
Chapter 3 What Jesus Accomplished

The cross was not an accident or merely a tragic example of injustice. Jesus said He came to give His life as a ransom, and the apostles taught that His death occurred according to God's saving purpose (Mark 10:45; Acts 2:22-24; 1 Corinthians 15:3). His resurrection was not a comforting symbol; God raised Him bodily from the dead (Luke 24:36-43; Acts 2:32).

He Bore Our Sins

Jesus "bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). He was sinless, yet He suffered for the guilty to bring us to God (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18). This is substitution: Christ stood in the place of sinners and bore the judgment our sins deserved (Isaiah 53:4-6; Galatians 3:13).

The cross reveals both God's justice and love. God did not pretend evil did not matter; He presented Christ as the atoning sacrifice so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:25-26). God's love is displayed in giving His Son for sinners and enemies (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-10).

No single biblical picture exhausts the meaning of the cross. Scripture describes sacrifice, substitution, redemption, reconciliation, victory, cleansing, and justification (Romans 3:24-26; 5:9-11; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 9:11-14). These truths belong together. The cross defeats evil because it deals with guilt; it reconciles us because Christ bears sin; and it frees us because the price of redemption has been paid.

The Sacrifices Pointed to Christ

Why does the Bible spend so much time describing altars, priests, blood, and sacrifices? God was teaching His people that sin brings death, that guilt cannot be dismissed, and that approach to a holy God requires the provision He appoints (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22). The worshiper did not invent a sacrifice or decide the terms of forgiveness. God provided the pattern.

Those sacrifices could not finally remove sin. They were repeated because their work was incomplete, and the priests who offered them were themselves sinners (Hebrews 7:27; 10:1-4, 11). They pointed forward to Jesus. Christ entered once with His own blood, offered Himself without spot to God, and secured redemption that does not need to be repeated (Hebrews 9:11-14, 24-28; 10:10-14). The

cross is not one more religious sacrifice added to many others. It is the fulfillment to which the earlier sacrifices pointed.

He Redeemed and Reconciled Us

Redemption is the language of release by payment. Jesus gave His life as a ransom and purchased people for God by His blood (Mark 10:45; Revelation 5:9-10). Reconciliation is the restoration of a broken relationship. Through Christ's death, enemies may be brought into peace with God (Romans 5:1, 10-11; Colossians 1:19-22).

Justification belongs closely with the cross. Because Christ died and rose, God can declare the believer righteous without denying the believer's former guilt (Romans 4:23-25; 5:1). This verdict is received through faith, not achieved through a lifetime of religious performance (Romans 3:26-28; Galatians 2:16).

He Rose Victorious

The resurrection vindicates Jesus' claims, confirms the saving sufficiency of His work, defeats death, and guarantees the future resurrection of believers (Romans 1:4; 4:24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 54-57). If Christ has not risen, Christian faith is empty and believers remain in their sins (1 Corinthians 15:14-19). Chris-

tianity therefore rests on a public claim about history, not merely on a private spiritual feeling (Acts 2:22-32; 26:22-26).

He Ascended and Reigns

After appearing to His disciples, Jesus ascended to heaven and will return (Acts 1:3, 9-11). He reigns at the Father’s right hand, intercedes for believers, and will finally defeat every enemy (Psalm 110:1; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28). The risen Christ is not absent or powerless; He is Lord (Acts 2:33-36).

KNOW THE WORDS

WORD	PLAIN MEANING
Atonement	Christ’s saving work by which He dealt with sin and reconciled sinners to God (Romans 3:25-26; 1 John 2:2).
Substitution	Jesus suffered in the place of sinners, bearing our sins and judgment (Isaiah 53:5-6; 1 Peter 3:18).
Redemption	Freedom secured by the price of Christ’s blood (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
Reconciliation	God restoring sinners to peace and fellowship with Himself through Christ (Romans

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	5:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21).
Resurrection	God's bodily raising of Jesus from the dead and the promised future raising of the dead (Luke 24:39-43; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

THINK IT THROUGH

Q Why Could God Not Simply Ignore Sin?

A good judge does not call evil good. God's forgiveness is not indifference to justice; at the cross, God deals with sin while mercifully saving believers (Exodus 34:6-7; Romans 3:25-26). We should not imagine an unwilling Son being punished by an unloving Father. The Father sent the Son in love, and the Son willingly gave Himself (John 3:16; 10:17-18; Galatians 2:20).

Q Is There Reason to Believe Jesus Rose?

The New Testament presents early testimony that Jesus died, was buried, rose, and appeared to individuals and groups, including more than five hundred people at once (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). The disciples proclaimed the resurrection publicly in the city where Jesus had been executed (Acts 2:22-32). The empty tomb alone does not prove every Christian claim, but the combined testimony of Jesus' death,

burial, empty tomb, appearances, and the transformed apostolic witnesses calls for an explanation (Matthew 28:1-10; Luke 24:1-49; John 20:1-29).

WATCH FOR COUNTERFEITS

Some messages reduce the cross to a path toward comfort, wealth, or personal success. Others suggest Jesus had to suffer in hell or become sinful in nature to finish redemption. Scripture says Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross and declared His work finished there (John 19:30; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 10:10-14). We should not add speculative teachings that Scripture does not require (1 Corinthians 4:6).

DECLARATION OF FAITH CONNECTION

This chapter supports these Church of God convictions:

- Jesus' death provides atonement and forgiveness for sin (Romans 3:23-26; 1 John 1:7-9).
- Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised bodily from the dead (Luke 24:36-43; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
- Christ ascended and now intercedes at the Father's right hand (Acts 1:9-11; Romans 8:34).

- A bodily resurrection awaits both the saved and the lost (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Using Romans 5:6-11, write what we were before Christ acted, what Christ did, and what believers now possess.

TALK IT THROUGH

1. What does it mean that Jesus died as our substitute?
2. How does the cross display both justice and love?
3. What is the difference between redemption and reconciliation?
4. Why is the bodily resurrection essential to the Gospel?
5. What is Jesus doing now?

FIVE DAYS IN THE BIBLE

Day 1: The Suffering Servant — Isaiah 52:13-53:12

List what the Servant suffers and what His suffering accomplishes.

Day 2: Just and Justifier — Romans 3:21-31

Notice how righteousness is received and how God remains just.

Day 3: Reconciled to God — Romans 5:1-11

Write every result of being justifieded by faith.

Day 4: Raised Indeed — Luke 24:1-49

List the evidence Luke presents for bodily resurrection.

Day 5: The Resurrection Chapter — 1 Corinthians 15:1-28

Write why Paul says resurrection is essential.