



John 19:28-29

I Thirst

On the outskirts of Jerusalem, overlooking the garbage dumps Jesus was crucified on rough-cut timbers with iron spikes.

The day began with a mock trial and the scourging of the victims. Pilate had Jesus scourged by the Roman soldiers. It was not humane. A lictor, trained in the proper administration of this punishment, stripped and tied the victim to a low stone column. He picked up a flagellum composed of a short circular piece of wood to which was attached several strips of leather. Each strip had pieces of bone, pieces of iron chain, nails, fishhook like claws and glass sewed to it. According to Roman law there was no set number of stripes to be administered, or to what parts of the body upon which it could be inflicted. The lictor took up his position about six feet behind Jesus. Jim Bishop says, "The flagellum was brought all the way back and whistled forward and made a dull drum sound as the stripes of leather smashed against the back of the rib cage. The bits of bone and chain curled around the right side of the body and raised small subcutaneous hemorrhages on the chest." Again and again and again the flagellum came back slightly lower each time and crashed against the skin and flesh of Jesus. In a slow heavy pulsating rhythm the victim of such beatings was often beaten to death. If not he was a bloody pulp when the lictor had finished his deadly job.

After being paraded through the streets Jesus was led up to Golgotha surrounded by four Roman soldiers and a centurion. Jim Bishop in *The Day Christ Died* writes vividly:

The executioner laid the crossbeam behind Jesus and brought him to the ground quickly by grasping his arm and pulling him backward. As soon as Jesus fell, the beam was fitted under the back of his neck and, on each side soldiers quickly knelt on the inside of the elbows. Jesus gave no resistance and said nothing, but he groaned as he fell on the back of his head and the thorns pressed against his torn scalp.

Once begun, the matter was done quickly and efficiently. With his right hand, the executioner probed the wrist of Jesus to find the little hollow spot. When he found it, he took one of the square-cut iron nails from his teeth and held it against the spot, directly behind where the so-called lifeline ends. Then he raised the hammer over the nail head and brought it down with force. . . .

Two soldiers grabbed each side of the crossbeam and lifted. As they pulled up, they dragged Jesus by the wrists. With every breath, he groaned. When the soldiers reached the upright, the four of them began to lift the crossbeam higher until the feet of Jesus were off the ground. The body must have writhed with pain

His arms were now in a V position, and Jesus became conscious of two unendurable circumstances: the first was that the pain in his wrists was beyond bearing, and that muscle cramps knotted his forearms and upper arms and the pads of his shoulders; the second was that his pectoral muscles at the sides of his chest were

arms and the pads of his shoulders; the second was that his pectoral muscles at the sides of his chest were momentarily paralyzed. This induced in him an involuntary panic; for he found that while he could draw air into his lungs, he was powerless to exhale (pp. 278-80).

Jesus had been enduring this kind of suffering on the cross for about three hours, from nine a.m. until noon. Through out all of the commotion about the cross we have heard Jesus keep praying, "Father forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). The two criminals got caught up for a time with the hostile crowd sneering at Jesus. They were shouting out with the crowd assembled before them, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Messiah, the Chosen One!" Another kept on shouting, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself and us!" Then one of the criminals came to his senses as he observed the divine Sufferer enduring the sins of others and he kept saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!" "Jesus remember me . . ." After some time Jesus said once and for all with no repetition, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in paradise" (23:42-43). At some point during the first three hours of the suffering the apostle John and four women drew nearer to the cross. Jesus' mother was with them. When Jesus saw His mother and "the disciples whom he loved" near the cross, Jesus said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" (John 19:25-27). John took Mary to his home in Jerusalem and then made his way back to the ugly scene. This drama kept on going on in the face of Jesus for about three hours and then a sudden, intense darkness fell upon the land from noon until three p.m. Toward the end of that three hours of quiet darkness that surrounded the scene the Suffering Servant of Yahweh cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani?" that is, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:45-46).

After about six hours the events surrounding the crucifixion of Christ now move quite rapidly. John tells us, "Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, said, 'I am thirsty'" (John 19:28). A Roman soldier poured some cheap sour wine onto a sponge and lifted it up on a hyssop branch to the lips of Jesus. When He received the sour wine He said, "Finished!" Jesus then with a loud voice said, "Father, into thy hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46). He gave up His spirit. A centurion standing by saw what happened and "began praising God, saying, 'Certainly this man was innocent'" (v. 47).

Let's go back and focus our attention on Jesus in John 19:28-29. Jesus has been suffering for six hours and it is now around three p.m. "Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon *a branch of hyssop*, and brought it up to His mouth."

Let's reflect on what those words of Jesus meant as we contemplate our redemption.

THE COMPLETION OF OUR REDEMPTION

Jesus is alert

The apostle John, who was present at the cross wrote, "Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished . . ." (v. 28a). The hardest part of the suffering is now over and now Jesus asked for a drink. He wasn't in

John 19:28-29 "I Thirst"

the suffering is now over and now Jesus asked for a drink. He wasn't in some swoon. He was alert in His suffering and the reason for His suffering. Even on the cross He is in control and the Master of the moment. He is alert up to the moment of His death.

What is it that Jesus now knows? All things have now been accomplished. They have been brought to a close or reached their goal. The last act in His suffering has now been completed.

Whatever it was that Jesus accomplished in that bitter agony during the three hours of darkness when He was covered with our guilt, and experienced the Father turn His face from Him was now consummated. When that was over, the final act was finished, and by that act His purpose of suffering was finished and He completed what the Scripture foretold concerning His death. Jesus was aware that nothing more was needed. The awful, cruel ugly task of paying the penalty for our sins was accomplished. Nothing needed to be added to His completed work. In the terrible darkness that covered the land Jesus had cried out, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? After this terrible suffering in the dense darkness was over Jesus asked for a drink. It is now that He knows that all His work is done.

What was accomplished?

"All things had already been accomplished" reveals the things Christ went to the cross to do. When He spoke these words, all things were accomplished. They stood finished and now He must only gain strength and declare that our redemption is completed and then give up His spirit. There was nothing more to be done. He had made the once-for-all sacrifice for sin. The Seed of the woman had bruised the serpent's head. The struggle with the power of darkness was over. He had won the battle for the souls of lost men.

Lenski writes, "The entire Scriptures in all that they present concerning the earthly work of Jesus have now been turned into actuality, the work mapped out by Scripture is now a work actually accomplished" (*John*, p. 1303). Nothing else needed to be done. His work of suffering is complete. In a few minutes Jesus will sip the sour wine at His lips and shout "Finished!" announcing to the world that His work is done. The price for our redemption is paid in full.

What was accomplished took place in those three hours of darkness when Jesus, covered with our guilt, experienced that even God had turned his face from Him. Jesus' suffering in bitter agony was over, and our redemption was completed. All that the Scriptures had foretold concerning His earthly work was completed. Nothing more was needed but to give up His spirit and die. The long, great work of redemption was completely done.

THE CREDENTIALS OF OUR REDEEMER

What was in John's mind when he wrote, "in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled" (v. 28b)? The construction here calls for the fulfillment in the words of Jesus, "I thirst." As Lenski notes, Jesus said, "I thirst," not "I die."

A. T. Robertson writes, "John sees the thirst of Jesus in Psalm 69:2f. . . This is one of the severest agonies of

A. T. Robertson writes, "John sees the thirst of Jesus in Psalm 69:2f. . . This is one of the severest agonies of crucifixion." The thirst was excruciating and intensified as He hung on the cross. Let it be clearly understood. The Scriptures had not predicted that the coming messiah would cry out, "I thirst." But the Scriptures had indicated that the Messiah would be a Suffering messiah. Jesus is the one and only one who fulfills the scriptures pointing to the coming Deliverer. It is not King David who suffers as an innocent, vicarious divine sufferer, but One greater than David.

F. F. Bruce also suggests Psalm 22:15, "my tongue cleaves to my jaws" because of the bitter dehydration and blistering thirst. The Scriptures were fulfilled spontaneously from the lips of Jesus. Nothing is forced on the Old Testament texts.

Psalm 69:1-3, 7-9, 19-21 is another of those great prophecies in the Old Testament of the humiliation of the Messiah. It speaks of our suffering Savior. The first four verses could be easily compared to the suffering of Jesus. Verse four, "Those who hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head . . ." Cf. John 15:21-25

John saw the words in verse nine being fulfilled in the events recorded in John 2:17. "For zeal for Thy house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me."

All four of the Gospel writers saw v. 21 fulfilled in the death of Jesus. "They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Matthew, Mark and Luke saw it being fulfilled in the beginning hours of the crucifixion when the merciful women offered Jesus the narcotic drink, but Jesus refused it (Matt. 27:34, 48; Mk. 15:23; Lk. 23:36). However, John sees it being fulfilled here in these last moments of Jesus life just before the cry of victory from the cross. This is not the hypnotic drugged wine the merciful women offered Jesus which He refused at the beginning of the crucifixion. "Jesus resolved to die with unclouded mind." This is the sour wine of the soldiers, "far from dulling the senses, may be intended to preserve or revive full consciousness." I think Leon Morris and many other scholars are correct in thinking "that He wished to undergo His sufferings with a clear mind. But now He is at the point of death. He wishes to say something that will be heard, so calls for a drink to moisten His parched throat. He drinks, then says, 'It's finished.' Immediately He dies . . . Elsewhere we read that Jesus uttered a loud cry just before His death." This was a Victor's cry! It was a cry of triumph! Read again John 19:28-30. "Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a *branch of hyssop*, and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."

"Those are right who agree that 'I thirst' voices a purely physical desire. It is, indeed, true that now all is finished, the work is done, the battle over, the victory won," writes Lenski. This is a request that Jesus makes. He asked for a drink. He wanted the sour wine to moisten His parched lips and throat. "He was rallying for His last strength. . . He wants His lips and His throat moistened in order that He may do just what the synoptists report that He does, namely utter a loud shout and thus die. Even the centurion was astonished at this mode of death. . . This request and the actual death were separated by only a few moments" (p. 1306).

This request of Jesus was fulfilled; He received the drink for which He requested. A Roman soldier took a reed and filled a sponge with the cheapest kind of sour wine and lifted it up to Jesus' fevered lips. That is why some of our older translations call it vinegar. It was the cheapest kind of sour wine the poorer people and Roman soldiers drank. It definitely was not like the good stuff Jesus made! Without a pause Jesus said, "Finished!" Luke tells us Jesus cried aloud, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit!" Having said this He died. The Son went home to be with the Father after having done the Father's will. "No wonder His voice rose to its loudest pitch." His work is brought to its perfect completed state. Done! Finished! Complete!

rose to its loudest pitch." His work is brought to its perfect completed state. Done! Finished! Complete!

All things . . . fulfilled

The entire Scriptures in all that they present concerning the earthly work of Jesus have now been turned into actuality. The divine work of atonement mapped out by the Scriptures is now a work actually accomplished.

After Jesus rose from the dead He said to two men as they walked along the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory? Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:25-27). Later that same night Jesus appeared before all the disciples in Jerusalem and ate with them. Before leaving He said, These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (vv. 44-46).

Let me whet your spiritual appetite and encourage you to examine on your own some of the many Scriptures that refer to the person and work of [Christ in the Old Testament](#). Check out the studies on Christ in the Old Testament where we examine some of the identifying marks of our Redeemer. If you believe the Scriptures you will make no mistake in identifying Him. His cry, "I thirst," marked Him as the promised Suffering Servant and Savior of men.

In Genesis 3:15 Jesus is crushing the head of serpent. Paul wrote in Romans 16:20, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you." The victory won over Satan at Calvary becomes your victory and mine.

Jesus is the Lamb of Genesis 22:7 when Isaac inquired of his father Abraham, "Where is the lamb?" If there were no lamb, Isaac must die. At the cross, the Lamb is identified and He makes Isaac's sacrifice for him. John the baptizer saw Jesus and declared, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).

Numbers 21:9 Jesus is the one being lifted up that whoever believes in Him may be eternal life. Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-16).

Moses spoke of the coming of the Prophet of God in Deuteronomy 18:15, 18. Here at the Cross Jesus is the one unique spokesman of God proclaiming the finished work of God in redeeming the world. Hebrews 1:2-3 tells us God "has spoken to us in His Son." "He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . ." Jesus had told some Pharisees on an earlier occasion, "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (John 5:46-47).

The person of whom the Hebrew prophet Isaiah wrote in 7:14 is fulfilled in the coming of Immanuel, "God with us." When giving reassurance to Joseph the angel Gabriel said, "And she (Mary) shall bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Here at the cross these words are being fulfilled.

the cross these words are being fulfilled.

This is the One in Isaiah 53:3 who is "despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . ." Jesus told His disciples, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be delivered up to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him unto the Gentiles. And they will mock Him and spit upon Him, and scourge Him, and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again" (Mark 10:33-34). These prophecies were fulfilled.

At the cross we see Isaiah 53:4 fulfilled in the One who "my griefs He Himself bore, And my sorrows he carried; Yet I esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted." This is not a reference to healing in the atonement, but Jesus dealing with the root of our sin problem.

Please allow me to reverently change the pronouns in Isaiah 53:5-6 to clarify the application. "Jesus Christ was pierced through for *my* transgressions, he was crushed for *my* iniquities; the chastening for *my* well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging *I* am healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of all to fall on Christ" (Isaiah 53:5-6).

Jesus is the One in Isaiah 53:10 of whom "the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If he would render Himself as a guilt offering. . . ." Jesus is that offering crushed for you on the Cross. "He Himself bore the sins of many" (v. 12). The apostle Peter remember that cruel scene and wrote: "He [Christ] Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. "

Yes, His credentials are authentic. They certify Him to be the Suffering Servant of Yahweh and our Savior. "Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I am thirsty'. . . When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, he said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit" (John 19:28, 30). I want one who has those kinds of credentials as my Savior and Lord.

THE COST OF OUR REDEMPTION

Wrath of God exhausted on Christ

"Jesus said . . . I thirst" (v. 28c-29). Jesus was revealing a physical condition. The Water of Life had drained Himself dry in the fires of hell for you and me. The fight was so bitter, the fire was so hot, and the contest was so severe, that he had to give His all. Death was the price of His victory. The One who drank your bitter cup of woe is now exhausted. The wrath of God has exhausted itself on Jesus!

This is the purely physical agony of the cross. Jesus was a human being suffering, not some Gnostic spirit. He was the incarnate Son of God. He was fully human and fully alive. He was God Man enduring the agony of physical suffering on our behalf.

The spiritual suffering for our sins is now complete, finished, done. The battle is over; the victory is won. The victor makes a simple request, "I thirst." With His lips and throat moistened He gathers up His strength and cries, "*Tetelestai!*" and says, "Father into thy hands I commit My spirit" and breathed His last.

The Son went home to the Father after doing the Father's will. The death of Jesus finishes His redemptive work. The redemptive shedding of His blood, done once for all, is finished and stands as finished forever. Jesus offered up Himself once for all (Hebrews 7:27). No more sacrifices! His one all sufficient sacrifice for

Jesus offered up Himself once for all (Hebrews 7:27). No more sacrifices! His one all sufficient sacrifice for sin is sufficient! Christ appeared as a high priest in the "perfect tabernacle, not made with hands" and offered up the perfect sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 9:12 says, "not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." "The wages of sin is death," "For the death He died, He died to sin, once for all . . ." (Romans 6:23, 10).

If you do not see Him as your Substitute, and His victory as your victory, there is no hope for you. He is exhausted because He has won the victory for you. He is thirsty because He has gone through your fire. Now He wants you to know it. To remain ignorant is fatal.

Jesus died for you

Jesus died for you and me. It was your death He was dying. You and I deserved to die, and He intervened on our behalf and made the decision to die in our place. We deserve to die for our sins just like those two criminals did on their crosses. We are sinners. We have failed to bring glory to God. The wages of our sin is death (Romans 6:23, 3:23). The Bible is extremely clear in its interpretation of Christ's death. "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (5:6-8). Make no mistake about it. It is vital for us to understand this great Biblical truth.

It is not His teaching ability, nor His miraculous power, nor His early appeal to the crowds, nor His surpassing sympathy, but it is His atoning sacrifice that meets human needs. Neither man nor God will be satisfied apart from the offering of an all sufficient Lamb whose blood has been shed for the sin of the world.

There is no one else to call upon for salvation. Only in the name of Jesus can you receive God's gift of eternal life. "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). Any and every other name will send you to an eternal hell and eternal separation from the LORD God.

But now He wants to fill your cup. The resurrected, living Savior wants to come into your heart and give you eternal life. He is alive and He wants to come in and live in you through His Holy Spirit. He offers to you refreshing waters of life. Jesus stands and pleads with you today, "Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (Revelation 22:17b). Are you thirsty? Come.

Ask Christ to be your Savior

It begins with a simple transaction. Believing that Jesus died in your place on the cross "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). Will you do that right now?

Will you right now pray, "Lord Jesus I am a sinner. I need you to come into my heart and give me your life. I believe you died for me on the cross and rose from the dead. I invite you to come into my life right now. I want You as my Savior."

Jesus said, "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny Him before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

[The Complete Series on 7 Last Saying of Christ](#)

Title: John 19:28-29 "I Thirst"

Series: Seven Last Saying of Christ

Message by Wil Pounds (c) 2008. Anyone is free to use this material and distribute it, but it may not be sold under any circumstances whatsoever without the author's written consent.

Unless otherwise noted Scripture quotations taken from the [NASB](#). "Scripture taken from the **NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE**®, © Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)

Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://www.bible.org/>. All rights reserved.

Wil is a graduate of William Carey University, B. A.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Th. M.; and Azusa Pacific University, M. A. He has pastored in Panama, Ecuador and the U. S, and served for over 20 years as missionary in Ecuador and Honduras. He had a daily expository Bible teaching ministry head in over 100 countries for ten years. He continues to seek opportunities to be personally involved in world missions. Wil and his wife Ann have three grown daughters. He currently serves as a Baptist pastor and teaches seminary extension courses in Honduras.

Didn't find what you wanted on this page? [Search this Website Here](#)

[HOME](#) | [BIBLE STUDIES & SERMONS](#) | [ABIDE IN CHRIST SEARCH](#) | [PERSONAL GROWTH](#) | [LINKS](#) | [LATEST AD](#)

[MAKE ABIDE IN CHRIST YOUR START PAGE](#)