

The Cross and the Atonement

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1. **QUESTION:** What role does the **CROSS** play in the great work of atonement? In other words, what part does the **CRUCIFIXION** of Christ play in the great plan of redemption?
2. **QUESTION RESTATED:** Stated differently, is salvation still possible if Jesus had not been **CRUCIFIED** at Calvary?

ANSWER: The cross has nothing to do with the great work of atonement and it has no direct role to play in the plan of redemption, for the simple reason that Jesus did not die because of the cross! The crucifixion of Jesus at Calvary does not save anyone!

- a. **John 19:32-33**---This passage tells us that Jesus did not even die because of the cross; the two other men who were crucified with Jesus died because of the cross, but not Jesus; therefore it is evident that the crucifixion of Jesus does not factor into the plan of salvation!
 - b. **NOTICE:** While it is true that Jesus died **ON** the cross, He did not die **BECAUSE** of the cross; the cross was the **PLACE** of His death, but not the **MEANS** of His death;
 - c. **John 10:11, 17-18;** IT IS THE VOLUNTARY LAYING DOWN OF CHRIST'S LIFE IN DEATH THAT SAVES MAN; Jesus laid down His life; this is how Jesus died;
 - d. **Matt 20:28**--Jesus came to **GIVE** His life a ransom for many; it was not taken away from Him; the two other men who were crucified with Christ lost their lives; their lives were taken away from them by the crucifixion; Jesus **died** because He voluntarily laid down His life, not because He succumbed to the natural pathological results of being physically crucified!
3. **QUESTION REPHRASED:** Now, let's rephrase the previous question: "What role does the **DEATH** of Christ play in the great work of atonement? In other words, what part does the **DEATH** of Christ play in the great plan of salvation?"

ANSWER: The answer is now obvious: E-v-e-r-y-t-h-i-n-g!

4. It is the death of Christ, **IRRESPECTIVE** of whether He was crucified or not, that saves men; the death of Christ, exclusive of the cross is what is necessary for the great work of atonement; many fail to understand the meaning of the atonement because they readily assume that Jesus died because He was crucified;
5. If Jesus died because of the cross, then He could only have died the first death, not the second death;

6. If the crucifixion of Christ is what saves men, then God cannot condemn Satan, Judas, Annas, Caiaphas and Pilate in the judgment for working together to bring the crucifixion of Jesus about; on the contrary, God needs to give them credit for helping Him fulfill His plan; they are His heroes!
 - a. God has to give the mob credit for crying out "crucify him, crucify him!"
 - b. Moreover, Satan partially becomes man's Savior for instigating the mob to cry out "Crucify him! Crucify him!;" he gets credit for orchestrating the crucifixion of Christ;
7. The fact is, the cross was not God's idea at all, but the Devil's; nothing concocted by the Devil can ever contribute to our salvation;

The Cross of Satan

8. **QUESTION:** If the cross has nothing to do with our salvation, then how did Jesus end up being crucified? Why did Jesus allow Himself to be crucified? Could He not have prevented it?
9. The cross was Satan's **last and final attempt to derail the plan of salvation**; Satan knew that Jesus had come to earth as a man subject to death, to voluntarily lay down His life as that Supreme Sacrifice, and his plan was to use the cross as the final obstacle to prevent Jesus from laying down His life!;
10. Satan placed the Roman cross in front of Jesus as a "**last-ditch, desperate effort to frustrate the plan of salvation**", hoping that Jesus, through some flaw and weakness of character, might be tempted to yield to the strong natural desire for self-preservation, save Himself and thus abandon the plan of salvation;
 - a. "if you are the Son of God, come down and save thyself. . . "
 - b. "he saved others, himself he cannot save. . ."

The Expediency of the Cross

11. **QUESTION:** If the cross was totally Satan's idea and had nothing to contribute to plan of salvation, then why did the Father allow Jesus to go through it?
 - a. **Why did not God intervene** to save His Son from a shame and reproach of the crucifixion? Only the worst of criminals were crucified; there is no record of the Jews crucifying their own kind for this reason;
 - b. Also, did not the crucifixion unnecessarily **expose Jesus to increased risk of failure** on account of the tremendous physical and mental suffering involved in it?
12. **John 19:6-7; Lev 24:16--Jesus could have prevented His crucifixion**, but did not;
13. There are 3 very important reasons why God allowed Jesus to be crucified, even though it was unnecessary for the salvation of men; more than the salvation of men was at stake:
 - a. **Luke 10:18**--The crucifixion allowed Satan to manifest his natural malignity towards Jesus to the full extent; the crucifixion would then **expose Him to the universe as a liar and murderer**; it would result in all sympathy being uprooted from the hearts and minds of all the unfallen angels; "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."
 - b. **John 12:32-33; Heb 12:2**---The crucifixion gave Jesus the opportunity to demonstrate His **unconditional love** for humanity; "If I be lifted up, I would draw all men unto me;" the

drawing power is not in the cross, but in the One who was crucified; Christ’s willingness to endure the shame and the physical torture of the cross from the hands of those whom He came to save has a subduing effect on the heart;

- i. **1 Cor 1:18**--The remarkable love demonstrated by Jesus in allowing Himself to be crucified is the reason why Paul could say, the cross is “the power of God to those who are saved;”
 - ii. **Gal 6:14**—the glory of the cross is Christ’s self-sacrificing love; “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.”
- c. Most of all, in the crucifixion, God found the perfect **object lesson** to graphically demonstrate to our dull senses the kind of sacrificial dying His Son would have to die in order to make the redemption of man from the punishment and degradation of sin possible—a cursed death;
- i. **Deut 21:22**---everyone knew that death by hanging on a tree was associated with the curse of God; it amounted to total God abandonment and being eternally lost; by going to the cross, Jesus was making a statement that He was willing to be eternally lost to save mankind;
 - ii. **Gal 3:13**--Jesus allowed Himself to be crucified even though it would add nothing to His work of saving man, because man’s dull senses needed a live dramatization of His cursed dying; this is the death that rightly belongs to us;
 - iii. **Heb 13:12-13**--Jesus suffered without the gate; this is an expression of utter rejection by God;

“If I Be Lifted Up . . .”

14. **John 3:14; Gen 3:14**--the lifting up of a serpent, a cursed animal, on a pole, serves as a fitting emblem to represent the kind of death Jesus would die; the two thieves on each side of Jesus did not die this death; only Jesus did;
15. **Matt 27:46**-- We are given a tiny window as to what the curse of God is, when Jesus cried "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?";
- a. Hence, the curse of God is total God abandonment of the wicked in the lake of fire! it is the second death
 - b. **Matt 10:28**---this is the death where both body and soul are destroyed
 - c. **Matt 26:38**—“ My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death;” Jesus had began dying this death at Gethsemane but was strengthened by the Father so He could go all the way to the Calvary;
 - d. **Isa 53:12**-- Jesus poured out His (human) soul unto death

The Crucifixion	The Curse of God
Wrath of Rome	Wrath of God for sin
Can only kill the body	Destroys the (human) soul and the body; the death of the wicked in the lake of fire; this is the death the Law demands
Killed the two other men, but not Jesus	Will destroy the wicked in the lake of fire

Brings physical suffering only	Brings eternal separation from God
Forgiveness still possible (thief on the cross was forgiven)	Death with no hope of forgiveness
Resurrection a possibility	Death with no resurrection

The Cross: the Gospel Straitjacket

16. Satan has not stopped using the cross against God’s Law and His gospel;
- a. **The veneration of the cross**-- Satan has caused the cross to be glorified in the minds of superstitious people; the cross itself is idolized and is become an object of worship and veneration;
 - i. Hollywood movies portray the cross in Dracula movies as an object with magical powers;
 - ii. the "holy cross"—a popular title used by of certain institutions like hospitals, memorial parks;
 - iii. the cross is used a relic and hung on church steeples and walls
 - iv. "the wondrous" cross --on which the prince of glory died
 - v. “and I love that old cross. . .”; “I will cherish the old rugged cross. . .;”
 - b. **The Law done away at the cross (Col 2:14)**---Satan has used the cross as a tool to war against the Law of God
 - c. **Heavenly ministration of Jesus eclipsed by the cross**—Most serious of all, Satan is using it right now to hide the truth about the great work of atonement going on in the heavenly sanctuary; the idea that everything was “finished” at the cross is the result of our infatuation with the cross;
17. It is possible to hide the truth about the ministration of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary by exclusively focusing on the cross; it is possible to spend a thoughtful hour each day contemplating on the cross in place of dwelling on the truth about the intercession of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary;
18. **Heb 6:19-20; Heb 10:19-20**---While we are told that we will contemplate the earthly ministry and sacrificial dying of Christ for all eternity, we have to recognize that the earthly ministry of Christ was but a part of a comprehensive plan of redemption, and that we have to keep up with the progress of the work of redemption and go beyond the cross, as the apostle Paul did;
19. **Heb 8:1-3**---It is possible to deny Christ by denying His Priesthood; by rejecting Christ as the Messiah, the Jews refused to follow Jesus in His heavenly ministration and failed to receive the benefit of His atonement; this sad error is being repeated by millions of professed Christians today who will refuse to go beyond the cross and follow Jesus by Faith in His ministration in the heavenly sanctuary;

A More Excellent Ministry

20. **Rom 4:25; Rom 8:34**--The intercession of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is just as important as the sacrificial dying of Christ and is a continuation of His redemptive work;

21. **Heb 8:1-2; Heb 12:22-24**—the blood of the atonement shed at Calvary does not avail unless it is sprinkled; “sprinkling of blood” is sanctuary service language and implies priestly ministration; the application of the blood by a Priest in the heavenly sanctuary is needed for justification and perfection to occur (“just men made perfect”);

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. **Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling.** Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. **GC 425.**

22. **1 Cor 15:17**---Without Christ’s High Priestly work in the heavenly sanctuary today, the death of Christ as Sacrifice would absolutely have no efficacy for any one; this is why Paul could, “if Jesus was not raised from the dead, believers are still in their sins;
23. **Rev 12:5, 10**—Jesus was “caught up to His throne” is a reference to His mediatorial work in the heavenly sanctuary after His ascension to heaven (**Rom 8:34; Heb 1:3, 13**), the final result of which is the ushering of eternal salvation—“Now is come salvation, and strength and the kingdom of our God and the silencing of the accuser
24. **Rev 19:7-8**---The sole purpose of the High Priestly ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is to prepare her for the marriage of the Lamb; it is to remove that one hindrance to the marriage---sin and to replace it with His own perfect robe of character (the wedding garment);
25. **Heb 4:16, Heb 6:19-20** and **Heb 10:19** ---But as long as we are saying that --- “It was finished” at the cross, and as long as we are saying, “the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is unnecessary,” then we are refusing to take off **that gospel straitjacket** which makes it impossible to heed Paul’s invitation to follow Jesus in the ongoing work of intercession in the heavenly sanctuary;
26. **Gen 3:16**---If we are truly the bride of Christ, then our desire will be to our husband and we will be about doing the Bridegroom’s business.
27. **Isa 4:1**---But if we refuse to attend to the current business of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary, then we are comparable to the seven women who wanted to be married to Jesus in name only. . .
28. Our reluctance to follow Jesus into the heavenly sanctuary by faith is the most serious impediment to the finishing of the work God has begun in our hearts. . .

Fellowshipping with His Sufferings

29. **Phil 3:10; Rev 5:6**---In His work as Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, Jesus is presented by John as a Lamb slain; the pain of that cursed dying lives on in the heart of Jesus because of the constant commission of sin;
30. Only by putting off the gospel straitjacket and casting aside the shackles of traditional theology and following Jesus into the heavenly sanctuary is it possible for us to have fellowship with his sufferings;

His intercession is that of a pierced and broken body, of a spotless life. The wounded hands, the pierced side, the marred feet, plead for fallen man, whose redemption was purchased at such infinite cost. **GC 416.**