

## Dipso

***“After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), ‘I thirst.’ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.... Jesus... received the sour wine....” (John 19:28-30a, ESV)***

Of all of Jesus’ last words from the cross, perhaps ***“I thirst”*** (*“dipso”* in the original language) seems the least dramatic as well as the most theologically shallow. But you know, *“dipso”* really is neither undramatic nor shallow. To begin, let’s remember the setting. Jesus said *“dipso”* shortly before He died. We’re told that our Lord ***“[knew] that all was now finished.”*** But what was ***“finished”*** (*“tetelestai”* in the original language)? Jesus’ work of paying for the sins of the world is what was ***“finished.”*** And then, ***“to fulfill the Scripture,”*** Jesus said, ***“I thirst.”***

You know, while Jesus, in word and deed, did fulfill Messianic prophecy at His crucifixion, yet it wasn’t His sole purpose at Golgotha to quote a certain number of passages from the Old Testament before He died. It wasn’t that as Jesus was seeing death draw near that He suddenly realized that He better hurry up and say, ***“I thirst.”*** Exactly what ***“Scripture”*** was even being ***“[fulfilled]”*** by Jesus saying *“dipso”*? Well, it’s generally understood that David’s words from two Messianic psalms were fulfilled. In Psalm 22:15, the psalmist writes: ***“... my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws”*** (ESV). And in Psalm 69:21 David says: ***“... and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink”*** (ESV).

Undoubtedly, Jesus was parched from the rigors of crucifixion. And this reveals the great suffering that the Son of God in human flesh endured as punishment for the sins of the whole world – which included enduring hell for us (Matthew 27:46). But could ***“I thirst”*** mean more than that Jesus was suffering from need of hydration? Some suggest so. And because Jesus’ words from the cross are very significant, I tend to agree.

And you know, while Scripture’s admonition to not insert words into the Bible or remove words from the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19) ought to always be taken very seriously, yet pondering a deeper meaning to our crucified Savior’s word *“dipso”* does not necessarily compromise the Biblical text. In fact, considering a deeper meaning for the word *“dipso”* could result in an enhanced understanding of our Lord’s passion. After all, Jesus’ words, ***“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”*** (Matthew 27:46, Modern English Version) and ***“It is finished”*** (John 19:30, ESV) are packed with far deeper theology than may appear so at first glance. So too, ***“I thirst”*** could be conveying more than that Jesus was physically parched.

Christian theologian and bishop Augustine of Hippo (who lived from AD 354-430) wrote: *“The Samaritan woman at the well found the Lord thirsting, and by him thirsting, she was filled.... And when he was on the cross, he said, ‘I thirst,’ although they did not give him that for which he was thirsting. For he was thirsting for them”* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament, Volume IVb. Edited by Joel C. Elowsky. General Editor, Thomas C. Oden. Published by InterVarsity Press, Copyright 2007, p. 321). Whether or not St. Augustine’s interpretation of ***“I thirst”*** is correct, it cannot be denied that Jesus loves us greatly and went to the cross for the purpose of redeeming the world and reconciling us with God. For undoubtedly our crucified Lord and Savior did ***“thirst”*** for you and me while He hung upon the cross.

Lutheran commentator, the late Dr. Paul E. Kretzmann, also reminds us of an important point when he commented on this section of Scripture. *“It was about three o’clock in the afternoon when... during the darkness that covered the land, He had drunk the cup of the wrath of God over the sins of the world to the very dregs.... He had conquered all the enemies of mankind; He had accomplished all things... He had gained the salvation of mankind.... But there was still a word of Old Testament prophecy which had not yet found its fulfillment, and therefore Jesus... cried out: ‘I thirst’”* (*Popular Commentary of the Bible: The New Testament, Volume I.* Concordia Publishing House, Published 1921, p. 519).

Dr. Kretzmann reiterates that **“Jesus [knew] that all was now finished”** by pointing out that by this time *“He had drunk the cup of the wrath of God over the sins of the world to the very dregs”* (Ibid, p. 519). All of God’s righteous anger over our transgressions had been fully imbibed by Jesus. So, did He now say *“dipso”* to announce that God’s anger over our sins was satisfied – to announce that He had fully quaffed the chalice that He had agreed to drink in the garden (Matthew 26:39)? Was Jesus saying that He would have been willing to drink even more were it necessary to attain our salvation?

I don’t know. But even if these possible interpretations are not what Jesus meant, yet it’s still clear from Scripture that Jesus did receive all of our punishment – that *“He had drunk the cup of the wrath of God over the sins of the world to the very dregs”* (Ibid, p. 519). And it’s also clear from the Bible that Jesus did everything that was necessary to save us. Was Jesus saying more in the word *“dipso”* than it would appear on the surface? I can’t definitively say “yes.” But I believe that it’s very likely that He was saying more.

My friends, **“the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many”** (Matthew 20:28, Modern English Version). See, God didn’t become human to complain about His physical agony or to in any way enrich Himself. He came to serve us. So, His **“[thirsting]”** was all about your salvation and mine. Therefore, we have hope. For **“all [is] now finished.”** So, throughout the remainder of Lent and even throughout the remainder of your earthly journey, look to the cross and know that God loves you and has saved you. His life was sacrificed for yours. And three days later He bodily rose again for you. In Him you have life which shall never end.

See you in church this month as we observe our Savior’s passion and glorious rising.

Pastor