

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE CROSS?

Many years ago, a ship broke apart during a violent storm, and all the crew was lost except for one man. When the storm ended, he found himself floating in the water on a piece of debris. He despaired of ever being rescued. After a long time in the water, the man noticed an object on the horizon. He wasn't sure what it was, but he began swimming toward it. Finally he saw what it was: It was a cross. Just a cross silhouetted over the horizon as if it were planted right on the water. That cross proved to be his way mark! Never taking his eyes off the cross, he swam and swam until finally he saw the shoreline.

Yes, it was a cross sitting on a church at the high point of a small city. And in a real sense, it saved his life. Because, you see, that cross gave him direction and courage. It gave him hope. For

millions of others around the world, the cross of Christ has also led them to life—eternal life! But how and why does the cross have such power to save?

The Gospel

- Jesus Christ, was part of the Godhead with the Father and Holy Spirit.
- Through Christ the world and everything in it was created.
- Christ was born of the virgin Mary and became one of us to live among us.
- Mankind has sinned against God and by rebelling against Him we are condemned to death.
- Christ was innocent of sin, but died as a substitute for us, so that whoever believes and turns from their rebellion may have eternal life.

KEY POINTS

First of all, when we talk about the cross, we're not talking about just any cross. On the contrary, we're talking about one specific cross. And yet, it is who was hanging on that cross, Jesus of Nazareth, the Creator and God of the Universe, that makes this cross so incredible. On the cross hung one by the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

However, the Bible also refers to him as the eternal Word:

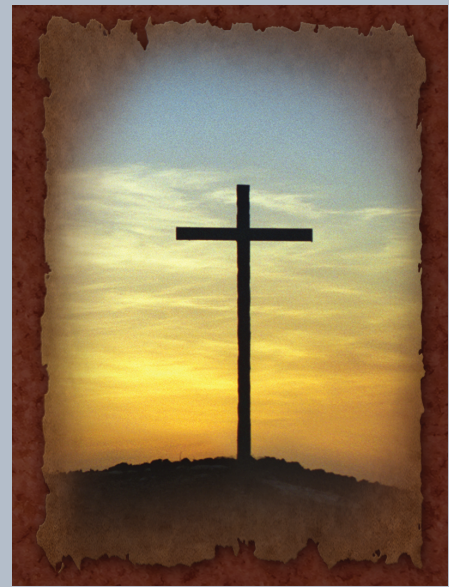
“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing

was made that was made.” (John 1:1)

Jesus was part of the eternal Godhead – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

The Word, Jesus Christ, was there at the creation of the world.

Hebrews 1:1-3 says: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”



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Jesus, the Creator of the Universe was born to a virgin by the name of Mary. (Luke 1:35) What does this mean to us? It is telling us that this little planet meant so much to God that He sent his only begotten Son to come down here and become one of us. And live and die here as one of us. What a wonderful picture of God this presents. What a comforting thought to know that this is what the Creator God is like. He cares about us so much that He came down to live with us in the form of His Son! (Phil. 2:5-7)

The amazing thing isn't so much that he could do it, but why? And here's the most wonderful truth in all creation: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) He died for you and me because of love!

You see, the Bible tells us that all of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory and that the wages of sin is death.

(Romans 3:23; 6:23) And because we have sinned and done wrong, we've all forfeited eternal life. We now all face eternal death because of our sin and rebellion. However, Jesus offers us a way out. He tells us we can make a choice for Him and have Him as our Savior and Lord. "Choose Me," He says, "and I will give you eternal life."

Of course, most people don't consciously choose to serve Satan. But they make a choice for him every time they choose their opinions over God's authority. God tells us in the Bible, "You shall have no other God's before me," (Exodus 20:3), and that includes ourselves. But when we place our will over God's stated commands, we separate ourselves from the only source of hope, happiness, and life. The foundation of all sin and rebellion is human beings making decisions to become their own gods - and dying as the result.

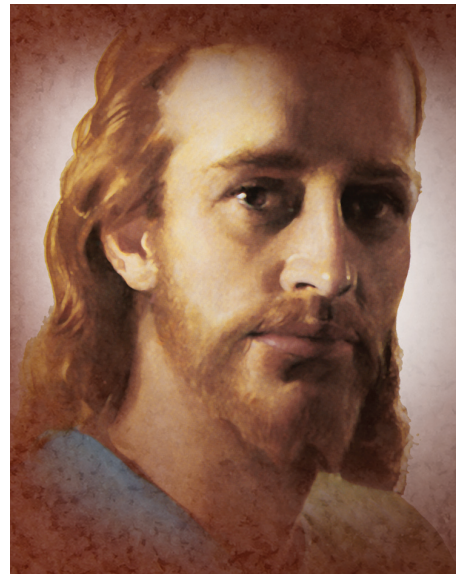
If we choose to accept His perfect life to cover our imperfect life; if we choose to accept His substitutionary death on the cross on our behalf, then through God's love and grace, in Christ we have passed from death into life! Why? Because the Bible tells us that "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1). Put another way, the Bible says: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6) Oh, my friend, allow the wonder of this life-changing truth to sink into your mind. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

No matter what sins litter your past; no matter the guilt you and I carry due to the fact that we are sinners; despite all of that, when we come to Christ and accept Him as Savior and Lord, God promises to forgive our sins and remember them no more. (Hebrews 8:12; 1 John 1:9). The cross of Christ is the most powerful symbol in the universe because on the cross we see the most powerful demonstration of love the universe has ever witnessed!

BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

Wouldn't you like to have the slate wiped clean from your past? Wouldn't you like to know the joy of being accepted by God? Just say Yes to Jesus right now. In your mind's eye, imagine Him standing before you saying, "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and him with me." (Revelation 3:21) Tell Him right now, "Come in Lord. Come in and take your rightful position on the throne of my life." When you open the door of your heart to Jesus, He will give you perfect rest. Jesus said "Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)



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