

THE AMAZING CROSS

The centerpiece of God's plan to redeem sinful mankind—yea, of history—is the cross of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the “word of the cross” (1 Cor. 1:18). The cross is “the power and wisdom of God” (23–24). Christians should glory in the cross (Gal. 6:14). The cross is so significant because it demonstrates so many extraordinary facts:

- **The awfulness of sin.** Most folk glorify and laugh at sin, but God and His Son did not and do not. The righteous One suffered for the sins of the unrighteous (1 Pet. 3:18). Without His shed blood we could not be forgiven (Heb. 9:22b). Only by His sacrifice could He “put away sin” (v. 26b). Sin is so terrible it took the terror of the cross to save us from it.
- **The love of God and Christ for Man.** God's love caused Him to give His Son to save us (John 3:16). God demonstrated His love for sinners in the death of His Son (Rom. 5:8). Christ expressed His love for us on the cross (2 Cor. 5:14). God loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). God's love and the cross are inseparable.
- **The price of redemption.** Christ gave himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6). He “purchased” the church with His blood (Acts 20:28). He “gave himself up” for the church (Eph. 5:25; Tit. 2:14). He redeemed us “with precious blood” (1 Pet. 1:18–19). There could be no redemption without the cross.
- **The wickedness and cruelty of men.** Isaiah foretold that Jesus would be “despised and rejected” (Isa. 53:6–8). Judas betrayed Him for 30 coins. At Jesus' first trial, Peter denied he knew Him three times. The Jewish rulers so hated Jesus that they violated the law and renounced justice to condemn Him. An irrational mob cried for His crucifixion. Pilate and Herod abused Him, and Pilate delivered Him to the cross, knowing He was innocent. The cross revealed the depths of cruelty and wickedness to which sinful men can plunge as they slew their only Savior.
- **The nobility of meekness.** He refused to call the angelic army to rescue Him (Mat. 26:53). To the taunts and wild charges, “he opened not his mouth” in self-defense (Isa. 53:7; Mat. 27: 14). He **allowed** His captors to nail Him to the cross when He could have prevented it (John 10:18). “When he was reviled, he reviled not again” (1 Pet. 2:23). Jesus on the cross is meekness perfected.

- **Unqualified obedience to God.** Jesus came to do His Father's will (John 6:38). He went to the cross because God required it (Mat. 26:39). Jesus' perfect obedience took Him to the cross—the ultimate demonstration of obedience (Phi. 2:8).

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