

THE CROSSROADS OF HISTORY

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The death of Jesus on the Cross

It took place at Golgotha... the place of the skull. All of history points there. God prophesied it in Genesis 3:15. Moses mentions it in the Passover Lamb. David described it in Psalms 22. The prophet foretold it in Isaiah 53. John the Baptist proclaimed it at the beginning of Jesus public ministry: 'Behold the **Lamb of God** that takes away the sin of the world.' Jesus predicted it. Peter preached it in the first sermon in Acts 2. Heaven and its citizens will always remember it. The book of **Revelation has numerous mentions of the Lamb of God.**

The **Lamb** that was slain. Worship to the **Lamb** who sits on the Throne. The blood of the **Lamb**. The **Lamb** at the center of the Throne as Shepherd. The **Lamb's** book of life. The song of the **Lamb**. The **Lamb** as LORD of Lords and KING of Kings. The wedding of the **Lamb**. The wedding supper of the **Lamb**. The wall of the heavenly city has the name of the **Lamb** on it. The **Lamb** is the temple. The **Lamb** is the lamp. Jesus is that perfect **Lamb** of God.

CRUCIFIXION.....the Persians invented it and the Romans perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment. It was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering. The Cross is where we get the word 'excruciating'. The spikes used were 7 inches long, like railroad nails. Crucifixion was meant for slaves, foreigners, revolutionaries and the worst of criminals. They suffered for their crimes and sins. Though innocent and pure, Jesus would suffer for ours.

'Crucifixion is a most cruel and disgusting punishment. The very mention of the cross should be far removed not only from a Roman citizen's body, but from his mind, his eyes and his ears.' - Cicero

Jesus bore our sorrows at Gethsemane. **Jesus bore our sickness** at Gabbatha at the whipping post with 39 lashes from a whip with metal balls tipped with sharp pieces of bone. They would rip his flesh to shreds. The scourging was designed to totally exhaust the victim. Jesus was so weakened that he could not carry his own cross. (the crossbar weighed over 100 lbs., the post weighed 200 lbs.) One historian of the day wrote that Jesus was reduced to human rubble. God's prophet wrote the same thing 800 years before.

'....his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.' - Isaiah 52:14

Jesus suffered the mocking, the spitting, the shame of nakedness, the intense pain of nails into nerves in his hands and feet. A struggle to breathe. The most painful aspect of the cross for Jesus was bearing the curse of mankind's sin. Jesus suffered the wrath of God that we deserved.

THE WRATH OF GOD

In the Old Testament alone the wrath of God is mentioned 585 times. It is also mentioned much in the New Testament. eg.(Romans 1:18, 2:5, 5:9, 12:19, 13:4). Few today know very much on the subject. 'There are more concordance references in

Scripture to the anger, fury and wrath of God than there are to His love and tenderness.' - A.W. Pink - The Attributes of God

We must not receive our concept of wrath based on human behavior. 'God's wrath in the Bible is never the capricious, self-indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger so often is. It is instead, a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil. God is only angry where anger is called for. God's wrath in the Bible is wrath of the Judge, administering justice. It is something which men choose for themselves. The essence of God's action in wrath is to give men what they choose.....' - John 3:18. - insight from the book Knowing God by J.I. Packer

God is holy and cannot wink at sin. He abides by His moral laws. Sin's penalty must be paid. Those who reject Jesus as the Son remain under the wrath of God. - John 3:36 When Jesus returns to earth, he will be marveled at by His believers but to those who do not believe or obey the gospel of Jesus, there will be everlasting punishment. - 2 Thess. 1:5-10. In Rev. 14:10 the wine of God's wrath or fury is described as full strength. During Biblical times the wine was always diluted. The ratio would vary but quite often was 3 to 1 water to wine. When the Day of the Lord comes, God's final judgment on wicked mankind will not be diluted but full strength. God's judgments in the Bible are sudden, swift and complete. The final one will be unprecedented. Only those whose lives are hidden in Christ will be protected - Colossians 3:3, Isaiah 26:20-21. Jesus has already suffered God's wrath for them at the cross. All others will seek to hide under the rocks but they cannot hide from Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Revelation 6:15-17.

Jesus was the propitiation for our sins. - 1 John 4:10.

"**Propitiation** , it's a beautiful word which means to turn away wrath by the satisfaction of violated justice. Webster's dictionary defines the word similarly as 'to appease and render favorable, to conciliate and reconcile'. Christ's act of propitiation has removed the barrier of God's offended character. It's because when Jesus hung on the cross, He bore the compounded fury of God's just wrath against the sins of mankind." - The Liberation of Planet Earth by Hal Lindsey

THE LOVE OF GOD

The cross was a place of God's wrath as we have seen. It was also a place of the greatest display of love for all time. God demonstrated his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. - Rom.5:8. This is love, 'God sent His son as a propitiation for our sins - 1 John 4:10. 'This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.' - 1 John 3:16. True love involves sacrifice. We often confuse love for lust.

Lust seeks to benefit self at the expense of others.

Love seeks to benefit others at the expense of self. - Edwin Louis Cole

God so loved the world....the sinful world.....that He gave His only Son Jesus to die for us all so that whoever fully trusts in Him should not perish but have eternal life. **Jesus shed his blood** in the **garden**, at the **scourging post** and at the **cross**. His body was covered from head to toe with blood. His blood speaks to us from heaven. Abel's blood spoke....'guilty'. Jesus' blood speaks a better word about us

who believe in Him. It shouts: 'righteous!....perfect!' - Hebrews 12:24, Hebrews 10:14, 2 Cor. 5:21.

THE GREAT EXCHANGE

The Cross of Jesus was a **blood covenant**. There was a great exchange, which was typical of blood covenants. Jesus took what we deserved and we received what we did not deserve.

Jesus bore our sorrows that we might receive joy. Jesus bore our sickness and disease that we might live in health and wholeness. Jesus was rejected by men that we might be accepted by God. Jesus suffered torment that we might experience eternal comfort. Jesus bore the shame of nakedness that we might know the dignity of wearing his robes of righteousness. Jesus bore the wrath of God that we might know the Father's love. Jesus took our sinful history so that we could live in His eternal story in the kingdom of God. Jesus bore the curse so that we might live in blessing. Jesus suffered thirst that we might drink freely of the water of life. Jesus became like a worm so that we might walk as kings. Jesus suffered hell so that we might experience heaven. Jesus took on our identity as sinners so He could give us a new name and identity as saints, heirs and sons. Jesus refused to defend himself in order that He could be our Advocate before the Father. Sin had entered the world through man. Now it would leave through a perfect man....Jesus Christ. When He returns to earth to set up his kingdom, the process will be complete. Earth will be once again be a sinless paradise.

At the end of his suffering, Jesus uttered the words: **IT IS FINISHED**. It means **PAID IN FULL**. The work was done. Our debt of sin was paid. Our work is simply to believe in the one God has sent. - John 6:29. To believe in Jesus is to trust in His finished work at the cross and to receive Him as Lord. Jesus calls us to the cross. We must die to our self and live for Him. He bowed to the Father's will his whole life. His last gesture at the cross was to bow his head and say: 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit'. God smiles with pleasure when we bow before Him in loving gratitude and obedience.

Whenever a blood covenant was made in Bible times, a tree was planted or some rocks were placed as markers of that transaction. Throughout eternity, the scars that Jesus bore as the Lamb of God will be a reminder of the price he paid for us. The Cross at Calvary is the tree, the everlasting memorial of the blood covenant that Jesus made for us. Jesus is the Rock we will always look to. The sacrificial love demonstrated in the cross was in God's heart long before man had fallen into sin.

Jesus was the Lamb chosen before the creation of the world
- Rev. 13:8, 1 Peter 1:19-20

The Cross of Jesus Christ truly is the crossroads of history.

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