

Before we begin the study I know that many people wear jewelry shaped into a cross, so

While researching for this message, I came across this information I thought you would find interesting.

The RELIGIOUS SYMBOL of the Cross

After the 'so-called' conversion of Constantine the Great, in B.C. 313, the cross first came into use as an emblem of 'so-called' Roman Christianity.

Constantine pretended at a critical moment that he saw a flaming cross in the heavens with these words inscribed on it "By this sign thou shalt conquer."

The following night he claimed he saw a vision where Christ himself appeared and ordered him to take the sign of this cross for his standard.

It remained the banner of the Roman army till the downfall of the Western empire. The cross they used had the embroidered monogram of Christ, which was the first two Greek letters of his name, X and P, with the Alpha and Omega, which is the 'Beginning' and the 'End.'

Take it for whatever it's worth.

SURVEYING THE CROSS

Gal 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory,
save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

We will reflect on the importance of the 'cross-work' of our Saviour.
We'll also do some basic background information about the cross.

The word 'cross' appears 28 times in the scriptures beginning in Matthew through Hebrews. The word 'cross' is not written in Genesis through Malachi.

We'll begin by thinking about
The PROPHECIES and HISTORY of the Cross

Long ago crucifixion was a common form of punishment among heathen nations. Nails were driven through a condemned person's hands and feet to hold them on the cross until they bled to death. The Roman government practiced it.

Psa 22:16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

John 20:25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

The Jews regarded crucifixion as the worst form of death, because it carried the curse of God upon it.

Deut 21:22-23 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree:
23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for ***he that is hanged is accursed of God;***) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Gal 3:13 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:

That's what they demanded be done with Jesus:

Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

(Speaking of Jesus of Nazareth from vs. 38)

Acts 10:39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

The leaders of the Jews wanted Jesus to be 'cursed of God' because He claimed to be the Son of God with power to forgive sins:

Jer 33:8 And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

Matt 9:2-3 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

Luke 5:21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

John 19:7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

Yet, His disciples knew Who He was:

John 1:49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Matt 16:13-16 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

John 6:66-69 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

The demons knew Who He was:

Luke 4:41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

And He Himself knew Who He was:

Isa 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

Now let's look at

The PROCEEDURES of Death on the Cross

Scourging began the process of crucifixion:

Isa 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

For your general information

Eastern people have great respect for a man's beard. It was considered extremely important for a man to wear one. Pulling out Jesus' beard was one of the grossest indignities they could do.

Also, in Eastern countries, it is highly offensive to even spit in another person's presence. How much more degrading to spit in their face!

Mark 15:15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

Matt 26:67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

Luke 22:63-65 And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.

64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

Next, the death sentence included the doomed person to carry their own cross to the place where they would be executed. However, Jesus was too weak to drag it all the way, and so they caught another man to take it the rest of the way for Him:

John 19:16-17 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

Luke 23:26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

The place of crucifixion was outside, yet nearby, the city:

Heb 13:11-13 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

John 19:19-20 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

Jesus was crucified on Calvary. It is also called Golgotha:

Mark 15:22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Just before nailing a convict to the cross, a vinegar/wine mixture with gall and myrrh was offered to drink as a medical tonic to help lessen the pain. Jesus refused to drink it:

Psa 69:21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Matt 27:34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

Mark 15:23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

Crucifixion was guarded by a group of four soldiers and their centurion.

John 19:23-24 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Soldiers, watching, were allowed to put vinegar on a stick and reach it up:

John 19:28-30 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Luke 23:36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

Breaking the legs would hasten death on the cross.

Psa 34:20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

John 19:31-34 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,)

besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

His side was pierced:

Zech 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

This type of death sentence being executed by crucifixion on a cross was also intended to bring **shame** upon the offender.

That's why they held it in a conspicuous place where it was highly visible to passers-by:

Psa 69:19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour:
mine adversaries are all before thee.

Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Phil 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Christ was mocked:

Psa 22:6-8 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

8 He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

Matt 27:39-44 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Although the crucifixion of Christ was unique because of WHO He was, the basic procedures that we examined were common for that kind of execution.

**Although Israel had scriptures describing the death of Christ
they did not realize what it was:**

1 Peter 1:9-11 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.
 10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently,
 who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:
 11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, **when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.**

Even Jesus' disciples did not understand His sacrifice, when He told them:

Mark 8:31-32 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.
 32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

It was **AFTER** his resurrection, that He explained the prophecies to a couple of them on the Emmaus Road, who were walking and talking about His crucifixion & resurrection:

Luke 24:25-27 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:
 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?
 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets,
 he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44-46 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.
 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,
 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

It is evident that, even then, the believers in Israel did not have understanding of His death, even though John the Baptist had identified Him early on:

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith,
Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

A Samaritan woman realized Who Jesus was, and told her friends in the city:

John 4:42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

We've seen the Prophecies and History of the Cross. Now let's consider:

The PURPOSE of the Cross

God used the sacrifice of Christ on the cross to pay for all sin:

(Speaking of Jesus, from verse 22)

Heb 7:27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

(Speaking of Jesus, from verse 24)

Heb 9:26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Heb 10:9-12 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, *(that's the Old Testament, the Law, written on STONE)* that he may establish the second. *(that's the New Testament, the Law, written on their HEARTS)*

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, *(Jesus Christ -- from verse 10)* after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

We know the blood of that New Testament was Christ's blood on the cross. **BUT --** a distinction to notice here is that when Jesus told that to His disciples He told them that it was for them. It was specifically done FOR Israel:

Matt 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Luke 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

We now understand through Paul's revelation of the mystery that Jesus' blood extends to ALL people everywhere ---- **BUT NOW** ---- it is withOUT distinction for Israel. It wasn't revealed until it came through Paul that Jesus' blood was for EVERY man:

1 Tim 2:5-6 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

We Gentiles are not UNDER the New Testament. God made that with Israel:

Jer 31:31-33 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

So, although we believe the scriptures that the New Testament was not FOR us ... nevertheless, we can testify about the blood of Christ that paid for OUR sins also:

2 Cor 3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

The prophecy was given that the Gentiles would also be able to be saved. THAT was NOT a mystery:

Isa 49:6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel:

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles,
that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

The apostle John's epistle also showed Gentile salvation:

1 John 2:1b-2 Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins:

and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

But it is in the epistles of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, that we find the reasons why we can say ... as the opening verse of this message ... that we glory in the cross.

It is through Paul's revelation that we learn many of the BENEFITS we (the Body of Christ, in the dispensation of grace) receive because of the 'cross-work' of the Lord Jesus Christ where He shed His blood.

We have redemption the COMPLETE forgiveness of sins:

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

We enjoy peace with God:

Col 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

We are justified declared righteous by His death on the cross:

Rom 5:8-9 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Christ removed the condemnation of the law from us:

Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Both Jews and Gentiles have now been merged together in one body by the cross:

Eph 2:14-16 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

God would have us remember that sacrifice of Christ.

Eph 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

Paul had a great love for the message of the cross:

1 Cor 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

1 Cor 2:2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

We can celebrate it as the element that we have 'in common' with Israel. His blood paid for our sins also:

1 Cor 11:23-26 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

In closing, we remind you of the opening verse, that tells us to glory only in the cross after all, that is where we find our salvation:

1 Cor 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

This is David Dowell, saying "Think about it!"