

The Broken Bread
(Matt. 14:14; 15:32)

When YAHSHUA heard that John had been beheaded He withdrew in a boat to a solitary place. But when the crowds heard of it, they followed Him on foot from the towns; When He went ashore and saw a great throng of people, He had compassion for them and cured their sick (Matt. 14:13-14). This solitary place where YAHSHUA had gone to be alone and find comfort through prayer was the place where many had found their miracle and the Bread of life when they found Him. Notice that He was not frustrated that the throng had disturbed His plan to be alone; instead He had compassion for them and there He met the need of those who needed to be healed. The disciples, however, when evening had come, wanted Him to release the crowd to buy food for themselves. But YAHSHUA was not willing to dismiss the crowd hungry. Led by compassion, He commanded them, You feed them! On the second multiplication of bread and fish, YAHSHUA approaches the disciples with the same need they presented Him earlier- the feeding of the crowd. He called the disciples to Him and said, I have pity and sympathy and am deeply moved for the crowd, because they have been with Me now three days and they have nothing to eat; and I am not willing to send them away hungry, lest they faint or become exhausted on the way (Matt. 15:32). Blinded to the reality of past experience of the first multiplication, they had this to say: Where are we to get bread sufficient to feed so great a crowd in this isolated and desert place (v.33)? Since the number three speaks of resurrection and divine completeness, YAHSHUA, on the third day, would bring life to the crowd by means of multiplying the few loaves of bread with the crowd of thousands.

YAHSHUA stood ready to share His own body as a sacrifice for the multitude that had come to hear Him and be healed. Symbolically speaking, when He broke the bread to share the pieces with the crowd, He was offering His body as the Bread of life to the world. When He gave the disciples the pieces of bread to share with them, He was showing that the Gospel was to be shared to the world through them. He said, I am the Bread of Life; he who comes to me will never be hungry and he who believes in Me will never thirst anymore; If anyone eats of this Bread he will live forever, and also the bread that I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh; you cannot have life in you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood (John 5:48, 51). Before He took our cross, He suffered greatly in the hands of the Romans, who wounded Him mercilessly. His body was beyond recognition as the Prophet Isaiah predicted. His face and His whole appearance were marred more than any man's and His form beyond that of the sons of men (Isaiah 52:14b). David McClister writes, "Scourging, called verberatio by the Romans, was possibly the **worst kind of flogging administered by ancient courts**. While the Jews administered whippings in the synagogues for certain offenses, these were mild in comparison to scourging. Scourging was not normally a form of execution, but it certainly was **brutal enough to be fatal in many cases**. A person certainly could be beaten to death by the scourge if that was desired. Its purpose was not only to cause great **pain**, but to **humiliate** as well. To scourge a man was to beat him worse than one would beat a stupid animal. It was belittling, debasing, and demeaning. It was considered such a degrading form of punishment that, according to the Porcian (248 B.C.) and Sempronian (123 B.C.) laws, Roman citizens were exempt from it. It was, therefore, **the punishment appropriate only for slaves and non-**

Romans, those who were viewed as the lesser elements in Roman society. To make it as humiliating as possible, scourging was carried out in public. The instrument used to deliver this form of punishment was called in Latin a flagellum or a flagrum. This was much different from the bull whip that is more common in our culture. It was instead more like the old British cat o' nine tails, except that the flagellum was not designed merely to bruise or leave welts on the victim. The flagellum was a whip with several (at least three) thongs or strands, each perhaps as much as three feet long, and the strands were weighted with lead balls or pieces of bone. This instrument was designed to lacerate. **The weighed thongs struck the skin so violently that it broke open.** The church historian Eusebius of Caesarea recounts with vivid, horrible detail a scene of scourging. He says, "For they say that the bystanders were struck with amazement when they saw them lacerated with scourges even to the innermost veins and arteries, so that the hidden inward parts of the body, both their bowels and their members, were exposed to view" (Ecclesiastical History, Book 4, chap. 15). The victim of a scourging was bound to a post or frame, stripped of his clothing, and beaten with the flagellum from the shoulders to the loins. The beating left the victim bloody and weak, in unimaginable pain, and near the point of death. It is no doubt that weakness from his scourging was largely the reason Jesus was unable to carry his cross all the way to Golgotha" (Matt. 27:32 and parallels).

Hours before YAHSHUA was arrested, when He was having His Passover supper with His disciples, He introduced the bread they were going to partake as His body which was to be broken for them, as He broke the bread and gave it to them. The true Bread of Life shared His body with His disciples before it had happened so that they in return would share Him with the world as their Savior, the substance of life here on earth and after. The broken body of YAHSHUA brought us healing – spiritual and physical. He let the Roman soldiers wound Him with deep wounds, so that we could experience the joy of healing. Every suffering He went through was for a purpose to be fulfilled in everyone who would accept His love through His broken body. "I gave My back to the smiters and my cheeks to those who plucked off the hair; I hid not My face from shame and spiting" (Isaiah 50: 6). There is nothing that we go through in this life that He has not suffered. The marks are in His body, our Bread of Life. It is right and fair that we share His broken body to the world so famish of Him without realizing it. They look to satisfy their hunger and thirst through other meanings that could never satisfy them, empty sources. YAHSHUA, the Bread of Life is the only Way, the only Truth, the only Life that feed the soul of men, for whom He suffered and died. When we eat His broken body, we are made alive in Him; our spirit is revived through His Spirit and we become partakers of all His spiritual blessings! To us He gave the right to be called His children and heirs with Christ. Alleluia, what a Savior! This is the Bread that came down from heaven. It is not like the manna which our forefathers ate, and yet died; he who takes this Bread for his food shall live forever (John 6:58). He is the Bread of life to eternity; the bread that will sustain life forever. This Bread will guarantee us the absence of death when we feed on it. YAHSHUA, the Bread of life, is a gift of eternal life; receive Him today!