

# THE THREE CROSSES AT CALVARY

## Introduction

- 1) After Jesus was condemned to death, He was led outside the city of Jerusalem and crucified between two other condemned individuals (Lk. 23:33; Jn. 19:16-18)
  - a) Crucifixion was a method of execution used by the Romans – slow, tortuous, humiliating
  - b) Since that time, the cross has become a symbol to many of Christianity and salvation
- 2) The two other individuals were robbers/thieves/criminals (Mk. 15:27; Matt. 27:38; Lk. 23:32)
- 3) There were three crosses used that occasion for the purpose of execution, and each of them represents something significant for every person to consider today:
  - a) A cross of **Rejection**, a cross of **Repentance**, and the cross of **Redemption**

## I) A Cross of **REJECTION**

- A) At first, both thieves reviled Jesus with the other mockers (Matt. 27:39-44; Mk. 15:32)
- B) The words of one of the thieves continued unchanged as mocking blasphemy (Lk. 23:39)
  - 1) This thief was familiar with Jesus' claims, but derided Him as a false Messiah
  - 2) His evil heart was manifested in a criminal life and blasphemous words (Matt. 15:18-19)
  - 3) Goes along with mocking crowd – easy to follow the bitter and rebellious (Ex. 23:2)
- C) Many today reject Jesus and His claims
  - 1) Reject Jesus as *the* exclusive way, truth, and life for all men (Jn. 14:6; 6:27, 63, 66)
  - 2) Deceived and blinded by the philosophies of this world (Col. 2:8)
  - 3) Trapped in sin: hardened heart, worldly lusts, and the pride of life (1 Jn. 2:16)
- D) Rejection of God and His Son results in being eternally lost in sin (Jn. 8:24; Jn. 12:48)

## II) A Cross of **REPENTANCE**

- A) One of the thieves has a change of heart and rebukes the other thief (Lk. 23:39-41)
  - 1) Points out the real reason for rejecting truth – no fear of God! (cf. Ps. 36:1)
  - 2) He admitted that they were condemned justly, but Jesus did nothing wrong (Acts 3:14)
  - 3) Refused to continue ignoring his own failings and attacking others – admitted guilt
- B) This thief asks Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom (Lk. 23:42)
  - 1) What a statement of faith and repentance! Change of heart led to seeking a new life
  - 2) Believed that Jesus would be alive and possess a kingdom that would bless him
  - 3) Acted on knowledge already possessed to do the right thing while there was opportunity
- C) Jesus promised hope and salvation to this penitent thief – “today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Lk. 23:43)

## III) The Cross of **REDEMPTION**

- A) Jesus is crucified for all mankind that they might be saved (Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:15)
  - 1) The sinless Lamb of God died for every sinner (1 Pet. 2:22-24; Rom. 5:8)
- B) His sin-sacrifice provides redemption for those who believe and obey (Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12)
  - 1) We are justified freely by grace through the redemption in Christ (Rom. 3:24)
- C) We are redeemed (bought) by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19; 3:18)
- D) What must I do to be redeemed and sanctified (Heb. 10:10)?
  - 1) Believe and obey (repent, confess Christ, baptism – Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:9-10)

## Conclusion

The **crosses** of the two sinners represent all of us, either rejecting Christ or repenting of our sins. The cross in the middle is what we all need – redemption and sanctification through the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 2:2). Consider these crosses and examine your own life. Kneel in submissive obedience to the crucified Christ today, for He suffered to become the “author of salvation to all who obey Him” (Heb. 5:8-9)!