

YOU CHOOSE A CROSS

INTRODUCTION

33 years ago, a woodsman planted a sapling of Gopher wood. 28 years later his son cut down that full grown tree, and hewed out two timbers of wood. One was about 12 feet long, the other about 5. He left it on the hard rock of the desert mesa to dry, with the other lumber he was harvesting. Five years later he sold these two timbers to the Romans. This was good ship-building wood, and he hated to see them use it for the purpose that they wanted it for, but he sold it to them for 30 silver Dinars, which was a month's wages.

A lowly Roman soldier laid out the large timber on top of a hard and dusty rock called the Place of the Skull. The other, shorter piece, he carried to the Fortress Antonio in Jerusalem. The prisoner would carry it back, wearing it.

Jesus was that prisoner.

THE GREATEST BATTLE

Armageddon is not the world's greatest battle. This CROSS is the scene of the greatest battle of all time. Here our Lord fought and won the redemption of Mankind. Satan thought he had won. He killed God's only Son. Who would save man now? But Jesus became sin for us, and He died to carry it far away. He arose to give us proof what he had done.

THE CENTER OF HISTORY

Why do we count history from the birth year of this man Jesus? Everything that came before Him is BC Before Christ. Everything that came after Him is Anno Domini. This is the Year of our Lord, 1998. We count Jesus as the center of history because of this cross.

How odd that today we wear little crosses as jewelry. We might as well be wearing little gold ropes shaped like a hangman's noose, or little electric chairs. What is so special about the CROSS?

THE PASSOVER

Tomorrow, Thursday, is the High Sabbath. (Saturday is the regular Sabbath.) So Thursday is the Passover, commemorating the Jews leaving Egypt. This was their Independence, when God freed them from Slavery. ***The Cross is also our Independence Day.***

MOUNT MORIAH

Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, had another name once. It was called Mount Moriah. Two thousand years before, another Father would offer his only son on that same spot: Abraham offered Issac, but God spared the boy. Today, our Heavenly Father would offer His only Son here, and not spare Him.

Look at the cross. (walk around it) It is late Wednesday afternoon. The sun is bright and hot, and the sky is cloudless. Earlier, there was a violent earthquake, and the Sun was blackened, and there was a sudden hard rain. This happened when Jesus died.

THE ARK

Something else in the Bible was made out of Gopher wood. What was it? The Ark. Everything alive today descended from what Noah preserved in that Ark. It was a method of salvation for this world, the second from Creation.

This Easter Sunday is the same day that God led Noah and his family out of the ARK.

ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION

To the first world, the Ark was not salvation, but destruction. Everyone who saw it knew they would die without it. Their world was destroyed by water because of it.

This cross is the same thing. The world hates it. It knows that the cross is the ultimate Engine of Destruction. This world and everything in it will pass away because of this cross. Everything was nailed to the cross with Jesus on that day. All Laws, all governments, all civilizations and cultures. Indeed this very planet, and the whole solar system. And all of the universe . . . for in Jesus, as he was on that cross, all things were crucified with him on that day.

SECOND COMING

You and I look forward to the Lord's return. Do you realize that you will lose everything you own when that happens: Family Photos / Tape collection / Your House / Your Land / Your Mutual Fund / Your Retirement / Your Car / Every Monument / Every Art Gallery . . .

All you will have after that Event, *will be each other*, and all those you brought with you. It will all happen because of this CROSS.

WE ALL BEAR OUR CROSSES

Don't even go there! Don't compare your burden, which is common to all people, with this! What ever you are bearing, your unsaved neighbor is too. Don't say it like somehow we are mitigating our sins with our own suffering!

YOU CHOOSE A CROSS

This is what you choose when you become a Christian. This CROSS.

Hebrews 13:12 -13 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.

YOUR FAMILY

Every morning you get out of bed and you think, "I love my family." "I love my work." "I love my home." But you must leave them, give them up, and pick up this cross and follow Him.

YOU UNDERSTAND?

Galatians 2:20 For I am crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.

We said all things were crucified on the CROSS. Something else was crucified on that day wasn't it? You were! Therefore, you carry His CROSS to your work, to your school, to your neighbors, to your family. You lift HIM up in front of them. *Why?*

John 12:32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." They may crucify you. Some of them might believe!

THE END OF THE WORLD

They are DYING without Him. Just like that ARK, if they don't hold on to it, they will die. It is the end of the world. The Lord could return at any time.

You don't have time for your plans: YOU CHOOSE A CROSS!

You don't have time to plan your future: YOU CHOOSE A CROSS!

You don't have time to play in this playground: YOU CHOOSE A CROSS!

You don't have time to make investments: YOU CHOOSE A CROSS!

You don't have time to choose a bride: YOU CHOOSE A CROSS!

You don't have time be shy with your neighbors: YOU CHOOSE A CROSS!

You don't have time be polite in front of your family: YOU CHOOSE A CROSS!

They may crucify you. Some of them might believe! You might save some of them. LIFT JESUS UP!

INVITATION SEE HIS FACE

The cross is empty now. Jesus is in the tomb, waiting for Sunday morning. But could you see His face when He died? Bruised, battered, and bleeding. Such a horrible death. Such loss! But look at His face: A look of supreme satisfaction! He said, "IT IS FINISHED." What He really meant by that was "PAID IN FULL."

You are the reason He died on that CROSS. He was happy to do so.

Hebrews 12:2-3 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.