

## Essential Truths I: Living With God

# 5

## The Cross

The marvel of the Gospel is the length to which God went in order to save mankind. Take a look at some of these scriptures:

- ➔ **John 3:16:** “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”
- ➔ **Romans 5:8:** “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- ➔ **Philippians 2:5-8:** “...Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but...humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!”

When Jesus Christ was put to death by being nailed to a wooden cross, wicked men thought they were just executing a man who was disturbing their way of life. They did not realize that the Cross was planned by God from the beginning of the world (**Revelation 13:8**).

Peter summarized God’s whole plan of salvation in **Acts 3:13-18**:

“...You handed [Jesus] over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this...Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.”

The Word

God

Origins

Jesus

**The Cross**

The Blood

Resurrection

Repentance

Grace

Faith

Water Baptism

Holy Spirit

Temptation

Fellowship

Generosity

Kingdom of God

Worship

Prayer

Eternity

Second Coming

The Call

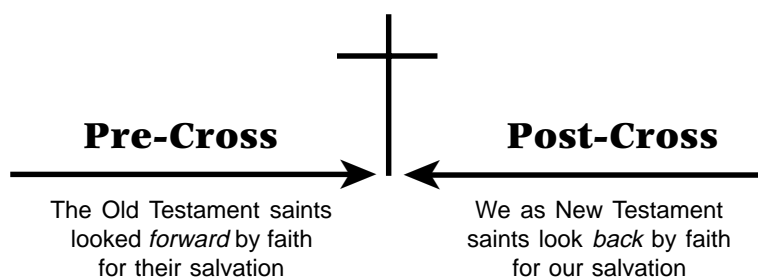
## The Center of History

The Cross of Christ is the center-point of human history. From the moment that Adam sinned, it was pre-planned by God that Jesus would die on the Cross. From that time on people looked forward in faith to what God promised he would do. In **1 Peter 1:10-11**, Peter tells us:

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”

One of those prophets, Isaiah foretold in great detail the suffering of Christ, in **Isaiah 53:3-12**, here rendered by the *New Living Translation*:

“He was despised and rejected – a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God for his own sins! But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed! All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the guilt and sins of us all. He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. From prison and trial they led him away to his death. But who among the people realized that he was dying for their sins – that he was suffering their punishment? He had done no wrong, and he never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man’s grave. But it was the Lord’s good plan to crush him and fill him with grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have a multitude of children, many heirs. He will enjoy a long life, and the Lord’s plan will prosper in his hands. When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of what he has experienced, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. I will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners. He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners.”



Whereas the Old Testament saints looked *forward* in faith to the Cross of Christ, we now look *back* in faith to the Cross of Christ. Today we look back and, by believing what Jesus has done for us

on the Cross, receive forgiveness and new life. The Cross is the center of human history and the center of our lives.

## The Great Exchange

### Read 1 Peter 2:24

The Cross dealt with every person's sin, suffering and sorrow. Jesus died a substitute death – this means he died in the place of every person.

### Read 2 Corinthians 4:14

Personally receiving the work of the Cross activates the salvation of God and does five principal things:

- God exchanges your sin for Christ's righteousness (**2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 1:17**)
- God declares you "not guilty" (**Romans 5:1-2; 8:1**)
- God declares you his child (**John 1:12-13; Romans 8:15-17**)
- God gives you unrestricted access into his presence (**Hebrews 4:16**)
- God gives you eternal life (**John 3:16; 10:28; 1 John 5:11-12**)

### Read Titus 3:3-7

## The Wonder of the Cross

The Cross lies at the heart of God's plan of salvation. Yet crucifixion on a cross was one of the most shameful, painful forms of execution known to man. This can be a "stumbling block" to people familiar with worldly ways of solving problems.

### Read 1 Corinthians 1:18,22-24

In the Cross, we see God's powerful solution to mankind's predicament.

### *The Cross demonstrates God's power*

#### Read Colossians 2:15

Jesus was crucified in weakness (**2 Corinthians 13:4**), but even the "weakness" of God is stronger than man's strength (**1 Corinthians 1:25**). The Cross totally dissolved Satan's rights over mankind (**John 12:31; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 1:18**), enabling the power of God to be released into your life (**Romans 1:16**).

### *The Cross demonstrates God's love*

#### Read again Romans 5:8

The extent of God's love went beyond what mere words can express. God *demonstrated* his love in the death of Christ upon the Cross. As **1 John 3:1** puts it:

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!..."

#### Read 1 John 4:8-10

## ***The Cross demonstrates God's holiness***

### **Read Colossians 2:14**

The Cross fully satisfied God's holiness. The written code – the standard of God's holiness revealed in the Old Testament – was cancelled at the Cross by a “new and living way” (**Hebrews 10:19-20; Romans 7:6**) – the holiness of Christ Jesus himself.

## ***The Cross demonstrates God's wisdom***

### **Read 1 Corinthians 2:7-8**

God's love and holiness intersected at the Cross. His righteous judgment demanded the death penalty for sin. But his love met his own demands. Only the Cross fully satisfies God's righteous requirements. This is the wonderful wisdom of God.

### **Read 1 Corinthians 2:2,5**

## **Victory of the Cross**

Jesus' death on the Cross won a great victory for you. Because God dealt with your sin on the Cross it means also that all the misery and suffering which is a result of sin was also dealt with. The Cross means freedom for you in seven areas:

- Freedom from Satan's power (**Colossians 1:13; 2:15**)
- Freedom from past sins (**John 8:36; Colossians 2:13**)
- Freedom from your old self (**Romans 6:6-7,14,17-18**)
- Freedom from sickness (**Matthew 8:17**)
- Freedom from the curse of the law (**Galatians 3:13**)
- Freedom from judgment (**Hebrews 9:27-28**)
- Freedom from everlasting death (**John 3:16**)

## **The Finished Work of the Cross**

### **Read Hebrews 9:12**

The most important thing we need to understand about the Cross is its “once for all” nature. The death of Jesus was one supreme sacrifice, adequate and complete for all time.

### **Read Hebrews 9:26-28**

The last words that Jesus uttered upon the Cross were: “It is finished!” (**John 19:28-30**). Your salvation is based upon your faith in the work of salvation he completed for you on the Cross. There is nothing for you to add. There is nothing for you to complete the salvation won for you. It is a 100% absolutely finished work. Nothing can be added to the Cross to make you accepted before God. It has already been done!

---

## A Revelation of the Cross

---

### Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

God's power has been released into your life because of the Cross (read again **1 Corinthians 1:18**). This power is real for you on a daily basis because of two important facts:

#### ***Christ died for you***

### Read 1 Peter 3:18

On the Cross, Jesus was your **substitute**. He received the judgment you should have received, so that you would not need to be judged. It is because of this exchange of Christ's life for your life that you have been reconciled to God.

#### ***You died in Christ***

### Read Galatians 2:20

On the Cross, Jesus was your **representative**. As far as God is concerned, when Jesus hung dying on the Cross he saw *you* hanging on the Cross. You were *in Christ* when he died, was buried and rose back to life again.

When Jesus died on the Cross, God counted his death as your death. Your old life was nailed to the Cross together with Jesus. The Cross of Christ is the turning point of your life. You have died with Christ and have begun a new life with Him as well.

### Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

On the Cross, God dealt with your old life once for all. You do not need to kill your old life off – God has already done that on the Cross. Because of the Cross, you are now a “new creation.” The old life has gone, crucified on the Cross! A new life has begun, a life now shared with God because of Christ. And as a new creation in Christ, you too can echo the words of **Galatians 6:14**:

“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”