

BROKEN FOR YOU

T.B.S. No.65

“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 *Corinthians* 11.23–24

The problem stated

It is sometimes suggested that the words in verse 24, “This is my body, which is broken for you”, are at variance with John 19.36 “These things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall *not be broken*”; and Exodus 12.46 with reference to the Passover Lamb—“neither shall ye break a bone thereof”; Numbers 9.12 “nor break any bone of it”; Psalm 34.20 “He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken”.

Dr. A. T. Robertson, in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, makes a highly misleading comment upon this verse “As a matter of fact the body of Jesus was not broken (John 19.36). The bread was broken, but the not the body of Jesus”. The body of a person does not consist only of bones. After His resurrection the Saviour said, “...handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Luke 24.39). The words of John 19.36 “a bone of him shall not be broken”, quoted by Dr. Robertson, are immediately followed by the statement in verse 37, “And again another Scripture saith, they shall look on him whom they pierced”. This makes it quite clear that the Redeemer’s *body*, His flesh, would indeed be broken, but that His *bones* would not be broken. Paul’s words in 1 *Corinthians* 11.23, 24 are consistent with this.

No contradiction

There is of course no contradiction and no departure from the Passover symbolism. The *bones* of the Passover Lamb were not to be broken. The *bones* of the Lord Jesus Christ were not broken. The *body* of the Passover lamb was certainly broken, when its blood was shed, and when it was skinned, and when the viscera and internal fat were removed and cleansed before roasting. It is equally true to say of our Lord that, while no *bone* was broken, His *body* was broken, when the crown of thorns broke the flesh of His brow, when the scourging broke the flesh of His body, when the nails broke the flesh of His hands and feet, and when the spear broke the flesh of His side. There was thus a literal fulfilment of the Passover symbolism in that His bones were not broken; and a fulfilment of Isaiah 53—“He was wounded for our transgressions.”

The omission of the words from some manuscripts

Some early transcribers of the Epistles of Paul evidently misunderstood the passage and did their best to remove what they wrongly imagined to be a contradiction. Some just dropped the word KLOMENON, ‘broken’, and left the improbable and incomplete statement, “this is my body for you”. Some paraphrased by inserting THRUPTOMENON (broken into pieces), and in place of ‘broken’, some of the Latin versions put ‘tradetur’ or ‘traditur’ (‘given’) in place of ‘frangetur’ or ‘frangitur’ (‘broken’) while some borrowed ‘given’ from Luke 22.19.

This erroneous omission affected the text of papyrus 46 and the Codices Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus and Ephraemi, but early correctors of Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Ephraemi detected the omission and restored ‘broken’. Codex Claromontanus (D) has THRUPTOMENON by the first hand, corrected to KLOMENON by the second.

Hardly any cursive manuscripts support the omission of ‘broken’. Among the few exceptions are No.33 of the 9th century, and No. 1739 of the 10th. The Armenian of Zohrab, Origen, Cyprian, Pelagius, Cyril of Alexandria, and Fulgentius also omit ‘broken’. These authorities were followed by Westcott and Hort and others in the 19th century, and led to the omission of the word from the English Revised Version and several 19th and 20th century translations in various languages.

The Received Text underlying the Authorised Version is undoubtedly correct in retaining

'broken'. It has the support of the correctors of Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Ephraemi, the "Abschrift" (a 9th century copy of Codex D), G, K, P, (all of the 8th and 9th centuries). The Received Text is also supported by the majority of the Byzantine manuscripts, the most numerous class, the majority of the ancient Lectionary copies, and a considerable number of minuscules which in several respects show a degree of independence of the Byzantine text. These agree in retaining 'broken'—Nos. 81, 88, 104, 181, 326, 330, 436, 451, 614, 629, 630, 1241, 1739 mg., 1877, 1881, 1962, 1984, 1985, 2127, 2492, 2495.

The disputed word is also found in manuscripts of the Peshitta and Harcleian Syriac, and the Old Latin—Claramontanus and Palatinus of the 5th century, and Boernerianus of the 9th. The word is also preserved in the ancient Gothic version of the 4th century, and the Armenian of Uschan, and is quoted in the writings of Ambrosiaster, Basil and Chrysostom, all of the 4th century, Euthalius and Theodoret in the 5th, and John of Damascus in the 8th, many of whom had access to manuscripts older than any now in existence.

No Greek manuscript evidence can be found for 'given' in this verse, and it must be assumed that the Old Latin, Vulgate and Coptic manuscripts which have this reading were affected by an early but misguided attempt to harmonise the passage with Luke 22.19. The primitive liturgies, which have preserved the words of institution unchanged since the 4th century, all include the word 'broken', thus indicating that the word was to be found in the very ancient copies upon which these liturgies were based.

Rejection of the evidence

The weight of ancient evidence for the authenticity of "*broken for you*" has been gradually concealed by the modern versions. The Revised Version of 1881 has "*for you*" in the text, but a note admits that, "*many ancient authorities read—which is broken for you*". The Revised Standard Version note says merely, "*Other ancient authorities*", while the New American Standard Bible note says, "*Some ancient manuscripts read—is broken*". The N.E.B., the N.I.V., the Good News Bible and others omit the words and have no note regarding the ancient evidence for the rejected words.

The omission of "*is broken*" by the New American Bible (R.C.) and the B.F.B.S. "Translator's New Testament" (1973), and the Good News Bible, ensures that ecumenical versions now being prepared in many languages will also omit the words without comment. The antiquity, variety, number and weight of the authorities for 'broken' in 1 Corinthians 11.24 are very substantial compared with the slight evidence for the alteration in the critical editions of the Greek and in the modern English versions. It is interesting to note that the New Berkeley Version retains the correct reading in this passage.

The inspired writers

It is not unlikely that our Lord used both expressions as He delivered the bread to His disciples, and that under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Matthew and Mark record only, "*This is my body*"; Luke includes the Saviour's words, "*which is given for you*"; and Paul, guided by the same Spirit, tells us that Jesus also said, "*broken for you*". Paul was not quoting from one of the Gospels, for 1 Corinthians 11.23–25 is one of a number of passages in which Paul very explicitly asserts that he received a direct revelation—"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you...". Paul uses this expression also in 1 Corinthians 15. 3—"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received..."; and again in Galatians 1.12—"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ".

"Holding fast the faithful Word"

As the modern versions gain more general acceptance among undiscerning readers, there will be an increasing tendency to drop the familiar words—"broken for you"—from the communion service, and people who are familiar only with a modern version will not be conscious of their loss. Those who cherish the Bible as the inspired and holy Word of God will desire to preserve its precious truth whole and entire, and are bound to resist the gradual erosion of the words of the Divine revelation.

The Reformation versions all contained the words "broken for you" in 1 Cor. 11.24, and the Geneva Bible of 1560 has a note in the margin—"Signifying ye manner of his death when his

bodie shulde, as it were, be torne and broken with most grievous torments. .ye which thing the breaking of ye bread, as a figure, doeth moste lively represent”.

An edition of the Bible in 1590 places beside Beza’s Latin translation from the Greek the Latin translation of the ancient Syriac made by Tremellius. A Latin note accompanying Beza’s Latin is almost identical with that in the Geneva Bible.

The Communion service in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England quotes the words of our Lord as they are recorded by Luke—”This is my body which is given for you”—and these words were to be found in the Prayer Books of 1550, 1552, 1559, 1604 and 1662, and continue in use today. For this reason a congregation hearing the abbreviated reading of 1 Corinthians 11.24 in the NEB, RSV, or GNB in a public reading would not be conscious of any change in the communion service, where “given for you” follows the Gospel rather than the Epistle.

The Presbyterian Churches relinquished the Prayer Book, but attached great importance to the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Directory for Public Worship. In each of these 1 Corinthians 11.24 *“broken for you”* is specifically quoted in relation to the communion service. This verse is found among the texts accompanying the Confession of Faith Chapter 29—*“Of the Lord’s Supper”*; the Larger Catechism, on Question 168—*“What is the Lord’s Supper?”*; the Shorter Catechism, on Question 96—*“What is the Lord’s Supper?”*; and in the Directory—*“Let the words of institution be read out of the Evangelists, or out of the first Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, Chapter 11.23 / have received of the Lord, etc. to the 27th verse..”* (This includes “broken for you”).

The Reformed Churches owed much, under God’s blessing, to the example and advice of John Calvin, whose works include an article prepared for the use of the Churches of Geneva, entitled—*“The Manner of Celebrating the Lord’s Supper”*. The minister says—*“Let us listen to the institution of the Holy Supper by Jesus Christ, as narrated by St. Paul in the eleventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians”*. The familiar words of Holy Scripture then follow, including *“broken for you”*. For more than four hundred years the Reformed churches throughout the world have rightly acknowledged that the words *“broken for you”* constitute part of the Divine revelation. The words have been read, heard, and meditated upon by countless generations of the Lord’s people as part of the Sacred Scripture—not merely since the dawn of the Reformation, but since the words first fell from the lips of the incarnate Son of God. Our generation has witnessed a falling away from the worship of God; a repudiation of the authority and truth of the Word of God, a forsaking of the moral standards of that Word, and the gradual erosion of many vital passages of the written Word itself. This has not come about all at once, but gradually, step by step, and it must be admitted that the process has been aided to some extent by a lack of vigilance on the part of those who profess to be “Reformed” and “Evangelical”. The present article is concerned with just one word in one verse of Holy Scripture, but the command of God extends to the preservation of His Word in all parts—*“Diminish not a word”*.

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