

The Nails Of The Cross

No. 39

Introduction.

I. In Psalms the 22nd chapter David prophesied the crucifixion of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He, through the Holy Spirit, vividly described more than a 1,000 years in advance the painful, shameful death Jesus would experience. Please listen carefully as David speaks prophetically in the first person for Jesus.

PSA 22:1 My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

PSA 22:7 All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, {saying,}

PSA 22:8 "Commit {yourself} to the \Lord\; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

PSA 22:13 They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion.

PSA 22:14 I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.

PSA 22:15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And Thou dost lay me in the dust of death.

PSA 22:16 For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.

PSA 22:17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me;

PSA 22:18 They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots. ASV

II. In about the year 33 A.D. we read of the fulfillment of this horrid prophesy.

A. Pilate and the blood thirsty crowd unjustly condemned the sinless Jesus to die by crucifixion. Jesus was scourged (His back mutilated) at the request of governor Pilate and led outside the city of Jerusalem to Golgotha - the place of the skull.

B. There the cruel, heartless Roman soldiers nailed His hands and feet to a cross and placed Him between two thieves who had also been crucified. The nails were probably about 7" long and about 3/8 inches in diameter. These nails, better described as spikes, were viciously pounded into the hands and feet of Jesus.

III. There are three relevant, awesome facts I would like to emphasize about "The Nails of the Cross."

I. **Jesus Was Actually Nailed To The Cross** - In the first place, I would like to emphasize that Jesus was

actually nailed to the cross.

A. There are some religious people who contend Jesus was merely tied to the cross after He was scourged.

B. This doctrine is contrary to the facts.

1. It is true the Romans often scourged men and then tied them to a cross, leaving them to die a slow death of starvation and by eaten by animals, but this was not always so. Their victims were frequently nailed to a cross to make crucifixion even more terrifying and horrible.
2. The Bible plainly teaches that Christ was nailed to the cross. (Psa. 22:16; Col. 2:14).
 - a. Listen to the words of John the apostle.

JOH 20:19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."

JOH 20:20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

JOH 20:21 Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

JOH 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

JOH 20:23 "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

JOH 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

JOH 20:25 The other disciples therefore were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

JOH 20:26 And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be with you."

JOH 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing."

JOH 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

- b. From this reading we learn that Christ appeared to all the apostles after His resurrection with the exception of Thomas. When they told Thomas they had seen Jesus, he said he would not believe Jesus had been raised from the dead until he could see the print of the nails in His hands and put his finger in the print of the nails. Jesus later showed Thomas His wounded hands and gave him the opportunity to touch them. This is conclusive proof that Jesus was nailed to the cross.

II. **The Nails Intensified The Suffering Of Jesus** - In the second place, I would like to emphasize that the nails intensified the suffering of Christ.

A. The nails driven into His hands and feet cause Jesus to suffer excruciating pain and to burn with fever.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia describes vividly the horrible suffering of crucifixion.

“...Among the Romans crucifixion was preceded by scourging, undoubtedly to hasten impending death. The victim then bore his own cross, or at least the upright beam, to the place of crucifixion...The suffering of death by crucifixion was intense, esp. in hot climates. Severe local inflammation, coupled with an insignificant bleeding of the jagged wounds, produced traumatic fever, which was aggravated by the exposure to the heat of the sun, the strained position of the body and insufferable thirst. The wounds swelled about the rough nails and the torn lacerated tendons and nerves caused excruciating agony. The arteries of the head and stomach were surcharged with blood and a terrific throbbing ensued. The mind was confused and filled with anxiety and dread foreboding. The victim of crucifixion literally died a thousand deaths. Tetanus not rarely supervened and the rigors of the attending convulsions would tear at the wound and add the burden of pain, till at last the bodily forces were exhausted and the victim sank to unconsciousness and death.” (Volume II, p. 761).

B. The pain of crucifixion is beyond our comprehension. Jesus suffered this horrible death for each one of us. (Heb. 2:9).

III. **The Nails Did Not Hold The Mocked Christ To The Cross** - In the third place, I would like to emphasize that the nails did not hold the mocked Christ to the cross.

A. As Jesus hung on the cross in agony and shame, the mob challenged Christ to come down from the cross. (Matt. 27:39-40, 42-43).

B. The question arises, “**What was it that held Christ to the cross?** Was it the nails in His hands and feet?” Some answer “yes,” but the answer in an emphatic “no.”

1. He who had the power to still the storm on the sea of Galilee, heal the sick and raise the dead could have removed the nails.
2. The crowd that kept yelling “Let him be crucified..Let him be crucified” could not have killed Christ if He had not wished to do the Father’s will. (Jn. 10:18).
3. Furthermore, Jesus could have called “more than twelve legions of angels” to help Him and removed Him from the cross. (Matt. 26:49-53).
4. No, the nails (spikes) driven into His hands and feet did not keep Christ from coming down from the cross.

C. **What did hold Christ to the cross?**

1. **The Father's will** held Jesus to the cross.

a. Jesus came to do the Father's will. (Jn. 5:30).

b. It was the will of God that His beloved Son become the "propitiation" (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins. There was no other way that God could save His sons of creation; so He sent His eternal Son to die for man. (1 Jn. 4:10).

2. **The Savior's love** held Jesus to the cross.

a. Paul wrote these words in Philippians 2.

PHI 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

PHI 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

PHI 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

PHI 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

PHI 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

PHI 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,

PHI 2:11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

b. Paul informs us here that Jesus voluntarily left the glories of heaven and came to the earth in the form of a man that He might save man.

c. Jesus had infinite, boundless, matchless love for man and proved this on the cross. (Jn. 15:13).

3. **The joy set before Christ** held Him to the cross

a. In the Hebrew letter we learn that Jesus "for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising shame." (Heb. 12:2).

b. The mocking by the angry mob at the foot of the cross was ignored by Christ because of the "joy set before him." He was willing to endure the suffering and shame of the cross that He might have the joy of redeeming the world.

C. Thus neither lack of power nor nails held Christ to the cross. The Father's will, Jesus' love and the "joy set before Him" bound Him to the cross on which He died. This is why He suffered and died in our place. (Isa. 53:5, 6).

Conclusion.

- I. The fact that God and His Son loved us so much should move our hearts and motivate us to devote our lives to the One who died for us.
- II. The fact that Christ remained on the cross will not help us unless we let His great love draw us to Him, to trust Him and to love Him and to remain faithful to Him.
- III. Jesus is no longer on the cross. He is no longer experiencing pain and suffering and shame. He now sits in glory at the right hand of God. He has all authority. He is Lord of lords and King of kings, the Great Savior and Shepherd and He invites all to come and enjoy His sweet salvation.
- IV. Will you come to Christ, in faith be baptized and devote the rest of your days to Him? It will be the greatest and most important decision you have ever made. Come as we stand and sing.

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