

# The Meaning of the Cross

# “Cross” – variety of uses in NT

- a. Mt.10:38, take up, follow Me. Lk.9:23
- b. Mt.27:42, stayed on the cross
- c. 1 Co.1:18, foolish to the perishing
- d. Ph.2:8, *even the death of the cross*
- e. Col.1:20, reconciled all...blood of His cross
- f. Hb.12:2, endured the cross

# “Cross” – variety of uses in NT

a. Mt.10:38, take, follow Me. Lk.9:23

And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me

Figurative

# “Cross” – variety of uses in NT

## b. Mt.27:42, stayed on the cross

41 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 42 He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him

Literal

# “Cross” – variety of uses in NT

c. 1 Co.1:18, foolish to the perishing

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God

Proclamation

# “Cross” – variety of uses in NT

d. Ph.2:8, even the death of the cross

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross

Torture

# “Cross” – variety of uses in NT

e. Col.1:20, reconciled all...blood of His cross

19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup> and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross

Sacrifice

# “Cross” – variety of uses in NT

f. Hb.12:2, endured the cross

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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Example



# “Cross” – not on church building

- Cross was public execution; humiliating
- Reserved for slaves and worst criminals (not Roman citizens)
- Catholics and others worship the cross (idolatry)

## “Cross” – not on church building

- Claudius, ‘bishop of Turin’ (d. AD 839) attacked the superstitious use of the sign of cross.
- “If we worship the cross...because Christ suffered on it, we might also worship every virgin because he was born of a virgin, every manger because he was laid in a manger, every ship because he taught from a ship, yea, every donkey because he rode on a donkey into Jerusalem. We should bear the cross, not adore it.”

# Lord's death was . . .

## 1. Natural (real). Zechariah 13:7 –

Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,  
against the Man who is My Companion,  
Says the LORD of hosts. Strike the Shep-  
herd, and the sheep will be scattered.

- My Companion: associate, one in close, united relation; fellow.
- How could God's equal die? Jn.1:1-3, 14

# Lord's death was . . .

1. Natural (real). Zechariah 13:7
2. Unnatural (prophesied)
  - Pronounced innocent by judges [Pilate, Herod, Pilate's wife, and Judas] . . . yet crucified?

# Lord's death was . . .

1. Natural (real). Zechariah 13:7
2. Unnatural (prophesied)
3. Supernatural. John 10 –
  - <sup>17</sup> Therefore My Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again.  
<sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from my Father.
  - Jn.18:6-7; Mt.27:45, 51-52 ... 54

# Lord's death was . . .

1. Natural (real). Zechariah 13:7
2. Unnatural (prophesied)
3. Supernatural. Phil.2 –
  - <sup>6</sup> Being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.
    - Jesus: truly God
    - Surrendered independent exercise of divine attributes

“Only a divine being can accept death as obedience; for ordinary men it is a necessity” – Lohmeyer

# I. The Death of Christ

Mk.14:43-49: betrayed by friend; opposed Him as if He were *Judea's most wanted*

Mk.14:50-52: abandoned by His disciples

Mk.14:53-65: tried by hypocrites; abused

Mk.14:66-72: Lord is abused as Peter denies Him

Mk.15:1-5: tried by Pilate

Mk.15:6-14: mob prefers hardened criminal

Mk.15:15: scourging

Mk.15:16-20: soldiers mock Him – Jewish joke



Lk.23:26: Jesus carried own cross... Simon...

Lk.23:27-31: women lamented Him. Lk.19:41

Mk.15:20-22: place of skull. *Golgotha*

Mk.15:23: refused drink to deaden pain

Mk.15:24-26: cross [*pain . . . prolonged*]

Mk.15:27-32: ridicule of robbers / passers-by /  
priests and scribes

I. The Death of Christ

II. What Does the Cross of  
Christ Teach Us?

# 1. We are sinners. Ro.2:1

- Most people minimize sin
  - “But I never hurt anyone”
  - Mt.15<sup>19</sup> out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies
  - Josh.7:21...

## 2. We are guilty. Ro.3:19

- Jn.16<sup>8</sup> And when He has come, He will convict world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment

### 3. We are helpless. Ro.3:20

- Could not justify themselves.
- Phm.<sup>18</sup> But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. <sup>19</sup> I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides.
- Onesimus could not undo his crime or pay his debts against Philemon. Paul would pay

## 4. Only God can save us. Ro.3:21

- Strength is required to save someone after an accident
- More strength required to save someone if it requires us to lose our own life...
- How much strength is required to sacrifice our own son to save another??

## 5. God loves us. Ro.3:25-26

- Propitiation:
  - OT: blood-sprinkled lid of ark of covenant – mercy seat (Hb.9:5)
  - NT: Jesus is the perfect sacrifice – satisfied demands of God's justice
  - Jesus is our Mercy Seat (*sacrifice of atonement*)
  - Ro.5:6-8

# So what?

- Mt.10<sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.  
<sup>39</sup> He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.
- To follow Lord, we must take up the cross...
  - Take electric chair? Hangman's noose? ...



# So what?

- To Jesus, the cross was not a beautiful gold emblem on church building, but a painful execution . . . .
- Most churches today focus on birth of Jesus. NT emphasizes His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, reign . . . .