

## **The meaning of the Cross – Part II**

(Some Theological implications) *By: Peter Crause*

*Note: All scripture quotations in these studies are from the King James version (modified to reflect common English spelling and usage today), of the scriptures.*

**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 have looked at the physical aspects of the cross. It was bloody! It was humiliating! It was agonizing! It was cruel! It was FINAL!

WHY WAS IT NECESSARY???

WHY DID IT HAPPEN???

WAS THERE NO OTHER WAY???

WHO BENEFITTED FROM IT???

These are questions that come to mind for both believers and unbelievers. In today's world "global village"; everything is relative, with no absolutes and Jesus Christ and his death on the Cross of Calvary have become irrelevant it seems. Even so-called Christians are loathe to speak of it; "lest we offend" other beliefs or religions. "Tolerance" is the order of the day. We are asked to believe that there are many ways to God.

Listen to Apostle Peter; *"Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men; whereby we MUST be saved". (Acts 4:12)*

*Sounds very intolerant, exclusive and absolute to me.*

The religions and customs of the world have ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to offer the Child of God. We have everything we need in the Scriptures as illuminated by the Holy Spirit. From beginning to end it is Jesus and Jesus only!

**2Peter 1:3** *According as his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue:*

**Col 2:2** *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;*

**Col 2:3** *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

### **The Necessity (Mankind under a death sentence)**

**Rom 3:10** *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

**Rom 3:11** *There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God.*

**Rom 3:12** *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that do good, no, not one.*

God had declared, “The soul that sins; shall die”. This we see so plainly revealed in Genesis. Death is very much part of this world. Physical death is obvious; no race or family is exempt here; however, spiritual death is not so obvious – excepting the tell-tale signs are everywhere in the moral decay of society and its obvious rebellion against God.

**Gen 2:16** *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat:*

**Gen 2:17** *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.*

Whatever the fruit of the forbidden tree in the garden of Eden was, it was NOT an apple. It is called “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”. Apples do not have this attribute! Man’s test was to see if he would choose to be God-dependant and have eternal, joyous life, or Self-dependant (independent) and bring upon humanity all the problems that “SELF” does – as we see today. The root of man’s problem is SELF. Listen to someone talking and count the number of “I’s” and “My’s”.

The whole point of the story in Genesis concerning mankind’s fall into death and spiritual darkness is to enlighten us as to our present condition, to announce the fact God would someday take care of the problem and to reveal to us that there is an evil entity behind it all. This evil entity has only one aim – to destroy mankind; who was created in God’s image.

The truth of the event was immediately evident. Genesis 5 has the repeated phrase “...and he died.” The inner spiritual death which was immediate, finally worked its way out into the physical. The rest is history: birth, sinful living and ultimate death has been and is the lot of mankind.

This would’ve been man’s eternal lot – BUT GOD!

*(The following three verses are from the Bible in Basic English version)*

**Gen 3:22** *And the Lord God said, Now the man has become like one of us, having knowledge of good and evil; and now if he puts out his hand and takes of the fruit of the tree of life, he will go on living for ever.*

**Gen 3:23** *So the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to be a worker on the earth from which he was taken.*

**Gen 3:24** *So he sent the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden he put winged ones and a flaming sword turning every way to keep the way to the tree of life.*

God's plan for mankind is not that he remains in a sinful fallen state eternally; which evidently would have happened had he eaten of the Tree of Life. Hence he was barred from eating of the Tree of Life – whatever it was. Before we can eat of that tree – which represented the Lord Jesus – we must die. This will be further developed in Part III.

**Gen 3:13** *And the LORD God said to the woman, What is this that you have done? And the woman said, The serpent tempted me, and I did eat.*

**Gen 3:14** *And the LORD God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, you are cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon your belly you shall go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life:*

**Gen 3:15** *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*

The promise of someone to destroy satan. In it is a hint that satan would hurt this One physically.

**Gen 3:21** *For Adam and his wife the LORD God made coats of skins, and clothed them.*

This act was to cover nakedness – the indication of their sin. In this was the foreshadowing of God's future provision for man's sinful condition. Death to another to provide a covering for sinful man. Put another way, someone or something else had to pay to cover man's nakedness; in this case an animal. Please note this was merely a covering. God's future provision would not merely cover but remove sin.

The entire scriptures from here until the death of Christ are a revelation of God's provision for man's salvation that was to come.

Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Corinthians declares:

**1Cor 15:22** *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Since all of Adam's race are "in Adam", all die. The ONLY way out is to be "in Christ".

### **The Necessity (God's love for mankind)**

**John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

**John 3:17** *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

**John 3:18** *He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

A Holy God cannot permit sin into His presence. God is LIFE, sin is DEATH. There can be no fellowship between the two. God is LIGHT, sin is DARKNESS; again no fellowship. God is HOLY, sin is UNHOLY; again no fellowship.

A great dilemma that ONLY God is and was able to solve without giving up any of His attributes, nor abrogating His law and condemnation of sin. And thank the Lord, He did solve the problem.

The following scriptures show God's love:

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

**Eph 2:4** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us,*

**2Thes 2:16** *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,*

**Titus 3:4** *But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,*

**1John 3:1** *Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know him.*

**1John 3:17** *But whoever has this world's good, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his deep feelings of compassion for him, how does the love of God dwell in him?*

**1John 4:7** *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.*

**1John 4:8** *He that loves not does not know God; for God is love.*

**1John 4:9** *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

**1John 4:10** *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the settlement for our sins.*

**1John 4:11** *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

The Love of God was the driving force to save mankind. To get a "bird's eye view" as it were, note the following:

- Man is spiritually dead and under sentence of eternal death and separation from God. (**Eph 2:1** *And you he has quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*)
- God is Holy and Just and must punish man for sin and rebellion. He cannot merely forgive and forget; He must remain true to His nature.
- But the problem is God loves man and doesn't want him to suffer the consequences of sin – nor the coming judgment.

- The ONLY way available for God to clear man of guilt and grant forgiveness is for another to pay the penalty – as shown by all the blood sacrifices and rituals throughout the Old Testament
- Who could pay the penalty? Another sinful man? Obviously not. An animal? No! Animals never sinned, nor were they created in God's image. The only person who could pay the penalty would be another sinless and perfect human being. But there was no such person available.
- God's solution was to be born as a human being Himself – not of the seed of man which had sin embedded in it (David said in [Psalm 51:5](#) "*Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*"), the virgin birth was absolutely necessary to accomplish this.
- So Jesus Christ – God Himself – being born miraculously and sinless. Having lived a sinless life was able to be the one man capable of paying the just penalty for all of mankind. The Bible says: "*On Him was laid the iniquity of us all*" [Isaiah 53:6](#) Jesus died in our place, bearing our penalty and paying the debt we owed; thus in God's view, when we are "in Christ" we also died. There is thus now no more condemnation on us for our sin.
- In Eden man made a choice to "go it alone" and leave God out of the equation. Since the Saviour has come and paid the penalty for sin, man has the choice to receive God's provision by faith, put to death the old life and receive a new spiritual life.
- Man still cannot save himself or please God by self-effort. That still smells of the fallen state. The only one who pleased God was the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus we must die to self and self-effort and let the Life of Christ be lived in and through us to please God.

The practical outworking will be developed in Part III.

We all need to reach the following conclusions:

- we are lost sinners totally incapable of pleasing God by any of our efforts or "goodness"
- we need a Saviour, not an example to follow. We could NEVER EVER be like Christ no matter how hard we try in self effort.
- God has provided just such a Saviour. "[Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world](#)"
- By simple faith; accepting God's provision, we can be all God wants us to be.