**What Jesus Accomplished on the Cross**

* Part I: The Cross and Individual Sinners
	+ **The Forgiveness of Sins**
	+ The Defeat of Death and Promise of Eternal Life
	+ Our Adoption As Children of God
	+ Our Sanctification As a Believer
* Part II: The Cross and the Curse, Creation, and the Nations
	+ Overcame the Curse of Genesis 3
	+ The Redemption of Creation
	+ The Redemption of the Nations
* Part III: The Cross and the Redemption of Israel and the Jewish People
* The belief of many folk who consider themselves Christians—members of the “Church”
* 1) There is no hell or judgment; God loves and forgives everyone
	+ Christ’s death wasn’t really needed (if it even really happened historically)
	+ *Or*, if it did happen, somehow His death made it possible for universal salvation without our faith or acceptance of it--the cross was *that* sufficient (neo-orthodoxy)
* So, we can basically live any way we want in our morality and treatment of others
	+ There will be no justice for the evil and crimes committed during this life—
		- The physical and sexual abuses, violence, wars, thefts, cruelty to children, immoral behavior, unfaithfulness to obligations, fraud– will go unpunished (even Hitler will be in heaven)
* 2) *Or*: There is a hell and judgment, and it exists because God is mad at us sinning humans and will pour out His wrath on us and send many of us to hell
	+ We are "sinners in the hand of an angry God"
* Matt. 25:41
* “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”
* 3) Because God is a really a good God, He poured His wrath on His begotten Son instead of us
	+ On Jesus (the perfect human who did not sin—and was completely undeserving of this wrath)
* A tough theological concept

* A consequence of this thinking:
* God pouring out wrath to deal with sinners serves as *the model* we also can use in dealing with our opponents, enemies and criminals—in anger by punishment, revenge, violence and war
* 4) The Church replaced Israel, receiving all of her physical, worldly promises “spiritually”
	+ The historical suffering of the Jews is just bad cosmic luck; or perhaps payment for crucifying the Messiah
	+ And all Jewish people (including those killed and unjustly treated in centuries of anti-Semitic pogroms and the Holocaust) will go to hell if they do not become born-again members of the Church

* 5) There is no Millennium Reign
	+ There is only a heaven waiting for the “saved” that is completely distinct from this earth
* Rev. 21:1-2
* Then I saw a new heaven and a *new earth*, for the first heaven and earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I saw the holy city, the *new Jerusalem*, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
* 6) The Kingdom of God is in heaven with God; and not on earth today
	+ Therefore, signs and wonders do not occur anymore
	+ The Holy Spirit can help save us, and get us to heaven, but not do much more than that (He doesn’t heal; doesn’t deliver; doesn’t confront evil)
* 7) The plan: go to church; get saved if need be; be good; go to heaven at death
	+ Do not worry about bringing God and His kingdom to earth or stewarding the earth as God’s image-carriers
	+ Adam and Eve and the satan have so fouled things up, that improving things on earth, influencing others, and stewarding the earth wisely, are pretty much hopeless endeavors
* A Christian perspective that is closer to an Old and New Testament Biblical viewpoint
* In the four gospels, the gospel preached by Jesus and the twelve was the gospel of the *kingdom of God*
* Matt. 4:23
* And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the *gospel of the kingdom*, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.
* Jesus sent his disciples out with the same message:
* Matt. 10:7-8
* “As you go, preach this message: ‘The *kingdom of heaven is near.’* Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.’”
* Acts. 1:3
* After His suffering, He presented Himself to them with many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a span of forty days and spoke about *the kingdom of God*.
* Acts 28:30-31
* *Paul* stayed there two full years in his own rented house, welcoming all who came to visit him. Boldly and freely, he proclaimed the *kingdom of God* and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.
* Clarification: Paul’s gospel emphasizes the “grace of God” in addition to the kingdom of God
	+ Paul explained that his was the gospel to *the Gentiles* during the *“times of the Gentiles”* and in the *“age of grace”*
	+ The gospel of “saved by grace alone” is entirely appropriate for the Church (and is the gospel the most often preached)
	+ *But* it does not replace completely the gospel of the kingdom
	+ Because, even as Gentile believers in the age of grace, we have the privilege and opportunity to bring more of the kingdom of God into this earth, displacing the kingdom of evil, as the twelve apostles were instructed to do
* More precisely, the gospel of the grace of God, and salvation by faith in Christ's work, is *our entrance* into a relationship with Jesus
	+ Our growth as followers and disciples of Jesus should naturally feature:
		- * 1) Less self-centeredness
			* 2) More sacrifice and concern for others
			* 3) More evangelism, ministry, intercession, deliverance
			* 4) That is, co-working with the Holy Spirit in advancing the *kingdom of God* on Earth
* God’s kingdom *has* come to earth—inaugurated by Jesus and His first century disciples
	+ And the kingdom will continue to come in more fullness as it is proclaimed and lived by Jesus’ disciples (us) until He returns
	+ "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven."
	+ We are commanded to invite others to join us on earth, as citizens of heaven (evangelism), and advance God's coming kingdom (discipleship and Christian service)
* Jesus’ and Paul's hope for the church was that she be faithful to bring *heaven to earth* as much as is possible until the Second Coming
	+ And not that the church regard His work on the cross simply to get us away from this earthly life, to avoid hell, and go to heaven

* Jesus’ Great Commission is to make *disciples*, not just "converts" or folks who do the minimum needed to escape hell, and do not contribute to His kingdom’s advance on earth
* What the cross accomplished
* The Messiah died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*
* I Cor. 15:3-4
* For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that *Christ died for our sins* *according to the Scriptures*, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day *according to the Scripture*
* That is, Jesus' death on a cross occurred according to the Old Testament promises and prophesies
	+ To the Jewish nation and its people *first*
		- Whose exodus, Law, conquest of Canaan, festivals, Passover, exile and return all pre-figure and are fulfilled in Jesus
	+ To the Gentile world and its people *second*
* 1. Christ died on the cross so we could be forgiven of our sins
* Heb. 9:24-25; 28
* For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own…so Christ, *having been offered once to bear the sins of many*, will appear a second time, *not to deal with sin* but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.
* The first Passover in Egypt resulted in judgment on Egypt; its gods, its leaders, and its people
	+ The Israelites (and *their* sins, in addition to the Egyptians’) was “passed over” – they were “covered” by the blood on the doorposts
	+ This foreshadowed the blood sacrifices in the Law which also “covered’ the sins of the Jewish people temporarily
	+ Until the Lamb of God became the sacrifice that did not merely “cover” the sins, but actually *took away the sins* entirely--of Israel and of the world
* It was no coincidence that Jesus died during the Passover week
	+ His blood shed on the cross provided a *second Passover* for Israel as well as the world
	+ And the bread and the wine at Holy Communion symbolizes Jesus’ broken body and shed blood for the church established a *new* covenant
* II Cor. 5:19
* ...in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, *not counting their trespasses* against them
* It will be developed further that the target of the judgment of God during the first Passover was *not* the Israelites—but the gods and the leaders of Egypt
	+ The Jews were exempted from this judgment—"passed over"
* The target of the judgment of God during the "second" Passover—Christ's crucifixion and resurrection—was not *humans*
	+ It was the "principalities and powers" – the same "gods" worshipped by the Egyptians – that were judged, spoiled, and stripped of their authority
	+ Humans were "passed over" and given an opportunity to receive the covering and taking away of their sins by Jesus' work
* Sin is the consequence of idolatry
	+ Idolatry is the “crime”
	+ That is, worshipping the creation (and anything in it) rather than worshipping the Creator
	+ Sin is the consequence or side-effect of idolatry
* Israel in the Old Testament worshipped wooden idols (and the pagan demon gods symbolizing, standing behind them, and sometimes actually “inhabiting” them)

* We moderns are idol and creation worshipper as well
* The main objects of idolatrous worship today (and the sins that results) are:
* 1) Self (pride, selfishness, ambition, rebellion)
	+ Including obsession with physical appearance (vanity)
* I Sam. 15:23
* For rebellion is like the sin of *divination*, and arrogance like the evil of *idolatry*
* 2) Money/material possessions (covetousness, greed)
* Matt. 6:24
* You cannot serve both God and money
* 3) Men/cult-of-personality—“heroes”--reliance on people, institutions, rather than God—which is to succumb to thrall and witchcraft

* Ps. 146:3-5
* Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help…Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help
* 4) Nations/cultures/family (worshipping the gifts from God, not the Giver)
* 5) Sexual idolatry (adultery; fornication; pornography use)
* 6) Entertainment and entertainers (hedonism)
* Ps. 101:3
* I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me.
* Idolatry—the worship of the created (and not the Creator)--is *the* problem
* Romans 1:25-26
* They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is forever worthy of praise! Amen. For this reason, *God gave them over* to dishonorable passions. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones…
* The tragedy of idolatry from God’s perspective is our failure to live as *image-carriers of God* because we are distracted by sin
	+ We then fail to glorify God in worship and by faithful stewarding of the creation (like Adam and Eve before the Fall)
* The real problem of “sleeping in” and missing work, is that *work does not get done*
* The issue of “identity”
* When *self* is an idol, humans follow their own preferences and do not follow God’s plan for their lives
	+ They are not “image-carriers” of God.. but are “image-carriers” of self
* Gen. 1:27-28
* So, God created man *in his own image*, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and *have dominion* over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.
* Rom. 1:18
* The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the *godlessness* and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness
* Godlessness (doing things without God) vs. Godliness (doing things within God’s purposes)
* Rom. 3:23
* …for all have sinned and fall short of the *glory* of God
* That is, God’s glorious purpose for God-image carrying mankind
* Romans 8:29
* For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be *conformed to the image of his Son*, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.
* Eph. 4:24
* ..And put on the new man who has been created in *God's image*--in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth.
* II Cor. 3:18
* But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the *same image* from glory to glory...
* When men and women do not step up to their God-given roles and responsibilities as
	+ Men, women, fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, neighbors, friends
	+ Leaders or followers in the jurisdictions of:
		- Family, church, work-place, community…
* When they do not use the power and resources available to them in their Holy Spirit-given gifts (the same abilities and power that Adam and Eve had before the Fall)...
* When they seek a different identity that God’s identity for them
	+ An identity that serves their own image, not God’s image…
* Then men want to be women; women want to be men; tall people want to be short; short people want to be tall; the unathletic want to be athletes; people in one occupation want to be in another

* This thinking is a deception; an illusion; and often life-ruining and eternal life-imperiling
* God’s plan: serve God as He created you: where you are; as who you are
	+ “The Chosen” and Jesus and little James
	+ “Play the hand you have been dealt” – in cards; in sports; in life
* This understanding could give us a new perspective on “identity or gender dysphoria”
	+ We all have, or are at risk for identity problems
	+ Maybe not a gender identity problem
	+ But certainly a “God’s-will-for-my life” vs. “my-will-for-my-life” identity problem

* It is a rare person, even believer, that walks completely in God’s identity for him/her (maybe only Jesus?)
	+ Who understands and desires to be an “image-bearer” of God
	+ But we can strive toward this
	+ This “identity crisis” revelation may help us have less judgment, and more compassionate for non-believers, liberals, gays, trans folk, and *ourselves*
* There are great benefits to God forgiving us--we are reconciled with God
* Rom. 5:10
* For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
* Heb. 2:17
* He (Jesus) had to be one of us, so he could serve God as our merciful and faithful high priest and sacrifice himself for the forgiveness of our sins
* And we are now able to forgive others
* God’s purpose of the cross was not primarily to appease the wrath of God toward men
	+ Although He does have wrath against sin, and is deeply disappointment in the sinner whose potential as an image-carrier and good steward has been compromised
* Rom. 1:18
* For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven *against all ungodliness and unrighteousness* of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
* God's wrath is revealed against unrighteousness, but He loves us sinners (both believer and non-believer)
* John 3:16
* “For God *so loved the world*, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
* Romans 5:8
* But God shows his love for us in that *while we were still sinners*, Christ died for us.
* The theological notion that Christ’s death on the cross was needed to appease God’s wrath toward humanity, and that this wrath demanded a human sacrifice (Jesus) is a *pagan* concept
	+ Consistent with human sacrifice methods of Baal, Molech, Chemosh, and Aztec and Mayan god-pleasing
	+ Consistent with Greek and Roman gods striving with and punishing their culture's human heroes and heroines (e.g., the Trojan War narratives)
* Atonement theories in church history:
* Jesus’ work on the cross served as a:
	+ Moral Influence (Christ’s self-sacrifice serves as an example to us)
	+ Ransom (Christ gives Himself to overcame the curse and the satan)
	+ Satisfaction and Penal Substitution (Christ was sacrificed in order for there to be justice)
	+ Redemption (Jesus' death purchased enslaved sinners)
	+ *Christus Victor* (Christ was a victor over sin, death, the curse)
* The challenge to us is to see the cross as the path to getting us to our true purpose and identity in life in Christ
	+ To help us be true worshippers of the Creator
	+ To tear down the idols of self, material things, and false heroes in our lives
	+ To stop pursuing what does not help our lives, our sanity, our friends and family
	+ To serve God joyfully in our gifts
	+ To heed the great questions of the prophets Isaiah and Elijah...
* Is. 55:2
* "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy."
* I Kings 18:21
* “How long will waver between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.”