pierced His side to be sure that He was dead. Though the spear went through His side, still not a bone was broken. So, was the body of Jesus broken?

I personally have no problem hearing one say "the broken body of Jesus" as long as it does not contradict Scripture in any way. I personally see a broken spirit of my Lord when He wept over Jerusalem whom He loved dearly. "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have*

gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not” (Lk 13:34)! I see the broken body of my Lord when He was taken from the garden, tormented and taunted, spat upon and beaten, ridiculed and reviled as He made His way to His place of crucifixion. I see the broken body of my Savior while Roman soldiers held Him down to nail Him to the cross of shame. I especially see the broken body of my Lord when, *“about the ninth Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* (Mt 27:46). The late and beloved Brother Bill Jackson once said concerning the crucifixion of Christ, *“Most certainly His body was broken both by nails and by spear.”* Just as a powerful wild horse can be “broken,” so was my Lord. Sent to save man from the just penalty of their sins, He was “broken” in the physical but now reigns as our highly exalted and mighty Kind (Phil 2:9). Never was there a bone of Jesus broken, but that does not mean that His body was not.