

GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE
(Special English Edition)

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THE CROSS OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Every doctrine points to the cross of Christ. The cross is the sign of Christianity. Christian civilization exists because of the cross of Christ. The cross is the central point of history. The world looked forward to the cross for four thousand years. The Bible talks about the cross through types, pictures and prophecies. For the last two thousand years the world has seen what the cross has done and how the cross won over evil.

We will present both the teaching and the meaning of the cross that are difficult to understand. We will see the message the cross brings to us. We will also see how it is connected to the other doctrines. This lesson will show us how the cross changes the way a person lives and behaves.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS LESSON

- From eternity in the past God planned that Christ must die on the cross to save man from sin.
- All the great doctrines of the Christian faith begin at the cross.
- The doctrine of the cross was the main subject for preaching by the apostles. If you take away the cross, Christianity has no message and no meaning. When we include the cross the whole world can look to Christ who died in our place and for our sins. Then the whole world can have eternal life.
- It is impossible to stress the importance of this lesson too much. We pray that the Holy Spirit will cause you to rejoice in this doctrine. We trust He will make this doctrine a part of your life.

THE LESSON

I. THE SHAME OF DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION

- A. To the Romans death by crucifixion was for very bad criminals. It was unlawful to crucify a Roman citizen. This kind of punishment was only for slaves of the worst kind. It was the worst death a person could suffer.
- B. The Roman government treated Christ as a criminal. Death by crucifixion was for such crimes as treason, robbery, murder, and many more.
- C. The death on the cross was very shameful. When the Romans crucified a person his own people totally rejected him (John 1:11).
- D. The Jews said that God cursed a person who died on the cross (Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:23).
- E. Christ suffered the shame of hanging on a cross almost naked. The crowd that stood around the cross laughed at Him because their eyes were blind from sin (Matthew 27:35-36).
- F. It is difficult to understand the meaning of the words of Hebrews 12:2. It says that Jesus accepted the shame of the cross because of the joy that God put before Him. Philippians 2:8 states that Christ obeyed God even when that caused Him to die on the cross.

II. CHRIST SUFFERED DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION

- A. Before crucifixion the soldiers usually beat a person with a whip. This beating was very painful (John 19:1; Matthew 27:26). The beating made the punishment of crucifixion even more painful. The soldiers made the whip of a wooden handle with several narrow strips of leather attached to it. The strips of leather had sharp pieces of bone or metal in them, which made them a little heavier. They tied the person to a post in the ground. They beat the condemned person on his back until the skin was almost gone. This punishment was so cruel that people usually fainted and sometimes even died. Christ suffered 40 such lashes (Deuteronomy 25:3; Matthew 27:26; 2 Corinthians 11:24).
- B. For our Lord the pain of the crucifixion was even greater because of the crown of thorns on his head (Matthew 27:29). The Roman soldiers made a wreath, or crown from some local thorn bush. They put the crown of thorns on His head and laughed at Him. We do not know what kind of bush it was. Some of the

The Cross of Christ

bushes of that country had needles that were longer than an inch. The needles were sharp and of very hard wood. The rough Roman soldiers pushed the needles into Christ's head. This was very painful (Matthew 27:30).

- C. The Romans used four different kinds of crosses for crucifixion. The one used most of the time was the one they used to crucify Christ. It was called the "crux immisa." It was made of the upright beam and a crossbeam. Christ's hands and feet were nailed to this cross by sharpened nails (John 20:25; Colo.2:14).
 - D. It is impossible to describe death by crucifixion. There are no words to describe the pain and suffering. In Judea the soldiers always gave a drink to the person they crucified. This drink caused a person not to feel the pain quite so much. Christ refused to drink it (Matthew 27:34). The hot burning sun made the suffering even worse. The wounds would get hot and infected. The person would usually get a fever, which made him thirsty and hot (John 19:28). The weight of a person's body tore away the muscles and nerves from the bone. This made the pain so bad that a person almost died of the pain alone. The blood stayed in the person's head and caused terrible headaches. Usually the victim died a slow death. When a person did not die soon enough, the soldiers would break his legs. This caused a person to die quicker (John 19:31-34). Verse 34 seems to say that Christ also died because of great sorrow in his heart.
- Å *Think about Christ's suffering from these verses: Hebrews 12:2, "... (He) endured the cross..."; 1 Peter 2:23, "...when He suffered he threatened not..."; and 1 Peter 3:18, "...Christ...suffered for sins the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God...."*

III. THE CROSS WAS THE MAIN SUBJECT OF THE APOSTLES' PREACHING

- A. 1 Corinthians 1:18 – The teaching of the cross is the power of God to those people God saves.
- B. 1 Corinthians 2:2 – I decided that while I was with you, I would forget about everything except Jesus Christ and His death on the cross.
- C. Galatians 6:14 – The cross of my Lord Jesus is my only reason for boasting.
- D. Ephesians 2:16 – The cross brought Jew and Gentile together.
- E. Colossians 1:20 – Peace with God was made possible by the blood of His cross.
- F. Colossians 2:14 – God nailed the law to the cross.
- G. Galatians 3:1 – Paul told the people in Galatia very clearly about the cross.
- H. 1 Peter 2:24 – Christ carried our sins in His own body on the cross.
- I. 1 Peter 1:18-19 – His valuable blood redeemed us.

IV. THE WORK ON THE CROSS RECONCILED (BROUGHT TOGETHER) MAN AND GOD

The ministry of Christ is called the ministry of bringing man to God (2 Corinthians 5:18). The idea of reconciliation is to bring God's good will back to a person. Man and God are no longer enemies. Those who once were enemies become friends. God removed the obstacles. God established peace. God made two into one.

- A. How precious then to read that God was in Christ, making peace between the world and Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). Christ was the one who stood between God and the world. He made it possible for a sinful world that stood against God, to have peace with God again.
- B. At the cross Christ made both Jews and Gentiles one people. Christ broke down the wall of hate between Jews and Gentiles. By the cross Christ brought both of them back to God (Ephesians 2:14-16; Romans 5:10).
- C. In Colossians 1:20-22, Paul is writing about sinners generally. Sinners were enemies of God because of their wicked works. Now they have come back to God. They have made peace through the blood of Christ. God judged our sins and He put them away (Hebrews 9:26). Man sinned against God but the cross satisfied God! No wall exists at this time. Anyone can now come to God without fear, through Christ.
- D. We should especially note that we are the ones who sinned against God. But God is the one who brings people back to Himself. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 says, "...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

V. THE CROSS AND THE LAW

The law judged and condemned all men because not one person could keep the law (Romans 3:9-23). Anyone who broke a part of the law was under its curse and his punishment was death (Galatians 3:10-11; James 2:10).

The Cross of Christ

- A. It is very precious then, to the believer, that Christ carried the full curse of the law for every one who trusts in Him (Galatians 3:13-14). He did this after He fulfilled the law by His life (Matthew 5:17).
- B. At the cross, Christ ended the law, in order to make every person who believes in Him right with God (Romans 10:4).
- C. At the cross, God took away our debt and nailed it to the cross (Colossians 2:14).
- D. Christ ended the law in order to make Jews and Gentiles one new man (the CHURCH). He did this by His death on the cross. Because of the cross Jews and Gentiles no longer need to hate each other (Ephesians 2:15-16).

VI. THE VICTORIES OF THE CROSS

- A. At the cross, God made Christ sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). He took our sins on Himself on the cross (1 Peter 2:24). God laid our sins on Him (Isaiah 53:6). He won over sin and put it away “through the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26). At the cross God punished all of your sins and He removed them. The only question you must answer is, “What will you do with Jesus?” (Matthew 27:22).
- B. On the cross Christ won over Satan, who is the greatest enemy of God and man.
 - 1. Christ became a person of flesh and blood in order that through death (the cross), He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14).
 - 2. Christ came to destroy the work of the devil (1 John 3:8).
- C. Christ won over the fear of death for every believer (Hebrews 2:15).
- D. Because of the cross Jews and Gentiles no longer need to hate each other (Ephesians 2:16).
- E. For the believer, the world is dead and the believer is dead to the world (Galatians 6:14). Jesus said, “Be happy. I have won over the world” (John 16:33).
- F. Christ ended the law (Romans 10:4). He bought us back from the curse of the law by dying on the cross (Galatians 3:13).

VII. WE LOOK AT THE CROSS AS AN ACT OF GOD

- A. The Bible looks at the death of Christ on the cross as an act of God.
 - 1. He took our troubles and made them His own. He bore our pain, and we thought God punished Him. We thought God beat Him for something He did (Isaiah 53:4).
 - 2. The Lord freed us from our guilt and put all our guilt on Him (Isaiah 53:6).
 - 3. The Lord decided to bruise Him. The Lord decided that He must suffer, so the Servant gave Himself to be the One to die (Isaiah 53:10).
 - 4. God caused that He became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- B. We must accept such an act as the greatest show of love the world has ever seen.
 - 1. “For God so loved...that HE gave...” (John 3:16).
 - 2. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His son to be the sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10).
 - 3. God showed His love to us. When we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

VIII. WE LOOK AT THE CROSS AS AN ACT OF MAN

- A. The cross was the highest point of God’s love for man. At the same time the cross was also the highest point of man’s hate for God.
When we look at the death of Christ as an act of man we see it as a shocking and cruel murder.
 - 1. Peter said that they should know without a doubt that God made the person they had crucified both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36; 4:10).
 - 2. In His sermon to the crowd Peter said that Jesus was pure and holy, but the Jews did not want Him, therefore they killed the One that gives life. But God raised Him from death, never to die again (Acts 3:14-15).
 - 3. Peter also told the Jews that they killed Jesus and hung Him on a cross. But God, the same God their fathers had, raised Jesus up from death, never to die again (Acts 5:30).
 - 4. Peter said that the Jews had turned against the righteous One and killed Him. They murdered Him (Acts 7:52).

The Cross of Christ

- ◆ *Because Christ died for us according to the will of God, we have a responsibility for that death. Anyone who rejects Christ joins in the actions of the crowd who murdered him. The person who rejects Christ does the same thing the Roman soldiers and Pilate did. To reject Christ is to trample the Son of God under your feet. To reject Christ means you consider the blood of Christ as unholy (Hebrews 10:29; Philippians 3:18).*

IX. CHRIST BRUISED ON THE CROSS

God did not bruise Him for something He did (Isaiah 53:4). God indeed bruised Christ at the cross. Without explaining this further, think about these things in your heart.

On the cross:

- Bruised with darkness (Matthew 27:45).
- Bruised with suffering (1 Peter 3:18).
- Bruised with sorrow (Isaiah 53:3-4).
- Bruised with death (John 19:30, 33).
- Bruised with sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).
- Bruised with blood (1 Peter 1:19; Romans 5:9).

X. THE CROSS SPEAKS TO US THAT:

- It (the cross) satisfied the justice of God (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26).
- Christ obeyed the Father perfectly (Philippians 2:5-9).
- the love of God is without limits (1 John 4:10).
- God's righteousness is put on the believer (Romans 3:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Christ bought us out of the slave market of sin (Ephesians 1:7).
- Christ brought man back to God (Colossians 1:20-21).
- Christ removed our sin (Hebrews 9:26).
- the cross defeated Satan (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8).
- there is complete forgiveness (Colossians 1:14).
- ◆ *The cross is at the center of every basic Christian doctrine. Paul said that the preaching of the cross was the power of God. Paul considered the cross as an important part of the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 1:18; 2:2; Galatians 3:1).*

XI. THE CROSS AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

- A. The Christian should honor the cross. He should never have shame for it (Galatians 6:14).
- B. Because of the cross, the Christian died to this world; therefore the world is dead to him (Galatians 6:14).
- C. Many people hate the cross. Every person who believes in the cross and lives in the light of the work of Christ on the cross must expect that the people of the world will hate him (Galatians 5:11). Some believers may even have to "suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12).
- D. If any person wants to follow Christ, he must say "no" to his own desires. That person must accept the suffering that is given to him, and he must follow Christ (Matthew 16:24). This means that we must bear whatever sufferings or persecution God allows. We must bear any suffering that comes to us in our service for Christ. Christians must consider that they have died with Christ on the cross. By the grace of God Christians died to the world. They must live like people who died to the world (Romans 6:6; 11-13; Galatians 2:20; 5:24).

CONCLUSION

When a person thinks carefully about the cross of Christ it will cause him to separate from the world. We sincerely hope that this study will give you a new love for Christ. We hope that you will have a new love for the cross of Calvary. We hope you will have a thirst to know more of the grace and power that flows from the cross.

GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE EXAM
LESSON 30

Questions to be answered by every student enrolled in the Rogma International Free Bible Study Course

Register No _____

Name _____

Address _____

Choose and Round O the correct answer in the following: -

1. The cross, in relation to all Christian doctrine: (Value 2 points)
 - a. stands on the same plane.
 - b. is the focal point and source of all Christian doctrine.
 - c. has no relation to other doctrines.

2. The Romans view the cross as: (Value 2 points)
 - a. an easy death.
 - b. a quick death.
 - c. a shameful and detestable death.

3. The Jews viewed death on the cross as: (Value 2 points)
 - a. a curse.
 - b. martyrdom for the cause.
 - c. no worse than being stoned to death.

4. The event that preceded the crucifixion and made it even more painful was: (Value 2 points)
 - a. the shame.
 - b. being made to carry the cross to Golgotha.
 - c. the whipping with 40 lashes.

5. In addition to all other suffering, Jesus seemed to have suffered: (Value 2 points)
 - a. broken legs.
 - b. a broken heart.
 - c. a broken spirit.

6. The heart of apostolic preaching was: (Value 2 points)
 - a. the birth of Christ.
 - b. the ministry of Christ.
 - c. the cross of Christ.

7. Bringing men into a right relationship to God is called: (Value 2 points)
 - a. imputation.
 - b. reconciliation.
 - c. adoption.

8. What did Christ abolish between Jews and Gentiles? (Value 2 points)
 - a. hatred
 - b. bad attitudes
 - c. wars

The Cross of Christ

9. The one who actually does the reconciling is: (Value 2 points)
- man.
 - the pastor.
 - God.
10. Christ abolished the law by: (Value 2 points)
- His death on the cross.
 - His resurrection.
 - His life.
11. Christ abolished the law because: (Value 2 points)
- it was made for Jews only.
 - no man could keep it.
 - it was no longer valid in the New Testament.
12. Looking at death of Christ as an act of man we can also rightly call it: (Value 2 points)
- an accident of history.
 - a murder.
 - a mistake.

Matching:

Place the letter in front of the reference on the line in front of the appropriate phrase.

13. What do the verses below say about the cross? (Open Bible) (Value 27 points)
- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| ___ the cross reconciled man to God | a. Hebrews 9:26 |
| ___ the cross and the law | b. 1 Peter 3:18 |
| ___ the triumphant sacrifice of the cross | c. Philippians 2:5-9 |
| ___ the cross viewed as an act of God | d. Isaiah 53:4 |
| ___ the cross viewed as an act of man | e. Galatians 6:14 |
| ___ the cross of suffering | f. 2 Corinthians 5:19 |
| ___ the cross of perfect obedience | g. Romans 6:6, 11-13 |
| ___ by the cross the Christian is crucified to this world | h. Acts 2:36 |
| ___ the Christian is to reckon himself to have died
with Christ on the cross | j. Romans 10:4 |

14. According to these references, of what does the cross speak? (Open Bible) (Value 18 points)
- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| ___ Satisfied justice | a. 1 John 4:10 |
| ___ Perfect obedience | b. Hebrews 9:26 |
| ___ Infinite love | c. Colossians 1:14 |
| ___ Reconciliation | d. 2 Corinthians 5:21 |
| ___ Removal of sin | e. Colossians 1:20-21 |
| ___ Complete forgiveness | f. Philippians 2:5-9 |

Fill in the blank spaces.

15. Jesus triumphed over all wrong by the way of the cross. According to the reference below, how did He do this? (Open Bible) (Value 10 points)
(Do not copy the whole verse – look for the pertinent phrase)

2 Corinthians 5:21 _____

1 John 3:8 _____

16. The cross is the center of all _____. (Value 3 points)

(Choose one of these words: religion, history, suffering)

17. What phrase in John 3:16 speaks of God's greatest demonstration of love?
(Value 2 points)

18. (Choose from the following words: glory, offense, ashamed, tomb, deny, enjoy, cross, Christian life, burdens.)

A Christian should never be _____ of the cross. (Value 16 points)

The cross is an _____ to many people.

Jesus said if any man followed Him he should _____ himself, and take up his

_____.