

Echoes from the Cross

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”

Acts 2:23-24

As Jesus hung on the cross of Calvary, the Jews were pleased that his voice would be silenced forever. The miracles would cease, parables and sermons would soon be forgotten, and his piercing accusations against the religious leaders of the day would be over. What they did not understand is that the echoes from the cross would be heard forever. In a matter of a few short days there would be an empty tomb; a Savior would rise triumphant; and thousands of his followers would be commissioned to complete the work that he had begun.

Lead Me To The Cross

An old story is told of a white cross that stood on a hill overlooking the city. A little boy who had been lost was searching frantically for his home. A policeman found him crying and visibly shaken and asked, **“Where do you live?”** The boy didn’t know where he lived. The policeman continued to ask the boy different questions searching for a clue of where the youngster might live. Finally the boy said, **“Take me to the cross at the top of the hill and I can find my way home from there.”** All Christian roads meet at the CROSS.

God has placed the cross at the center of all of the centuries and allows for everything to revolve around the cross. He allows world events to take place, governments to rise and fall, and many other situations to take place that lead people to the cross. As we always find the cross, we will always find our way home to heaven.

No event in time has ever been as life changing and history making as the crucifixion of Jesus and His resurrection. It has changed the destiny of millions of lives.

The Cross – God’s Divine Bulletin Board

The cross is the bulletin board where God hangs His message of Redemption for all mankind. It was on the cross of Calvary where Jesus nailed the ordinances that were against us.

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us... and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”
(Colossians 2:14)

It all began in Pilate’s judgment hall. Then the cat of nine tails (stone, bone, metal placed on the end of the whip). Next a purple robe, a crown of thorns, spitting on his face, and mockery. **“Hail, King of the Jews!”** As Pilate proclaimed, **“Behold the man”**, the blood thirsty crowd responded **“Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”** Pilate asks, **“Shall I crucify your King?”** The crowd thundered, **“We have no king but Caesar.”** Pilate washed his hands and said, **“I am innocent of the blood of this just man.”** The crowd yelled, **“Let his blood be upon us and our children!”** Eventually their prayer was answered. Jerusalem fell to Titus in 70 A.D. and the citizens were crucified around the walls of Jerusalem. It was the worst slaughter in history. As for Pilate he went to Gaul and is reported to have committed suicide there. But as for the day at hand, they led him away to Golgatha, the place of the skull. There they crucified Him. The cross was a symbol of shame and humiliation, but Jesus made it a symbol of dignity that day. He didn’t have any reason to be there. It was us who should have hung on the cross. He took our curse and became sin for us.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (Galatians 3:13)

It Is Finished

Blood dripped down his face, blinding his eyes, and the weight of his body made it difficult to breathe. Finally, He spoke in pain and finality; **“It is finished!”** Perhaps, he shouted it with all of His remaining strength. What He had come to earth to accomplish was now complete. **“Finished”** was the word that the Greeks used to write across bills that had been paid. On the cross of Calvary Jesus took our bill, and wrote, **“Finished. Paid in full!”** This is called **“the finished work of Christ.”**

Richard Lee and Ed Hindson in their book entitled **No Greater Saviour** relate that this was a **“shout of triumph, not a whimper of defeat. It was the pronouncement of victory that always came at the end of the Day of Atonement, and every Jew recognized it. When the sacrifice was completed and after the scapegoat had been driven out of their midst, the people shouted, ‘It is finished.’”**

Jesus had said, **“...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” (John 14:6)** On the cross of Calvary Jesus paved the way for us to go from earth to heaven. The cross built the bridge!

Pilate had posted a sign on the cross that read in several languages, **“Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”** The Jews requested that this be changed but Pilate refused saying, **“...What I have written, I have written.” (John 19:22)** This served as another echo from the cross. Jesus was, and is, and will always be **“The King!”** However it is up to each individual to determine whether He is their King. We will all do it one day, either in this life or the life to come.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)

The Word of God then requires us to be **“crucified with Christ.”** Paul said, **“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...”(Gal. 2:20)**

Playing Games At The Cross

At the foot of the cross, as blood dripped on the ground around it, a small group of soldiers took dice and were playing games. Right there at the foot of the cross. They gambled for Jesus' used clothing. As they played there they seemed to have forgotten that it was God on that cross, and they gambled with the possessions of Jesus Christ. Could we be guilty of being close to the cross but far from Christ? Do we gamble with our precious salvation? Do we gamble with the world we are called to reach? Are we guilty of playing games at the foot of the cross? There is still dice throwing going on at the foot of the cross.

Then there is the new trend of taking the cross and using it as an ornament to put around your neck, or on the dashboard of your car, or in your room. This makes the cross of Christ just a commonplace symbol, in hopes of the cross serving as a charm, protecting us from the evil one. Wearing a cross does very little in changing your life; nor does it crucify the old nature. (Romans 6:6)

“... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)

Did You Know?

- ❖ The act of crucifixion was a Roman custom. The Jews stoned people.
- ❖ Crosses were shaped like a 'T' rather than a 't'. They were about six feet high.
- ❖ Five inch nails were driven into the wrist and not into the hand.
- ❖ A sign identifying the person's crime was attached to the cross.

The Cross

- ❖ Crucifixion usually took place in a place where every one would be able to see.
- ❖ Prisoners were paraded through the streets, after flogging, to make an example of the person.
- ❖ Paul speaks of the "message of the cross" (1 Corinthians 1:18)
- ❖ He also refers to those who reject the Christian message as the "enemies of the cross of Christ." (Philippians 3:18)
- ❖ Satan had his greatest victory at the tree (of the knowledge of good and evil). He suffered his biggest defeat from the tree (the Cross).
- ❖ The cross we are to bear on a daily basis refers to the personal will of God for each person.

"He That Bears No Cross, Deserves No Crown!"

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What did the Jewish leaders think when Jesus was killed on the cross? _____

2. What did the lost little boy tell the policeman? _____

3. According to Colossians 2:14 what did the cross of Calvary do? _____

4. The people cried, "Let his blood be upon us and our children." What eventually happened? _____

5. What was meant by Jesus' words, "It is finished!" _____

6. What happened at the end of the Day of Atonement? _____

7. What words were posted on the sign on the cross of Jesus? _____

8. What does Galatians 3:13 say about those that were hung on crosses? _____

9. What were those who gambled at the foot of the cross guilty of? _____

10. Why do some people wear a cross? _____

11. Those who reject the cross become enemies of what? _____
