

The Cross

It has often been said that Christians “march to the beat of a different drum.” They do so because the crux of their world view turns events upside down; i.e., they know life-giving meaning where others see only folly or scandal (I Corinthians 2:18-25).

James Nickel

T. F. Torrance (1913-2007), “The saving act of God in the blood of Christ is an unfathomable mystery before which the angels veil their faces and into which we dare not and cannot intrude, but before which our minds bow in wonder, worship, and praise.” What we know by human theological proposition of this wonder is a knowledge in truth, but also in part.

James Nickel

The mournful dirge of the prophet Ezekiel traces the departure of the Glory of God from Israel. The Glory first lifts from the cherubim above the Ark of the Covenant and then moves ... to the threshold of the temple ... to the temple court ... to the wall of Jerusalem ... to the mountains of Israel toward the east ... the Glory is gone. Then, God brings Ezekiel back to the temple door and he sees the issuance of water from the threshold toward the east, a mere trickle at first, then rising and rising, flooding the earth with its healing flow. After a passing of five hundred years, the Glory appears to shepherds on the hills of Bethlehem, just outside Jerusalem. At the same time, the Wise Men in the east see the Glory as a star in the heavens and the light leads them, in time, to a house in Bethlehem where they worship the Word made flesh, the incarnate Glory of God. Thirty years later, Jesus cleanses the Jerusalem temple of its money changers and announces, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” He is speaking of Himself, the true temple of Israel, its True Glory. On Golgotha, the True Glory collapses in the agony of crucifixion, and, as verification of death, a Roman soldier takes a lance and pierces His side, puncturing the pericardium ... immediately blood and water gush out. The blood of Jesus to cleanse sins ... and water, from the True Temple, starts its journey, a mere trickle at first, but in time a watershed of health to the nations, renewing the world.

James Nickel

During the Passion Week, every arrangement of darkness arrayed itself against Jesus Christ. We behold a list of the worst of betrayal, anger, backbiting, vengeance, self-orientation, envy, jealousy, bribery, injustice (personal and institutional), mockery, cruelty, hatred, sadism, broken promises (e.g., Peter), ... It was indeed the battle of the ages: darkness, the lie, and hatred pitted against light, the truth, and love. The warfare in Jerusalem had its counterpart in the heavenly realm where evil spirits from the pit of Hell instigated each and every onslaught. It all came to a head at the Cross where the sins of the world engulfed the person of the God-man in unspeakable agony. During three hours on Good Friday, the light from the Sun dissolved, the ground shook ... all creation moaned under the burden.

But, the Cross, what seemed like sure defeat at the hands of the world power of Rome, threw a wrench into all the works of evil. It is through the Cross and the resurrection that Jesus Christ won the battle of the ages, the definitive victory over sin, darkness, and evil.

And, by the incarnational proclamation to the world of the Good News, light from this victory has dispelled the darkness ever since.

Indeed, Christ has won: *Christus Vincit, Christus Regnat, Christus Imperat* ... Christ is conquering, Christ is reigning, Christ rules over all.

James Nickel

When pain is unbearable, let the Cross of Christ bear it.

James Nickel

If I see aright, the cross of popular evangelicalism is not the cross of the New Testament. It is, rather, a new bright ornament upon the bosom of a self-assured and carnal Christianity. The old cross slew men;

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the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it.

A. W. Tozer, *The Divine Conquest*

The Cross of our Lord is the devil's mousetrap.

Augustine

The Cross of Christ became the crushing instrument that for all time curtailed any possible victory for the devil.

Gary DeMar

Although it was the earth that bore the Cross, in reality, it is the Cross the bears the earth.

Stanley L. Jaki

The man who takes his cross and follows Christ will soon find that his direction is *away* from the sepulcher. Death is behind him and a joyous and increasing life before.

A. W. Tozer, *The Divine Conquest*

If Jesus were to return to earth, the first thing we would do is crucify him again.

Raymond Brown, Cited in Thomas Cahill, *Desire of the Everlasting Hills*, p. 319