

CROSS

For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

(1 Corinthians 1:18)

According to the words of Jesus, the Cross was His goal and His purpose (John 12:27), the culmination of His earthly ministry, followed by His resurrection and ascension. His goal. Imagine that! What an awesome God we have, and how great is His love for us!

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

(Romans 5:8)

The Cross is the dividing line in the history of humanity. The death of Jesus Christ ushered in the New Testament, a covenant between God and men, of which God said,

“This is the covenant that I will make with them
After those days, says the Lord:
I will put My laws upon their heart,
And upon their mind I will write them,”
He then says,

“And their sins and their lawless deeds
I will remember no more.”

Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

(Hebrews 10:16–18)

Jesus was the final sacrifice for sins. On the cross the sins of the entire world were judged. The verdict was guilty (for all have sinned); the punishment was death (the wages of sin is death), and the punishment was executed. Jesus—the Perfect Sacrifice died to take away the sin of the world.

Behold, the Lamb of God who *takes away* the sin of the world!

(John 1:29)

Sin, the whole issue of sin, was settled right at that appointed time in history—on the cross. We have to grasp the full meaning of the words, “*Jesus took away the sin of the world.*”

Under the Old Testament, God had a system for forgiveness of sins. It was the blood of bulls and goats that covered sins. It was called the “atonement.” But the blood of bulls

and goats could never take away sins forever (Hebrews 10:4). It was only a shadow of the true sacrifice—Jesus. Since without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22), Jesus—the Perfect Sacrifice for sins—shed His own blood. His blood was superior to the blood of bulls and goats. The blood of Jesus Christ didn't just atone for sins—it didn't just cover them. The blood of Jesus took sin away (1 John 3:5). Do you see the difference?

The blood of Jesus cleansed our conscience from dead works (Hebrews 9:14) and made perfect those who draw near to God, which the blood of bulls and goats could never do (Hebrews 10:1).

Jesus Christ was born not like other men are born. If that were the case, Jesus could never qualify as a perfect sacrifice. He was born of a woman, but He was conceived by the Holy Spirit—thus born without the sinful nature, like the rest of us. Jesus was sinless, and that is how He spent His entire life—as the Lamb unblemished and spotless (1 Peter 1:19). The Virgin Birth should not be a stumbling block for anyone who believes in God. If God created man and the universe, surely without a doubt of any kind, He can start life in a human body.

Let us look at the benefits of the Cross:

- **Reconciliation** = bring back into friendship

Sin, which caused the separation between the holy God and sinful man, is taken away. Everyone can now be saved.

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

(2 Corinthians 5:18–21)

- **Forgiveness** = pardon; cessation of blame

The death of Jesus provided forgiveness. It is finished; it is done!

And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of degrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

(Colossians 2:13, 14)

- **Redemption** = buy back, set free, free from sin

The blood of Jesus paid the price for our redemption.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,
which He lavished upon us.

(Ephesians 1:7, 8)

- **Justification** = prove right, true or innocent, vindicated, excused, declared totally righteous by God

Because our sins are forgiven, God can remain just when pronouncing as righteous those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood,
we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

(Romans 5:9)

- **Propitiation** = appease, gain favor of

God the Father was totally satisfied with the sacrifice made by His Son.

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

(Hebrews 2:17)

- **Sanctification** = set apart as holy, free from sin

Beloved, we were made holy, sanctified by faith in Jesus. What sets us apart is that God Himself is indwelling us. What sets us apart is who we are in Christ Jesus.

By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

(Hebrews 10:10)

It is finished!

Notice that all the benefits of the Cross are in Jesus Christ. If you have Jesus, they all apply to you. You are reconciled, forgiven, redeemed, justified and sanctified.

If you don't have Jesus, if you don't believe that He is who He said He is, you have none of the above benefits. They just don't apply to you. You are still under the wrath of God, and you will die in your sins (John 8:24).

I believe that all Christians understand that Jesus died for our sins, but that is just a part of salvation's message. We are not saved only by the death of Jesus; we are saved by His life.

For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, *we shall be saved by His life.*

(Romans 5:10)

The invitation of Jesus is: **Come to Me for life!**

But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

(Galatians 6:14)

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

(Philippians 2:8)

For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

(Philippians 3:18, 19)

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him,

and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

(Colossians 1:19, 20)

. . . fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

(Hebrews 12:2)

He 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.

(1 Peter 2:24)