

Trends

A recent survey among Baptist churches belonging to the Southern Baptist Convention asked local Baptist pastors "How often does your church conduct the Lord's Supper?" Here are the results:

☛ 1% weekly ☛ 18% monthly ☛ 15% 5-10 times/year
☛ 57% quarterly ☛ 8% 0-3 times/year

- via LifeWayResearch.com

Acts 20:7: "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight."

Sentence Sermons

"They who once know the sweetness of each Lord's-day celebrating his Supper, will not be content, I am sure, to put it off to less frequent seasons."

—C. H. Spurgeon, "Songs of Deliverance"

1 Corinthians 11:26: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."

News & Notes

Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She is an encouragement to all of us!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?! Let me know.

Anyone need prayers? Let us know so we can announce it and post it.

Words of Life is published by the **Westside Church of Christ** meeting at 1301 N. Enterprise, Bloomington, IN 47404

Times of Service: Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

Editor: Craig Thomas (812-320-9569); craigthomas82000@gmail.com

Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



Nov. 24,
2019

Vol. 11,
No. 40

Is It Wrong To Argue Scripture?

Craig Thomas

Many may be surprised that some of the topics appearing in our column will involve identifying and refuting religious error. Our words may not be pleasing nor palatable to all, especially in today's society bent on enforcing its distorted standards of "political correctness." However, as we cover such topics we "beseech thee to hear us patiently" (Acts 26:3). God's word commands us to "expose" error (Eph. 5:11) and "believe not" every religious teacher. In fact, we must "test" every teacher "whether they are of God" for "many false prophets" wear "sheep's clothing" when in reality "inwardly they are ravening wolves" (1 Jn. 4:1; Matt. 7:15). Too much is at stake (Matt. 16:26) not to speak out. With this in mind, it constrains us to address the question presented in our title, "Is It Wrong To Argue Scripture?"

1) **What Does It Mean To "Argue" Scripture?** When we speak of arguing scripture we are simply referring to a discussion in which all views of an issue are examined openly, fairly, and calmly in the light of what the Bible teaches (Acts 18:24-26; 28:14-24). We are not seeking a knock down, drag out fight where sides attempt to annihilate one another. The "weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:4), but consist of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Our strongest desire is that all, even those who would oppose the truth, be convinced of their error, repent, turn to the Lord, and be saved eternally in heaven (2 Tim. 2:24-26; Jas. 5:19-20). Given the import of these issues, we welcome any scriptural challenge to our teaching (Acts 17:11). For only the truth of God's word and our willingness to obey it can set us free from sin and lead us to heaven (Jn. 8:32; Acts 20:32; Mt. 7:21-23).

2) **Should It Be Done?** The Bible clearly teaches that error and false teaching will arise (2 Tim. 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 2:1-2) and we must be alert for such (Acts 20:28-32). Thus, we have a God-given responsibility to defend the truth (Phil. 1:17; Jude 3) and warn those preaching and practicing error (1 Tim. 1:3). If we fail this responsibility we will be held accountable (Ezek. 3:16-21). This is why the Old Testament prophets (Isa. 58:1; Jer. 1:10; Ezek. 6:11), the apostles (Acts 20:26-31; 2 Pet. 3:1ff), and the Lord Himself (Matt. 7:15; 16:6, 11-12) preached as they

did. For example, Jesus and Paul often debated, disputed, and reasoned with those who were in error (Matt. 22:29; Acts 17:2-3,17; 18:4,19; 19:8). Those who shun such discussions give error an unfair advantage. For if error goes uncorrected it will “spread like cancer” (2 Tim. 2:17) not stopping until it has destroyed all that is pure and holy. Hopefully, all can see the need for these discussions and that they may be used to strengthen our faith and build us up in the way that is right and cannot be wrong (Col. 2:4-8; 2 Thess. 2:2-17).

The History of Crucifixion

Heath Rogers

Jesus was put to death by crucifixion. “*And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left*” (Lk. 23:33). This has made the cross is a focal point of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of our faith (1 Cor. 1:18; 2:2; Gal. 6:14; Col. 1:20).

Historians claim that execution by means of crucifixion was used by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Medes, and the Persians. The earliest mode of crucifixion seems to have been what we would identify as being impaled. Instead of being nailed or tied to a post, the body of the victim would be driven upon a sharpened stake and suspended in air. Alexander the Great is said to have crucified 2,000 inhabitants of Tyre in this manner when he captured that city.

The Romans adopted this method of execution and used it throughout their empire. By this time, the victim was no longer impaled. Instead, the Romans perfected the suffering by attaching the victim to a crossbeam that was then attached to the vertical stake. This made the victim’s execution more than a public spectacle. It turned his execution into a prolonged and grotesque torture. Crucifixion was so gruesome that it was reserved for slaves and criminals. It was against the law for a Roman citizen to be crucified. The Roman statesman and orator Cicero called crucifixion “the most miserable and most painful punishment appropriate to slaves alone,” and said, “let the very name of the cross be far away not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears.”

Roman crucifixion was usually preceded by scourging. The clothing would be removed from the back and chest of the victim and his hands would be bound to a pillar. The Romans commonly used a whip consisting of strands of leather weighted down

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:14-15

by pieces of bone or metal. The initial blows from this whip would cause blisters, while the continued blows would burst the skin and tear into the flesh. At times, this scourging was so severe the victim would not survive

to see the cross. After the scourging, the victim then bore his own cross (the crossbeam) to the place of execution. There his hands were tied or nailed to the crossbeam, which would then be lifted and attached to a vertical stake. The total height of the cross was not much taller than the victim himself. Sometimes a peg was placed in the stake for the victim to stand upon, or a block was attached for him to sit upon. Other times the feet were nailed to the vertical stake.

The victim hung suspended by the arms. In this posture, breathing was difficult and blood flow was restricted. The victim could inhale but would have to relieve the pressure on his arms to exhale. This was done by pushing himself up with his feet. His pain would be compounded if his feet were nailed into the cross. Every breath he took required him to repeat this painful process. To hasten death, the victim’s legs would be broken (Jn. 19:31-34) and he would die from asphyxiation. However, the Romans intended for crucifixion to bring a slow and lingering death. It was not uncommon for the victim to hang on the cross for days until his death. Even after death, the bodies of the victims would remain on the cross where they would rot or be consumed by scavenger animals.

Our Lord’s death by crucifixion was the subject of prophecy. In Psalm 22, David describes the agony of the suffering Messiah when he says, “*They pierced My hands and My feet*” (v. 16, see also Zechariah 12:10). Jesus knew He would be crucified. He spoke of Himself as being lifted up from the earth, thus signifying the way He would die (John 3:14; 12:32-33). He also told the disciples, “*You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified*” (Matt. 26:2).

Instead of avoiding this suffering, Jesus willingly surrendered Himself to His Father’s will. “*And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross*” (Phil. 2:8). Notice what Paul said about Jesus’ death. He didn’t willingly submit to just any kind of death. Jesus was willing to die the worst possible kind of death – “*the death of the cross.*”

We have the opportunity to remember the death of our Lord every first day of the week. The Lord’s Supper is the memorial instituted by the Lord

“Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’”

Mark 15:33-34

Himself. When we take the unleavened bread we are to remember His suffering: “*Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me*” (1 Cor. 11:24). When we take the cup, we are to remember His death: “*This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me*” (v. 25). As gruesome as our Lord’s death was, it is important that we go back to Calvary and remember the terrible price that was paid for our sins.