

Knowing God in the Word

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. Philippians 3:10.

Contradictions in Scripture: The Drinks on the Cross

Having undertaken to explain contradictions in Scripture, we have in our previous two messages examined both the healings of the blind men of Jericho and the Denials of Peter. Now, we will examine a less controversial topic, but one that will further serve to illustrate the method I have been using to examine and explain the supposed contradictions in the Bible. This topic is that of the drinks Jesus was offered during his crucifixion. Let us examine them in the order in which they occurred.

- 1.) Matthew 27:34. Jesus and the soldiers have just arrived at Golgotha with Simon the Cyrenian carrying His cross. Christ is offered wine mixed with gall by the soldiers. We do not know whether He was given it in a cup or sponge. He tastes it, then refuses to drink it.
- 2.) Mark 15:23. Jesus and the soldiers have just arrived at Golgotha with Simon the Cyrenian carrying His cross. Christ is offered wine mixed with myrrh by the soldiers. We do not know whether He was given it in a cup or sponge. He refuses to even take it.
- 3.) Luke 23: 36. Jesus has been put on the cross and the soldiers have divided His garments and cast lots for His coat. Christ is offered sour wine by the soldiers, who are mocking Him. We do not know how it was offered to Him. We do not know if He accepted it.
- 4.) Matthew 27:48, Mark 15:36. Jesus has just cried out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" Christ is offered sour wine by one of those who is standing by and has mistakenly supposed that He was calling upon Elijah. This indicates that this person did not know Aramaic and therefore is likely not a Jew. Christ was offered it on a sponge, which was lifted up to Him on a reed. We do not know if He drank it or refused it.
- 5.) John 19:29. Jesus has just realized that all things are accomplished which the Scriptures predicted would happen to Him on the cross. Christ requests drink, and is given sour wine. It was soaked into a sponge, which was lifted up to Him upon hyssop. It is put to His mouth, and He receives it.

It will be seen from what is written above that there were five occurrences of drink being offered to Christ, which is the number of grace. Christ is only specifically said to have accepted the final offering, which was the only one actually requested by Him. Christ is specifically said to have refused two, both of which were offered to Him by the soldiers, and both of which were drugged. Christ would have no drugs to deaden His mind as He was paying for our iniquities! The emphasis of the remaining two passages is on the mocking of the soldiers and on the confusion of the bystanders who did not understand His outcry in Aramaic, and so that is the reason we are not told the details of whether He accepted the drinks or not.

The three occurrences in which we are told whether or not Christ accepted the drink offered Him teach us two lessons. The first is that Christ refused to use mind-altering drugs. Although this no doubt could have made His suffering on the cross much easier, He refused to take them, as He wanted to bear the full brunt of the experience in order to fully pay for our sins. Once His job was done He asked for a drink, so we know that this was His main concern. Those who think that we

should take no medicine to help our ills have no basis for their arguments here. It is interesting to note that even in His terrible suffering Christ's motivation was the working of His Father's will. We do not have a God Who asks of us something He is not willing to do Himself.

The second lesson that can be learned from these occurrences is that, no matter what our intentions, we cannot truly do anything for the Lord until He requests it. We may see a good work that we think would be good and right to do, but if it is not a good work that God has prepared for us to do (Ephesians 2:10), then it cannot be something that we can say we are "doing for Christ." So many in the churches of today think that any and everything they do which is "religious" must therefore be done for Christ. But the fact of the matter is that God will only accept an offering that He has commanded. And the only offering that we can truly give Him is the living sacrifice of our very lives! (Romans 12:1)

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