

Greetings to you in the name above all names, our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome once again as we delve into the words of life.

At the time when our Lord Jesus was being crucified, as the sun was about to set and those who had been crucified were still alive, the Jews went to ask Pilate to have their legs broken to hasten their deaths. It should be remembered that, according to Jewish law, it was considered defiling to leave a criminal's body on the cross until the evening of the Sabbath.

This is explained in the Torah: Deuteronomy 21:22-23 (NIV) says:

*"If someone is guilty of a capital offense and is put to death and their body is exposed on a pole, you must not leave the body hanging overnight. Be sure to bury it that same day, because anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse."*

The Jewish leaders wanted to avoid the defilement of leaving bodies on the cross overnight, especially during the Sabbath, which was a holy day. Thus, they asked Pilate to break their legs to hasten their deaths.

### Theological Insight:

In the ancient world, crucifixion was a slow and agonizing form of execution, where the condemned person could linger for hours or even days, slowly dying from asphyxiation or blood loss. The breaking of the legs, by preventing the victim from pushing up to breathe, accelerated death.

However, if it weren't for their law, Roman execution usually allowed someone to stay on the cross until they died of their own accord. This could take days, and was deliberately torturous, ensuring that the person died a slow, agonizing death. The bodies would not be removed until vultures or scavengers came to feed on the remains.

### John 19:31-36 (NIV):

*31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.*

*32 The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the*

*other.*

*33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.*

*34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.*

*35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.*

*36 These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken."*

#### THEOLOGICAL INSIGHT:

In the New Testament, Jesus' body fulfills the ancient foreshadowing in the Passover lamb's sacrifice. The unbroken bones of Jesus directly correlate with the instructions God gave to the Israelites when preparing the Passover lamb.

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#### SO WHY WERE HIS BONES NOT BROKEN? WHAT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS IN SCRIPTURE?

There are two main theological reasons:

1. To confirm that Christ is truly our Passover Lamb.

When the Israelites were preparing to leave Egypt, God gave them specific instructions about the Passover lamb. The lamb had to be without defect, and not a bone of it was to be broken. This was a prophetic picture pointing to the perfect, sinless sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 12:45-46 (NIV):

*“A temporary resident or a hired worker may not eat it. It must be eaten inside the house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones.”*

This requirement was prophetic, symbolizing that the Messiah, the true Lamb of God, would be without blemish and His body would be untouched, fulfilling the law of the Passover.

John 1:29 (NIV):

*"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"*

The unbroken bones of Jesus therefore fulfill the Passover lamb's prophecy, reinforcing that Jesus is our true Passover Lamb, who takes away the sins of the world.

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2. To demonstrate that the body of Christ is not broken. Despite enduring the excruciating torture of the cross—being mocked, whipped, and nailed—His body remained intact. This shows the spiritual truth that the body of Christ, though the Church undergoes suffering, remains whole and unbroken.

Ephesians 5:30 (NIV):

*"For we are members of his body."*

This teaching stresses the unity of the body of Christ. Just as Jesus' physical body was preserved, so too should the spiritual body of Christ—the Church—remain united. The Church is called to be a unified body, and each member must remain connected to Christ and to one another, regardless of the trials faced.

Even though believers may go through hardships, we are to stay united in love, just as Christ's body remained whole through His suffering. As Scripture teaches, Christ's body is not broken, and neither should the body of His Church be broken by division.

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John 17:22 (NIV):

*"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one."*

This passage underscores the importance of unity within the Church. Jesus prayed that His followers would be one, just as He and the Father are one. Dividing the body of Christ goes directly

against this divine principle.

#### THEOLOGICAL INSIGHT:

Jesus' prayer for unity in the body of believers is central to the life of the Church. Disunity is a direct contradiction to the nature of God, who Himself is unified in the Trinity. When the Church is divided, it disrupts the witness of Christ in the world.

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Shalom.

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