

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

THE GREAT BATTLE

The execution of Jesus was the greatest judicial murder in the history of the world. Satan used the ones who should have been proclaiming Christ to have Him put to death.

JOHN 19:6

6 WHEN THE CHIEF PRIESTS THEREFORE AND OFFICERS SAW HIM, THEY CRIED OUT, SAYING, CRUCIFY HIM, CRUCIFY HIM. PILATE SAITH UNTO THEM, TAKE YE HIM, AND CRUCIFY HIM: FOR I FIND NO FAULT IN HIM.

Nevertheless, this devilish mean rebellion was turned into the blessing of atonement making salvation available for all mankind. It even included the very rebels who had crucified the Lord.

At the same time, the shameful deed or the cross became by redemption the turning point of human history. According to the latest studies the crucifixion of Jesus probably took place on April 7, 30 A. D. This, of course, is based on secular study, not on Scriptural proof.

Just what was the significance of the cross for God? The cross is the greatest event in the history of salvation, greater even than the resurrection. The cross is the victory. The resurrection is the triumph. The victory is more important than the triumph, although the latter necessarily follows from it. The resurrection is the public display of the victory, the triumph of the Crucified One. But the victory itself was complete. "It is finished."

JOHN 19:30

30 WHEN JESUS THEREFORE HAD RECEIVED THE VINEGAR, HE SAID, IT IS FINISHED: AND HE BOWED HIS HEAD, AND GAVE UP THE GHOST.

First, for God the cross is the supreme evidence of the love of God. For there the Lord of all life gave up unto death His most Beloved, His only begotten Son, the Mediator and Heir of creation.

HEBREWS 1:2-3

**2 HATH IN THESE LAST DAYS SPOKEN UNTO US BY HIS SON, WHO HE HATH APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS, BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS;
3 WHO BEING THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY, AND THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON, AND UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER, WHEN HE HAD BY HIMSELF PURGED OUR SINS, SAT DOWN ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH;**

HEBREWS 2:10

10 FOR IT BECAME HIM, FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, IN BRINGING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, TO MAKE THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.

Truly in this, God proves His love for us.

JOHN 3:16

16 FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

ROMANS 5:8

8 BUT GOD COMMENDETH HIS LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.

Second, the cross is the supreme evidence of the righteousness of God. For there the Judge of the world "as proof of his righteousness" did not spare even His own Son.

ROMANS 3:25

25 WHOM GOD HATH SET FORTH TO BE A PROPITIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD, TO DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS THAT ARE PAST, THROUGH THE FORBEARANCE OF GOD;

ROMANS 8:32

32 HE THAT SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON, BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?

In all the centuries before Golgotha, in spite of many individual judgments, God had not at any time visited sin with a hundred per cent punishment.

ROMANS 1:18

18 FOR THE WRATH OF GOD IS REVEALED FROM HEAVEN AGAINST ALL UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF MEN, WHO HOLD THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS;

ACTS 17:30

30 AND THE TIMES OF THIS IGNORANCE GOD WINKED AT; BUT NOW COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERY WHERE TO REPENT ;

He had been so patient with sin that His holiness could have been questioned.

ROMANS 3:25

25 WHOM GOD HATH SET FORTH TO BE A PROPITIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD, TO DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS THAT ARE PAST, THROUGH THE FORBEARANCE OF GOD;

Therefore only the atoning death of the Redeemer, as Divine self-justification for the past history of mankind, proves the irrefutable righteousness of the supreme Judge of the world. All the patience of the past was possible only in view of the cross. All future forgiveness is righteous only through looking back to the cross.

ROMANS 3:26

26 TO DECLARE, I SAY, AT THIS TIME HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: THAT HE MIGHT BE JUST, AND THE JUSTIFIER OF HIM WHICH BELIEVETH IN JESUS.

I JOHN 1:9

9 IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

Past patience, present judgment, and future grace meet at the cross.

ROMANS 5:8-9

8 BUT GOD COMMENDETH HIS LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.

9 MUCH MORE THEN, BEING NOW JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, WE SHALL BE SAVED FROM WRATH THROUGH HIM.

Therefore now for the first time, in a unique manner, the righteousness of God both as a Divine attribute and a Divine gift is revealed in the gospel.

ROMANS 1:17

17 FOR THEREIN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED FROM FAITH TO FAITH: AS IT IS WRITTEN, THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:9

9 FOR IF THE MINISTRATION OF CONDEMNATION BE GLORY, MUCH MORE DOTH THE MINISTRATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS EXCEED IN GLORY.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

21 FOR HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE SIN FOR US, WHO KNEW NO SIN; THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.

Third, the cross to God is the most marvelous augmentation of the riches of God.

REV 5:9-10

9 AND THEY SANG A NEW SONG, SAYING, THOU ART WORTHY TO TAKE THE BOOK, AND TO OPEN THE SEALS THEREOF: FOR THOU WAST SLAIN, AND HAST REDEEMED US TO GOD BY THY BLOOD OUT OF EVERY KINDRED, AND TONGUE, AND PEOPLE, AND NATION;

10 AND HAST MADE US UNTO OUR GOD KINGS AND PRIESTS: AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH.

1 PETER 2:9

9 BUT YE ARE A CHOSEN GENERATION, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, AN HOLY NATION, A PECULIAR PEOPLE; THAT YE SHOULD SHEW FORTH THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO HATH CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT:

TITUS 2:14

14 WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY, AND PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.

Yet it is not as if the wealth acquired by the cross meant an augmentation of the Divine glory itself--for God in Himself is infinite. Yet, it is true that in the church He has won an instrument, an organ for the revelation of His glory. Even now in the present the office of the church is not limited to the earth.

EPHESIANS 3:10-11

10 TO THE INTENT THAT NOW UNTO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN HEAVENLY PLACES MIGHT BE KNOWN BY THE CHURCH THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD,

11 ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE WHICH HE PURPOSED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD:

The cross was significant for both God the Father and for the Son. First, the cross was significant for both in that it is the highest acknowledgment of the authority of God. The Son became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

PHILIPPIANS 2:8

8 AND BEING FOUND IN FASHION AS A MAN, HE HUMBLD HIMSELF, AND BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.

ROMANS 5:19

19 FOR AS BY ONE MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE MANY WERE MADE SINNERS, SO BY THE OBEDIENCE OF ONE SHALL MANY BE MADE RIGHTEOUS.

Second, the cross was significant for both the Father and the Son in that it is the highest perfection of faith in God.

HEBREWS 5:8-9

8 THOUGH HE WERE A SON, YET LEARNED HE OBEDIENCE BY THE THINGS WHICH HE SUFFERED;

9 AND BEING MADE PERFECT, HE BECAME THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION UNTO ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM;

HEBREWS 12:2

2 LOOKING UNTO JESUS THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH; WHO FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM ENDURED THE CROSS, DESPISING THE SHAME, AND IS SET DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF GOD.

Third, the cross is significant to both the Father and the Son as the most definite augmentation of the good pleasure of God. He gave Himself as an offering.

EPHESIANS 5:2

2 AND WALK IN LOVE, AS CHRIST ALSO HATH LOVED US, AND HATH GIVEN HIMSELF FOR US AN OFFERING AND A SACRIFICE TO GOD FOR A SWEET SMELLING SAVOUR.

Fourth, the cross is significant for both the Father and the Son as a ground of the eternal continuance of the love of the Father to the Son.

JOHN 10:17

17 THEREFORE DOTH MY FATHER LOVE ME, BECAUSE I LAY DOWN MY LIFE, THAT I MIGHT TAKE IT AGAIN.

The cross was significant for Christ personally. First, the cross is significant for Christ for it is the way to the transfiguration of His position of love and power into that of Victor. It was the way from His being "in the bosom of the Father" unto the sitting "at the right hand of the majesty in the heights."

PHILIPPIANS 2:9

9 WHEREFORE GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, AND GIVEN HIM A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME:

HEBREWS 2:9

9 BUT WE SEE JESUS, WHO WAS MADE A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR; THAT HE BY THE GRACE OF GOD SHOULD TASTE DEATH FOR EVERY MAN.

HEBREWS 8:1

1 NOW OF THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE SPOKEN THIS IS THE SUM: WE HAVE SUCH AN HIGH PRIEST, WHO IS SET ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF THE MAJESTY IN THE HEAVENS;

Second, the cross is significant to Jesus as the way to the possession of His redeemed church. It was the way from His being "alone" as the corn of wheat, passing through death, unto victorious glorification and fruitfulness.

JOHN 12:24

24 VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, EXCEPT A CORN OF WHEAT FALL INTO THE GROUND AND DIE, IT ABIDETH ALONE: BUT IF IT DIE, IT BRINGETH FORTH MUCH FRUIT.

Only so could the "Leader of salvation" be made perfect as Leader and win the joy that lay before Him.

HEBRES 2:10

10 FOR IT BECAME HIM, FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, IN BRINGING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, TO MAKE THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.

HEBREWS 12:2

2 LOOKING UNTO JESUS THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH; WHO FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM ENDURED THE CROSS, DESPISING THE SHAME, AND IS SET DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF GOD.

Only so could Christ become the Firstborn of many brethern and the Head of His members.

ROMANS 8:29

29 FOR WHOM HE DID FOREKNOW, HE ALSO DID PREDESTINATE TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, THAT HE MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHERN.

EPHESIANS 1:22

22 AND HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM TO BE THE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH,

Only so could Christ acquire His "fulness," His "body," that "church which is the fullness of him who fills all things in all."

EPHESIANS 1:23

23 WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE FULNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL.

Certainly, as a Divine Person Christ has won nothing through the cross. The glorified Man in heaven possesses now no more divinity and personal glory than as the eternal Word He had before He became incarnate.

JOHN 17:5

5 AND NOW, O FATHER, GLORIFY THOU ME WITH THINE OWN SELF WITH THE GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS.

But as the Redeemer and "last Adam" Christ has nevertheless attained a fresh exaltation, even the name which is above every name, in which every knee shall at last bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

ROMANS 5:12-21

12 WHEREFORE, AS BY ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, AND DEATH BY SIN; AND SO DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN, FOR THAT ALL HAVE SINNED:

13 (FOR UNTIL THE LAW SIN WAS IN THE WORLD: BUT SIN IS NOT IMPUTED WHEN THERE IS NO LAW.

14 NEVERTHELESS DEATH REIGNED FROM ADAM TO MOSES, EVEN OVER THEM THAT HAD NOT SINNED AFTER THE SIMILITUDE OF ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION, WHO IS THE FIGURE OF HIM THAT WAS TO COME.

15 BUT NOT AS THE OFFENCE, SO ALSO IS THE FREE GIFT. FOR IF THROUGH THE OFFENCE OF ONE MANY BE DEAD, MUCH MORE THE GRACE OF GOD, AND THE GIFT BY GRACE, WHICH IS BY ONE MAN, JESUS CHRIST, HATH ABOUNDED UNTO MANY.

16 AND NOT AS IT WAS BY ONE THAT SINNED, SO IS THE GIFT: FOR THE JUDGMENT WAS BY ONE TO CONDEMNATION, BUT THE FREE GIFT IS OF MANY OFFENCES UNTO JUSTIFICATION.

17 FOR IF BY ONE MAN'S OFFENCE DEATH REIGNED BY ONE; MUCH MORE THEY WHICH RECEIVE ABUNDANCE OF GRACE AND OF THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL REIGN IN LIFE BY ONE, JESUS CHRIST.)

18 THEREFORE AS BY THE OFFENCE OF ONE JUDGMENT CAME UPON ALL MEN TO CONDEMNATION; EVEN SO BY THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ONE THE FREE GIFT CAME UPON ALL MEN UNTO JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE.

19 FOR AS BY ONE MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE MANY WERE MADE SINNERS, SO BY THE OBEDIENCE OF ONE SHALL MANY BE MADE RIGHTEOUS.

20 MOREOVER THE LAW ENTERED, THAT THE OFFENCE MIGHT ABOUND. BUT WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND:

21 THAT AS SIN HATH REIGNED UNTO DEATH, EVEN SO MIGHT GRACE REIGN THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO ETERNAL LIFE BY JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:45

45 AND SO IT IS WRITTEN, THE FIRST MAN ADAM WAS MADE A LIVING SOUL; THE LAST ADAM WAS MADE A QUICKENING SPIRIT.

PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11

9 WHEREFORE GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, AND GIVEN HIM A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME:

10 THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THINGS IN HEAVEN, AND THINGS IN EARTH, AND THINGS UNDER THE EARTH;

11 AND THAT EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.

Third, the cross was significant to Jesus as the most wonderful means to express His love.

EPHESIANS 5:25

25 HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, EVEN AS CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT;

GALATIANS 2:20

20 I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST: NEVERTHELESS I LIVE; YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME: AND THE LIFE WHICH I NOW LIVE IN THE FLESH I LIVE BY THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD, WHO LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME.

ROMANS 8:29

29 FOR WHOM HE DID FOREKNOW, HE ALSO DID PREDESTINATE TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, THAT HE MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN.

He has made His agonizing death on the cross to be the source of our life. Jesus has answered our gainsaying and hatred with redeeming love. What appeared to be satan's apparent victory became our Lord's most mighty and triumphant victory.