

THE CROSS AS THE SYMBOL OF CHRISTIANITY; ROMANS 5:6-8

INTRODUCTION

- I. IMAGINE A “MEETING” WHERE WE DECIDE ON SYMBOL OF CHRISTIANITY. SOME CHOICES THAT ARE “FLOATED” TO HONOR CHRIST ---
 - A. Crib --- incarnation
 - B. Carpenter’s bench --- Humanity & Dignity of manual labor
 - C. Boat --- His role a teacher
 - D. Shepherd’s staff --- John 10
 - E.. Towel --- Humble service
 - F. Empty tomb --- Victory over death
 - G. Throne --- Symbol of his reigning
 - H. Dove or fire --- Holy Spirit, but John 6:13-14)
- II. WHY THE CROSS, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF HOW “SOCIETY” SAW IT?
 - A. Romans ---
 1. Roman law forbade any Roman citizen from being crucified. It was considered the form of execution for a slave.
 2. Cicero
 - a. “...a most cruel and disgusting punishment.”
 - b. “the very word ‘cross’ should be far removed not only from the person of a Roman citizen, but from his thoughts, his eyes and his ears”
 - B. Jews; Gal. 3:13 --- Deut. 21:22-23
 - B. In a day and society in which we try to be politically correct, to fit in, etc. we need to remember what was written by some of our brothers in the NT
 1. 1 Cor. 2:2
 2. 1 Peter 3:18
 3. 1 John 4:10
 - a. NIV has “atoning sacrifice” for “propitiation”
 - b. Rom. 3:25
 - C. The proportion of the gospels devoted to the last week before the cross
 1. Luke --- about a quarter
 2. Matt. & Mark --- about a third
 3. John --- about **one half**
- III. TRACE THE CONCEPT OF THE “HOUR” IN JOHN
 - A. 2:4
 - B. 7:30
 - C. 8:20
 - D. 12:27**
 - E. 17:1
- IV. THE ONLY MEMORIAL HE INSTITUTED WAS FOR HIS **DEATH**
 - A. Refer to last supper
 - B. A broken loaf (body) and poured out fruit of vine (blood) --- fitting picture of any death, but especially death by crucifixion
 - C. 1 Cor. 11:23ff.
- V. WHY THE CROSS???????

BODY

I. THE CROSS IS THE SYMBOL OF OUR ATONEMENT

- A. Heinrich Heine (German critic & poet; 1797-1856) supposedly said on death bed, "God will pardon me. That's his [job, specialty]."
- B. Others "reason" this way --- "God requires us to forgive others. Surely, He will practice what He preaches."
- C. The problem with the type of thinking above is two-fold. It fails to take into account ---
 - 1. The seriousness of sin
 - 2. The majesty & holiness of God
- D. Things linked together in scripture
 - 1. Sin & death
 - a. Gen 2:17
 - b. Rev. 21:8
 - c. Rom. 6:23
 - 2. Blood & remission; Heb. 9:22
 - 3. Blood of Christ as only solution to sin
 - a. Heb. 9
 - b. Matt. 26:28
 - c. Heb. 9:12
 - d. Rev. 1:5

II. THE CROSS REVEALS THE CHARACTER OF GOD

- A. God's **justice** and God's **love** come together on the cross
- B. God's justice
 - 1. Job illustrates how "unfair" life can be
 - 2. Discuss Rom. 3:25 & 26 (refer to Coffman on Romans, pp. 126ff)
- C. God's love
 - 1. John 3:16
 - 2. **Christ** died for us
 - 3. Christ **died** for us
 - 4. Christ died for **us**

III. THE CROSS CONQUERED THE POWERS OF EVIL

- A. "I thought the open tomb was the symbol of victory"
- B. Consider Col. 2:13-15
 - 1. The death, burial, and resurrection are **very** closely linked
 - 2. BUT it can be said that the resurrection endorsed, proclaimed and demonstrated the victory that was already won
 - a. Consider these phrases ---
 - 1). "Having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 3:13)
 - 2). "For the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
 - 3). "Baptized into His death" (Rom. 6:3)
 - b. "Tie in" the above with 1 Peter 2:22-24
 - 1) The "tie-in" is "by whose stripes ye were healed"
 - 2) The other point to be made is that Satan tried every trick, temptation, etc. he could, but the only perfect person to ever live went to the cross.

CONCLUSION

- I. DESCRIBE STATUES OF BUDDHA
 - A. Legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, hint of smile, serene, silent, remote, detached from the world
 - B. Seemingly what so many want
- II. WHY WORSHIP THE LONELY, AGONIZING FIGURE ON THE CROSS?
 - A. He identifies with my suffering
 - B. In fact, my suffering seems insignificant
 - C. He is there for me
 - D. I still have some of the same questions Job had, but stamped over all of my questions is a picture of the cross
- III. THE CROSS MAKES DEMANDS AND OFFERS PROMISES
 - A. Luke 9:22-26
 - B. You cannot live for self & be a Christian
 - C. You cannot find fulfillment in life w/o being a Christian
- IV. WHAT IS YOUR "NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?"
- V. 2ND VERSE AND CHORUS OF "ONLY A STEP"

Casting your heavy burden down,
Come to the cross, the world may frown;
Yet ye shall wear a glorious crown,
When He makes up His own.
Only a step, only a step:
Come for He bled for you and died;
He's the same loving savior yet,
Jesus the crucified.