

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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“Preaching the same truth since before Kentucky was a state”

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THE CROSS

By: Dr. C. D. Cole

Introduction: Almost 20 centuries ago three crosses were erected against the Judean sky. A motley crowd had gathered to watch the Roman execution of three men; two of them were criminals against human society, but the other was different. His trial was different, and posed a problem for all who had a hand in it. There was a problem for His enemies, who had to trump up false charges. It posed a problem for the judge, who said he could find no fault in Him, a man whose wife warned him not to punish this just person. His execution must have posed a problem for the executioner, the Roman centurion, who exclaimed, truly this was the Son of God. His execution posed a problem for His own disciples who had been trusting Him to be a political king and deliver Israel from the Roman yoke. There was sadness in the words of the two disciples that day as they walked to Emmaus. Joined by Jesus, whom they did not recognize, but about whom they talked, and said, Luke 24:21, *“But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel...”* That statement revealed two things: that their hope was gone. They had hoped, but His death was the death of their hope. And their hope was in a political Messiah.

THREE CROSSES

Let us look at the three crosses:

So far as the size, shape and material, they must have been much the same.

The condition of the three who hung upon them was different. The two on the outside were sinners, the one on the middle cross was sinless; the only sinless man since Adam sinned.

The two on the outside were made to differ only by their different attitudes toward the person on the middle cross. They were alike in the beginning, for both derided him. But later one stopped deriding and began pleading. Luke 23:42, *“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”*

But in many ways that central cross was different. It was unique.

This cross had been planned before worlds were made; it was no accident.

This cross had been predicted by prophets from Moses to Malachi. Two thousand years of prophecy was fulfilled at Calvary. Matthew makes running comment as he narrates the facts of Calvary. He says this and that were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Calvary was not a mere incident in the life of our Lord; it was the purpose of His coming to earth. The cross was before Him when He left glory. For this cause

came I into the world. He came on the Lord’s business and His business was redemption business. That is why our Lord never blasted his persecutors and murders with denunciation. They subjected Him to every form of shame and degradation known to men and devils. They spat upon him, they slapped him in the face, they poked fun at him, they jeered and derided him, they challenged him to come down from the cross, they wagged their heads at him, and to all of it His only response was, Luke 23:34, *“...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...”*

This middle cross had a sequel. The men on the other crosses were taken down and buried and their bodies saw corruption and they were soon forgotten. But it was not like that with the man on the middle cross. The body was taken down and placed in a tomb, but it did not stay there, and did not see corruption. The powers of hell and earth were pledged to keep it there. The Roman government, the greatest earthly power, tried to make the tomb secure. A great stone was placed before it, the Roman seal was stamped upon it, and Roman soldiers guarded it. But that body came out. Christ said, when he was talking about his life, John 10:18, *“...I have power to lay it down, and I have*

power to take it again...”

A man who had started a religion and complained that he had so few followers was told that if he would go and die and be buried and rise again, then he might expect followers.

This middle cross was God’s cross. It was planned and executed by God. Isaiah 53:1-11, “*Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul,*

and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” Psalm 22:1-22, (in part) “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? . . . O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent . . . But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him . . . Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help . . . They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture . . . I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.”*

At Calvary God was making His Son who knew no sin to be sin for us. He took our sins that we might have His righteousness. Imputation not impartation. God punished Him that His justice might not punish us.

No man can escape from the just consequences of his sins. Philosophy nor science nor any human scheme has ever devised a way for man to escape. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The wages of sin is death. This is exorable law of justice. While there is no way of escape, the sinner may be rescued. And the cross was God’s way of rescue. Here is the only place of real hope. On no other

basis will God forgive sin. God will listen to nothing else as the reason why He should not punish any sinner.

“Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me.”

“Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.”

Every sinner must die for his sins. But here is a blessed truth. The believer dies in his substitute. To every believer, “Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

*“Dead to the law,
O happy condition;
Jesus has died
and there is redemption.”*

WITHOUT CHRIST

By: C. D. Cole

Ephesians 2:12, *“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”*

Introduction: The word *without* is associated with many other words to express lack of something. We speak of a man without means by which we mean a poor man. And so a man without health is a sick man; a man without friends is a social outcast; a man without work is an idle man; a man without a home is sometimes a GI Joe, and a man without a car is sometimes a Baptist pastor. There is such a demand for things that we are apt to think that a man’s life consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

We need things, but things are not the supreme need. Jesus said, Matthew 6:32,33, *“(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:)”* He was saying to His disciples that they did not have to make things the paramount object of their labours. *“...for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

Things have a place in our lives, but we harm ourselves when we make them paramount. The deepest of all poverty is to be without Christ. As physical beings we need things; as moral beings accountable to God, we need Christ.

Our object in preaching is to get men to see their need of Christ. Spurgeon: *“Young gentlemen, it is permissible for a preacher sometimes to wander from his subject provided only that he stick to his object.”* And of course the object must be to get men to trust Christ and honour Him.

WITHOUT A MEDIATOR

Without Christ man is without a mediator between himself and God. I Timothy 2:5, *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”* If there is one mediator between God and men, and Jesus Christ is this mediator, then to be without Him is to be without a mediator.

A mediator is a person who interposes between parties at variance to reconcile them and bring about peace between them. Mediation is always better than war. Mediation brings about peace; war never does. Peace treaties following wars are a farce. War does not produce peace. The very thought of such a thing is absurd. Wars do not stop because peace has been secured, because somebody is exhausted.

Sin has brought estrangement between God and man. Sin is an act of rebellion against God. God is sovereign but man wants to be. God put man under law, but man wants to be a law unto himself and do as he pleases. God is King but man is a rebellious subject. God cannot tolerate rebellion; this would mean abdication of His throne. God will not surrender to rebels; this would un-God Him.

In this warfare somebody is going to be hurt seriously and fatally hurt. Who will it be? God or men. Only the fool thinks he can successfully make war on God. Can impotent man, whose breath is in his nostrils, destroy the well-being of the Almighty? Can the creature dethrone the Creator and take the reins of government? If man can win this war with God, he doesn’t need a mediator. He need not sue for peace. Blind indeed is the man who thinks he is going to win against God!

Then too, if the sinner can propitiate God; if he can satisfy God’s demands and make himself

right with God, he doesn’t need a mediator. If the sinner can settle all past accounts with God and then live so as to secure the favor of God, he doesn’t need a mediator. But the sinner is just as helpless to make himself right with God as he is to win the victory over Him.

The sinner’s only hope is in a mediator; and such a mediator, who can satisfy the justice of God and turn away His wrath. What will it take to satisfy Divine justice? Nothing but the punishment of sin. Justice will make no allowance for sin. Justice will not compromise with rebellion. The rebel must be punished. This makes the work of the mediator difficult. In most cases of mediation both parties give in; there is a compromise. But in the war between God and men, God will not give in. So the Mediator must suffer what the rebel would have to suffer. Galatians 3:13, *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...”*

So to be without a mediator is to fight it out with God and win, or to surrender and then render satisfaction to His offended justice. In either case the sinner is hopeless, he is sure of hell.

And to be without Christ is to be without any mediator. How I wish I could get lost people to see what they are up against when they turn from Christ and refuse to trust him.

WITHOUT PEACE WITH GOD

To be without Christ is to be without peace with God. The unbeliever in Christ is exposed to the wrath of God. John 3:36, *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”* Isaiah 66: 15, *“For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a*

whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.” Revelation 19:15, “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” Many a sinner is saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no peace.

The only way we can enjoy peace with God is by trusting Christ. Romans 5:1, *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Colossians 1:20, *“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross...”*

When men look at the face of Christ in the day of judgment it will be so terrible that they are going to cry for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.

WITHOUT REMISSION OF SINS

To be without Christ is to be without remission of sins. Luke 24:47, *“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”*

Repentance and remission are associated only in Him. Repentance without faith in Christ would not bring remission of sins.

In the Russian-Japanese war a naval battle was fought in which the Russian fleet was defeated and almost destroyed. When the Russian Admiral and his captains returned to Russia they were court-martialed. As each one of the subordinate officers came into court he was accompanied by a lawyer to plead his case. In every case, extenuating circumstances or something else was pleaded for his exoneration. When the admiral himself came into court he was unaccompanied. To his superiors he simply said: “Sirs, The Russian fleet has been humiliated, the

people have confidence in you, I await my punishment.”

Conclusion: It used to be the custom of the Romans to put up a white flag at the gate of a city and tell the garrison if it would surrender while the white flag was up their lives would be spared. But when they replaced the white flag with a black flag that meant the garrison would be exterminated; no lives would be spared.

Sinner, God’s white flag of mercy is still flying; we are still in the day of salvation, but nobody knows how soon that black flag might go up; for you it might go up with sickness; it will certainly go up with death. Job 36:18, *“Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.”*