

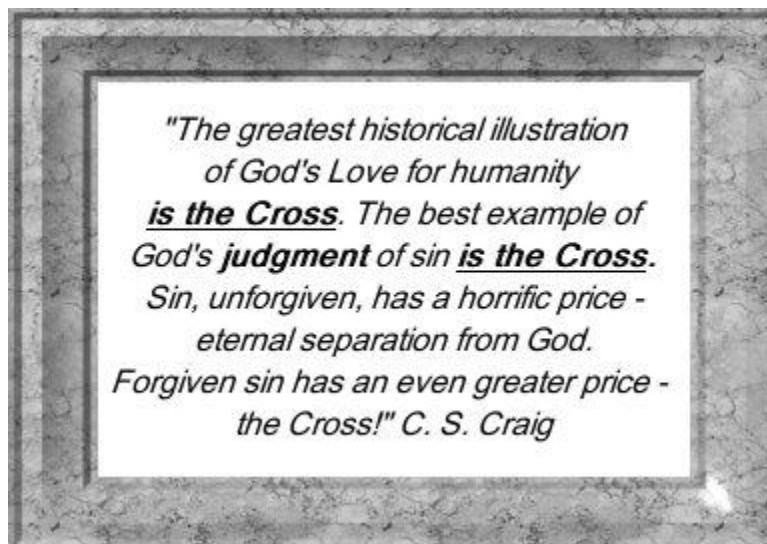
CROSS-WORDS: THE CROSS-THINKING OF CHRIST

© C. S. Craig Summer/Fall 2006

As a child I couldn't understand why Jesus had to die for me, I was a good boy most of the time. What a terrible thing to be nailed to a Cross. How could anyone nail another person to a cross? How could Jesus possibly bear the pain? He must have loved us an awful lot to do such a thing and suffer all that pain. I wondered what Jesus must have been thinking because I knew I could never stand the pain of those nails in my feet and hands. What Jesus was thinking is the purpose of this study. We will look at the Cross-words as well as the Cross-thinking of Christ.

The Old Testament records the actual thinking of Christ on the Cross in Psalm 22 which is called the "crucifixion and resurrection chapter" by scholars. Most people are familiar with the Twenty-third Psalm. The Book of Psalms was written about one thousand years before the incarnation of Christ. The fact that the words and the thinking of Christ on the cross were written in Scripture over a thousand years before Christ went to the Cross proves the Deity of Christ and the inspiration of the Bible. In Isaiah 7:14 the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ was predicted to the faithless Ahaz and the "house of David" (i.e. Israel- vs. 13) some 800 years before the event actually occurred. Isaiah 7:14 is virtually identical to Matthew 1:23. (Look them up, see for yourself.)

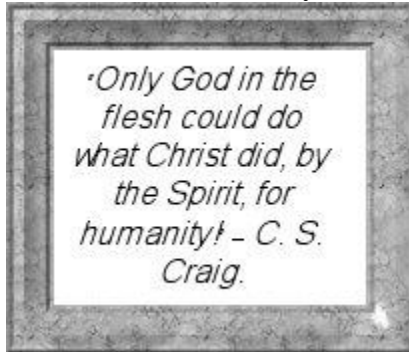
The name Immanuel which means "God with us" is not as much a title as it is a characterization according to Hebrew usage as in Isaiah 1:26& 9:6. Therefore, the name Immanuel stresses very clearly that this is "God with us." It is stated in just this manner so that the Jews (the whole house of David) would understand that Jesus Christ is the promised messiah that would save his people from their sins and rule forever. (See also Isaiah 53:1-12.) Christ's rulership is postponed until after the "times of the Gentiles" (referred to as the "Church Age" by Scholars). Note: We live in the Church Age and will do so until Christ comes back again.



Jesus knew the Holy Scriptures from a very young age. Nothing was more important to him than Bible Doctrine in his soul. Jesus (in his humanity) knew he was the promised Messiah for whom

the Jews had waited for centuries. He knew He would be crucified. From childhood and right up until the Cross, Jesus Christ (in his humanity) was perfectly relaxed. His mental attitude was always perfect; therefore his actions were always perfect. He was always in control of His faculties. He relied on the power of the Holy Spirit and God's Word [as it was written during His time in history] to sustain him throughout his life and death. No man has ever matched our matchless Savior's life and death.

Jesus Christ died for you! He did so because you are already condemned and lost in sin (John 3:36) for not believing. You can change your condemnation right now by accepting Christ as Savior – believe and receive (John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Romans 3:23-27; 5:1, 8, 10).



Having established a background, let us begin our study.

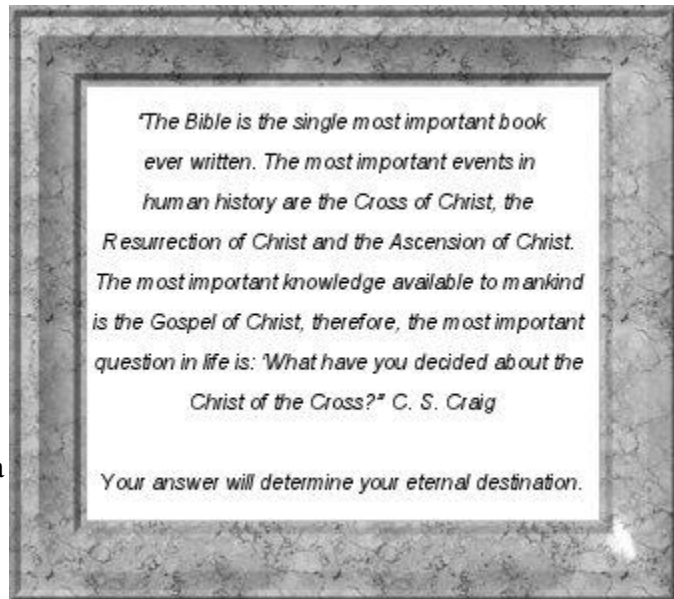
A SUMMARY OF THE CRUCIFIXION EVENTS (After the summary we will look at each statement in detail).

- 1). Arrival at Golgotha (Matthew 27:33; Mark 15:22; Luke 23:33; John 19:17).
- 2). Christ refuses the stupefying drink (Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23).
- 3). Jesus is crucified between two thieves (Matthew 27:35-38; Mark 15:24-28; Luke 23: 33-38; John 19:18).
- 4). Christ utters His first words from the Cross, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing," (Luke 23:34).
- 5). The Roman soldiers cast lots for His garments (Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23).
- 6). The Jews, the Romans and the two thieves on either side, mocked Christ and a sign is placed above His head (Matthew 27:39-44; Mark 15:29-32; Luke 23:35, 39-43).
- 7). Christ utters His second cry from the cross, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise", (Luke 23:43).
- 8). The third cry, "Women behold your son" (John 19:26), "Behold your mother" (John 19:27).

- 9). The darkness for three hours (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44).
- 10). The fourth cry, “Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46, 47; Mark 15: 34-36).
- 11). The fifth cry, “I am thirsty” (John 19:28).
- 12). The sixth cry, “It is finished,” (John 19:30).
- 3). The seventh cry, “Father, into your hands I commit (dismiss) my spirit,” (Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30).

A Closer Look At Each Statement

The first recorded words of Jesus Christ after He was nailed to the cross were for the very people who were crucifying Him “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing,” (Luke 23:34). These words are so amazing! They are so contrary to human nature. We all tend to harbor an unforgiving spirit. Christ, hanging on a cross, said to His heavenly Father “forgive them.” He was referring to the very people who were crucifying Him. We need to take a few moments and look closer at what it means to forgive.



The Doctrine of Forgiveness may be defined

as: letting go of resentment; excusing a guilty person of trespass; release from payment; forgetting an offense never throwing it up to the person again; and finally it means loving those who mock us, bully us, talk about us and malign us behind our backs. Forgiveness is contrary to our nature – we would prefer to get even. To forgive ill treatment is a tough assignment. However, we can maintain a forgiving mind when we stay in fellowship with the Lord (through 1 John 1:9). In fellowship, we have the power of the Holy Spirit who uses metabolized doctrine to guide us. Over time we can learn to think like Christ if we keep on keeping on in study and fellowship.

We must learn the attitude of loving-kindness and mercy even toward our enemies. We must learn mercy from the mercy seat by the Holy Spirit. (See Matthew 5:23, 24; Romans 12:14-20;

Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13.) The greatest person in history came as a servant to His creation. He came full of grace and truth; humility and mercy; sacrifice and service; caring and compassion. Jesus Christ had an intimate love affair with the Father and the Scripture. If you want to be great in the kingdom of heaven you must learn humility and forgiveness. You must learn Bible Doctrine so you can learn how to forgive according to Scripture. (Read Matthew 18:21-35.)

Forgiveness requires humility! Humility, too, is something we must learn by the Holy Spirit - our “guiding light!” (Please understand that the Holy Spirit leads the believer by utilizing Bible knowledge stored in our soul. Stored doctrine provides a frame of reference from our memory center which enlightens our understanding and application of God’s Word to circumstances.) In other words the Holy Spirit guides us by the light of metabolized doctrine. Doctrine applied to thinking results in conformity for application to life. But, first we must learn obedience and, from obedience, we learn patience and, from patience we learn humility. In the plan of God we are being conformed to be like Christ in our thinking and actions (Romans 8:29). God’s Word is the foundation for this transformation.

How much time do you spend in the Word of God? Time in the Word is directly related to love for the Lord. You cannot love where there is no knowledge! As believers we must be consistent in our daily study of the Word and in our daily confession of sin so that we are forgiven and cleansed (spiritually bathed). Then metabolized doctrine in our soul, which stands ready on the launching pad, can accurately and successfully be propelled into spiritual battle against the enemy. Who is the enemy of the Christian - the same enemies that Jesus resisted all of His life: the world (unbelievers), the flesh and the devil (John 6:63; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 6:12). In 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; we are instructed to be separated from the world. In 2 Corinthians 7:1 we are told to cleanse ourselves.

How do we separate and cleanse? God’s pre-designed plan for separation and cleansing is 1 John 1:9. For additional scripture references regarding the mechanics of separation and cleansing see: 1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Corinthians 13:5 Galatians 5:16, 17; Philippians 3:14, 15; Ephesians 5:17, 18. One more thing on forgiveness: forgiveness also includes learning to forgive yourself for your own disobedience to God and wrongdoings to others. This, for me, is the hardest of all – I constantly struggle with my own spiritual failures and inadequacies. I relate to the great Apostle Paul in Romans 7:25, (turn to it) where Paul describes his struggles against the flesh (human nature).

We all struggle with sin-weaknesses, therefore I thank God for the book of Romans. For additional study on sin and forgiveness please read Chapters 1-8 of Romans, which also covers much of the major foundational Christian doctrines found in the Bible. Doctrinal truths such as: the grace of God from the creation and fall of Adam to the end of history; the two natures of the believer; God’s answer to the tyranny of sin; a soul-sustaining description on suffering; forgiveness; redemption; sanctification; spirituality; eternal security for the believer; the restoration of Israel and much more.

The first eight chapters of Romans are towers of Christian doctrines and truth and chapter eight is the culmination of the first seven chapters. Romans 1-8 are God’s revelation to man in a nutshell. For example, God the Father is revealed as: Judge; Ruler of history; the one who knows our hearts and calls us to salvation; the one who justifies and glorifies us; the one who loves us so much that He spared not His only Son.

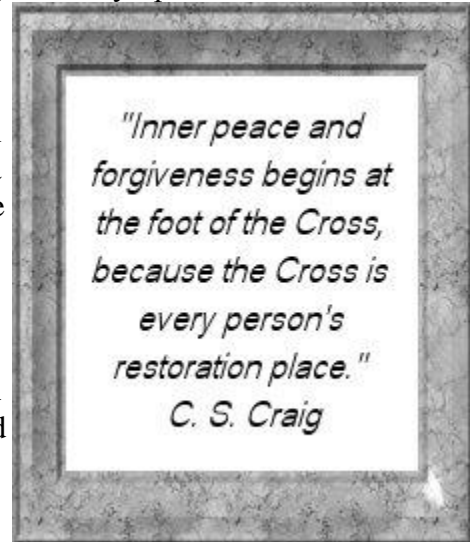
God the Son is revealed as: the Firstborn of many brothers; the Deliverer; the indweller of believers; the one with whom we are to be glorified; the Savior of our souls.

The Holy Spirit is presented as: the all powerful power source for believers; life and peace to our souls; the one who indwells and guides us; our interceder.

The Godhead of the Trinity is the foundation for Spiritual Truth, Divine Revelation and Christian Doctrine. All this is found in Romans 1-8. I call Romans the “Book of Foundational Christian Doctrine.” Truly, the Bible is the Book of Life inspired by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of mankind.

Our Lords second statement, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). This conversion of the thief on the Cross was strictly by God’s grace and is a perfect example of salvation without works (or anything else for that matter!!).

Only faith in the work of Jesus Christ can save any person because we are guilty of sin by our very nature in sin – the nature that sins (Romans 3: 23). This thief could not and did not work for his salvation – he was nailed to a cross he could perform nothing. He simply believed (Luke 23:41, 42). This is a perfect example of repentance – the thief went from insults and mocking Jesus (disbelief), to faith in Jesus.



Repentance is not turning from sin first, it is turning from disbelief. Turning from sin is the result of conviction, which follows a change of attitude toward God. Feeling guilty of your sinful ways is the result of believing, not the means of forgiveness. The Cross is the only way God can forgive. The first man pardoned and saved by Christ while He was on the Cross was a thief. And Christ not only hung with him, but died for him. Jesus chose to die with us, like us, for us. Now, that is passion! This is the love of our God demonstrated! Only in Christianity does God pay for sin. The Son of God died for mankind. In all other religions, man must work for salvation. By faith alone, God personally restores each believer at the point of salvation to his original state-of-being as a child of God (John 1:12; 3:36; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5-7).

The two thieves on each side of Christ represented the fallen human race since the first man (Adam) fell from grace. Christ was placed between the two dying thieves because he is the mediator between God and man (2 Timothy 2:3-6). “And He was numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12; Luke 22:37). Jesus Christ is identified with these men in condemnation nailed to a cross. One of these men is identified with Christ in salvation while the other chose not to believe and remain condemned. This is what life is all about – condemned humanity and the redeeming Christ.

What have you done with Christ?

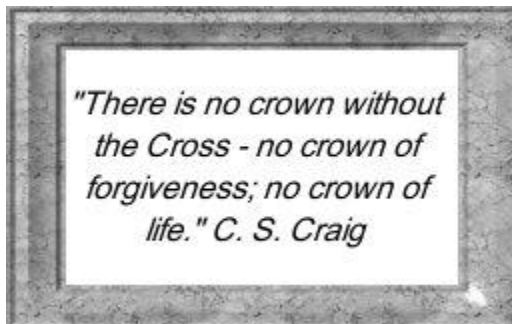
Which thief are you – the believer or the unbeliever?

Which thief do you want to be?

You can find peace, forgiveness and comfort right now by trusting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Christ died in your place so you could live forever with Him. "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:1). The Lord welcomes with open arms all those who turn to Him (John 6:36, 37; Hebrews 7:25). Heaven and hell are just a thought away; a heartbeat away. Jesus Christ did not come to save himself from the Cross; He came to save us by the Cross (Matthew 20:28). Christ died because God does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9).

Our Lord's third statement from the Cross is found in John 19:26-27, "Woman, behold your son," "behold your mother." Jesus Christ in His agony looked down from the Cross and saw His mother crying and looking helplessly up at Him. Jesus in excruciating pain comforted his mother in her hour of despair. He also made sure she would be secure by placing her welfare in the hand of John His beloved disciple. Mary's heart was in such pain, but her Son gave her peace and assurance that would sustain her for the rest of her life. There was no comfort for Jesus, only suffering.

John had fled when the soldiers took Christ away from the garden in Gethsemane, as did all the disciples. (See Matthew 26:56.) But, here at the Cross John found courage and was restored to fellowship at the foot of the Cross which we learn by our Lord's statement "behold your son." John came to the Cross, where Christ restored him and forgave him. From that day forward John walked in righteousness and served the Lord even in prison on the Isle of Patmos where God placed him so he could write the Book of Revelation. In fact, John was the only apostle who died of old age (natural cause) a testimony to his faithfulness. It is interesting to note that of all the followers of Christ, only four women and the Apostle John were at the foot of the Cross.



It is at the Cross where we first see the light (salvation) and it is at the Cross where we are restored to the light of fellowship by confession. One little tidbit for thought: Have you ever thought about how utility poles appear? There are millions and millions of them and we pass them every day. They are made to fasten and hang utility wires - they look like a cross. The Cross of Christ is everywhere if we would just see it. Please note that in His first three statements from the Cross, our Savior's concern is for others. He is in excruciating pain and His thoughts are for others. Our Savior nailed to a cross was beaten beyond recognition before He was ever crucified. Be sure to read Isaiah 52:14; Matthew 26:67-68; 27:27-30; John 19: 5, 14; 1 Peter 2:24-25).

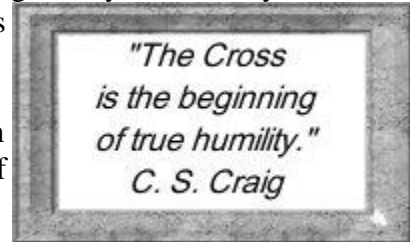
In Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34 we read: "Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken (abandoned) Me?'" This fourth statement heard from the Cross is perhaps the least understood of the seven statements.

When our Lord took the outpouring of the sins of the world, He became separated from the Father. This separation is beyond description and it is where every unbeliever will spend eternity – separated from God. If you choose to remain separated from God in this life, God will honor your decision in eternity, for eternity. "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me" are also

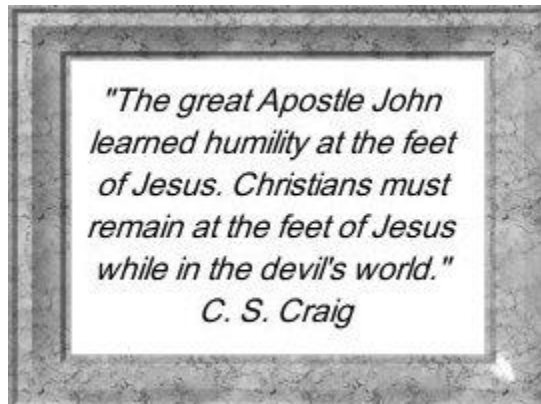
found in Psalm 22 and actually give us more insight as to what was going through our Lord's mind. It is called the "crucifixion Psalm." Note also that Psalm 22 ends with "It is finished," or "He has performed it." Through this Psalm, David takes us into the mind of Christ as He hung on the Cross. Although these words were a personal expression of anguish by David, they were also a glimpse into the future of Messiah, on the Cross, rejected by his people. "He came to his own and his own received Him not, "

(John 1:11). Here, in the 22nd Psalm, we can know the actual thoughts of our Lord. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? Oh my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer (have not answered), by night, and am not silent." "By

day" is referring to the three hours of daylight from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. "By night" is referring to the period between 12:00 noon and 3:00 p.m., the three hours of total darkness when God the Father imputed our sins to His Son on the Cross. This is why the Father did not answer the Son's plea – He was judging His only Son so we could be forgiven and have eternal life through Jesus Christ – this is God's Gift to us because He loved us. (See Romans 3:25, 26.)



Jesus Christ died for you in your place to save you from the Father's wrath. God (Jesus Christ) came in the flesh to save us from His own wrath. There was and is no other way to be saved (John 3:15-18, 36). Sin is a serious matter. The Cross is a serious matter. Your decision



regarding these two issues is a serious matter. Life and death are very serious matters. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved (Acts 16:31). Jesus Christ, as God, always had eternal and unbroken fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. When sudden darkness came over the land, the Father and the Holy Spirit turned their backs on the Son. We know from these words "Why have you forsaken me," that this is the time when Jesus Christ "bore our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). Just as our sin keeps us separated from God, our sins poured out on him separated Jesus from the other two members of

the Godhead. These words were literally screamed from the humanity of Christ. The instant our sins hit the humanity of Jesus his human spirit died spiritually (it is impossible for deity to die). In Romans 5:12-20 we learn that sin passed from Adam to all men. In Genesis 2:17 we learn that Adam died two deaths: spiritual and physical. He died immediately spiritually and 930 years later, physically. In the original, the word for "die" in Genesis 2:17 is in the plural and should have been translated "deaths" meaning two (spiritual and physical). Eve and Adam died spiritually, immediately. Physical death did not occur for centuries after the fall, although physically they began dying immediately.

I find it intriguing to imagine the physical stature of Adam compared to humanity today. It took Adam 930 years to die and it only takes man, today, about 75-100 years to die. One could speculate that Adam must have been about ten times the man that men are today. One could also speculate that the longer we live the more sin piles up against us. Because of our very nature, Jesus Christ had to become true humanity in order to die for our sins – thus the necessity of the

virgin birth. Because deity cannot die spiritually, God, in order to save mankind, must become a man because the payment for sin is spiritual death. If Jesus were to have a natural father like you and I, then he would not be able to pay for our sins because the sin nature is inherited through the father in every generation since Adam. The virgin birth meant that Christ did not have a human father therefore Jesus Christ had no sin nature. Christ never sinned during his life, therefore He was qualified to go to the cross and die for you and for me. Psalm 22:3 states: "...yet you are enthroned at the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel," which means that the Father judged from His Holiness. This is the reason He could not spare even His own Son. Now, we can have peace with God because of the Cross (Romans 5:1).

Please understand that there was no other way to pay for the sins of humanity – we were lost without hope, separated from God. In other words, only God could provide salvation, so Jesus Christ in eternity past willingly decided to go to the Cross in our place. What a tragedy that the majority of the human race could care less about our suffering Savior – that's incredible arrogance. This is the passion of man for self. Christ died a horrible death on the Cross for all mankind - that's indescribable love. This is the Passion of Jesus Christ for mankind. Jesus Christ suffered excruciating pain and horror in the blackest darkness that time has ever recorded and He did so for you and me and all the people who don't care. The twenty-third Psalm is a walk through the 'valley of the shadow' of death. We all must take this walk, just as our Savior did, but the believer will not have to walk alone. Jesus has already been there and He walks with every believer through the valley. On the Cross, God forsook his son. But God's Love for His Son never changed! In Isaiah 53:10 we read: "But the lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief, if He would render Himself as a guilt offering." The Father was not angry with Him. Christ was left alone to die alone so that you (the believer) would never be alone. Christ became separated from God so that we (believers) never have to be separated from God again. No man, from Adam to Christ, ever experienced the intimate Love of God the Father in the same way Christ did during His incarnation. But now, because of Christ, each individual believer can experience, first hand, an intimate relationship with the Father through the Son. Simply receive Christ as your personal Savior (by grace through faith – Ephesians 2:8, 9) then the process of experiencing God's loving-kindness (grace) becomes a lifelong adventure that carries over into eternity.

The fifth cry of Jesus was "I am thirsty" which is indicative of His humanity because deity does not thirst. "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I am thirsty'" (John 19:28). "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." Jesus Christ created the world. Jesus Christ turned water into wine. He could have quenched His own thirst even here as He hung nailed to a Cross, but He always chose to be submissive to the Father's will. Jesus was also fulfilling prophecy because it is written that He would thirst (Psalm 22:15; 69:21). These two verses were the actual thoughts of Christ as He hung on Calvary. (See also John 19:29-30.) Notice our Lord's self-control immediately after the three horrible hours of suffering in total darkness. Jesus Christ denied Himself so that He would not have to deny you. You must deny yourself and trust the finished work of Christ to be saved. Jesus Christ will deny you if you do not receive Him (John 1:12; Matthew 7:23; 25:41; Luke 13:27). "If any man is thirsty let him come to the Savior and drink" (John 7:37). Jesus Christ is the water of life (Revelation 21: 6; 22:1; 22:17). Jesus Christ loved the Scriptures as they then existed. Do you?

The sixth cry from the Cross was the greatest proclamation ever spoken since Adam fell in the garden. It is God's salvation as promised in Genesis 3:15. Read this proclamation for yourself in John 19:30 – "It is finished." All Scripture was now fulfilled. The sin debt of humanity has been paid! Salvation has been provided by God's Grace through the suffering of His beloved Son (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Jesus Christ is victorious over sin (John 19:30). Therefore, there is nothing you can do to deliver yourself from God's wrath. God is not impressed with you or your good deeds or your money. Believe in the Cross-work of Christ and be saved. Jesus Christ has already accomplished your salvation; all you need do is believe to make it a reality (John 3:15-18; 3:36; Acts 16:31).

The seventh and final words spoken by our victorious Savior are found in Luke 23:46: "Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit." After a life of caring for others; a life of torment, sacrifice and suffering; after six illegal trials and unmatched brutality; after enduring the most excruciating death in history; Jesus Christ had provided salvation. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost [voluntarily dismissed His spirit] (John 19:30). "I lay down my life that I might take it up again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself [His own decision]. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again (John 10:17, 18). Jesus Christ paid our sin debt (1 Peter 3: 18-22, see also: John 1:29; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:6 and Colossians 1:22). Salvation is complete! No man can add anything to the completed work of Christ. Only Christ's work is acceptable to the father. For religion or mankind to add anything to Christ's victory on the Cross is blasphemous. Over and over in Scripture we find the words of faith "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

Faith is the absence of works, deeds or merit of any kind. Faith is dependence on someone else (Christ) for salvation. The sin problem is solved! Sin is no longer the issue in the human race – not since Christ paid for sin! Jesus Christ was judged for all of the sins of the human race, past, present and future sins. Therefore forgiveness is the issue for the unbeliever. When you trust the Cross-work of Christ, God forgives your sins because of the Cross. At the Last Judgment, the Great White Throne Judgment, no one will be judged for their sins. Scripture is very clear to point out that all who stand before The Great White Throne will be judged by their works because they have rejected Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:12-16). As an unbeliever you have two future appointments: one is death and the other is the Great White Throne Judgment where you will stand before Jesus Christ. You will stand on your own merit because you have rejected the merit of Christ (Hebrews 9:27).

No amount of human works can measure up to the perfect righteousness of Christ and His perfect sacrifice for sin at the Cross. Each human being has the personal responsibility of accepting or rejecting the perfect "finished work" of Christ on the Cross. Your personal decision determines your eternal destiny. You have the choice to receive Christ as personal Savior based on His "finished work," or reject His finished work and stand on your own merit. Whatever your decision, be sure you think it over and consider all the facts surrounding the Cross of Jesus Christ (the Messiah -Yeshua) because He had you personally in mind when He went to the Cross. "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. For it is written 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.' Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the

philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ has the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength" (1 Corinthians 1:18-25).

The Jews at the time of Christ were expecting a conquering messiah. A man dying on a cross was not their concept of a savior who would deliver them from the bondage of Rome. The Scribes and Pharisees scornfully turned from the Cross – to them it was weakness and failure. They were expecting a display of power and force. They could only see what they considered a weak failure of a man hanging on a tree. But that tree of death brings life to all who will believe. The Jews and the Gentiles were blinded by their own arrogance. These same Jews, who spoke face to face with Jesus Himself and watched Him perform miracles, still wanted more demonstrations, more power and miracles. The Pharisees and the Greek-influenced gentiles regarded with contempt the uneducated religion of these followers of Christ and even Christ Himself who was a mere carpenter. They reasoned: how could these disciples know anything, they have not studied in Rome or Athens. It is the foolish thinking of men, especially educated men, in every generation that keeps them from simple faith in the Cross. Either the Cross is “the power of God” or it is “foolishness!” It is not the Cross that condemns us! It is foolishness! It is rejection! If you have really knelt at the foot of the Cross; if you have really focused on Jesus Christ; then, you were affected one way or the other. Either you rejected or accepted the Cross work of Christ. Either you have received Him as Savior or rejected Him. Is the Cross foolishness to you? Neglecting to make a decision is the same as rejecting! Paul did not preach Christ the conqueror, or Christ the philosopher. He preached Christ crucified! It was the so-called failure and weakness of the crucifixion that made Jesus Christ the greatest conqueror of all time. He won the greatest victory of all time: he defeated death by rising from the grave, and he paid for your sin – your personal salvation and mine. His victory can be your victory – your salvation. “It is finished” means that your salvation from the wrath of God has been accomplished. All you have to do is believe (John 3:15-18; or reject and perish John 3:36).

Jesus Christ lived the agony of the Cross so you would never have to be separated from God. Jesus saw the glory of resurrection morning and this sustained Him while paying for your sin.

When death stares you in the face will you be ready? It might happen today. The pride of worldly arrogance carries the world away from Christ and it leads to the lowest place known to man – the bottomless pit. There is no second chance – Christ won't die twice for you or the world! He paid once – for all – for all time! Believe it, or not! “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH – A SUMMARY Physical death is the result of inherited sin (Genesis 3:19). Death is universal - everyone dies. Therefore, sin is universal - in everyone (Romans 5:12-14). Physical death affects the body only and is not cessation of existence or consciousness (Habakkuk 2:5). The Hebrew word “Sheol” in the Old Testament is the place to which the dead went before the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. It had two compartments – one for believers, called Paradise in Scripture; and one for unbelievers, a place

of “Torment.” Scripture in the Old Testament reveals Sheol as a place of sorrow and torment for unbelievers (2 Samuel 22:6; Psalms 18:5 116:3). They are fully conscious (Isaiah 14:9-17; Ezekiel 32:21). Sheol in the Old Testament Hebrew language is the same as “Hades” in New Testament Greek. Please, be sure to read the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. Believers since the resurrection of Christ go immediately to Heaven to be with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23). Before the resurrection Christ told the thief “today you shall be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). Conscious life after physical death is assured by Jesus Christ Himself in Luke 23:42 and John 11:25, 26. In Heaven we will be with Christ forever (John 14:2). God chose to take us to the underworld so we could know that it is real. Please read the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. This is one of the most astounding stories in the Bible.

Today the world searches for heroes. Pro sports are at an all time high in popularity. Spiderman; Batman; Superman are all super-heroes, but they are all substitutes and imposters. They are all foolishness compared to my hero – Jesus Christ! Please close this study of our crucified Lord by reading Isaiah Chapter 55 – salvation through God’s Son by God’s Grace; and Hebrews 1:1-3. Happy Studying! (1 Timothy 4:6, 13; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 13:20-22).