



# THE CROSS



Through dying and rising Jesus achieves two things we cannot do for ourselves.

**Putting us right with God** through complete forgiveness.

**Dealing with the destructive effects of sin and evil** in our lives and in the whole of God's creation.

Atonement means "covering over someone's debt".

God always wants to be one with His people.

## WHAT JESUS ACHIEVES:

### Winning the victory over evil and death:

This is the main way Christians have understood His work on the cross. On the cross Jesus is revealed as the King who frees the whole universe from its slavery to fallen spiritual powers which pollute the world and lead to death. "...by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death..." (Hebrews 2:14)



### By paying a ransom:

In Christ God had paid to rescue His creation (including human beings) from slavery to oppressive powers. Jesus gives "His life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45).



### Being our representative:

Standing in our place and bearing the consequences for our sins: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us..." (2 Corinthians 5: 21). "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross..." (1 Peter 2:24).

### Being a sacrifice:

He is the "sacrifice" (Ephesians 5:2), the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) He is the way God revealed His love as He "sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 John 4:10).

## WHAT THIS BRINGS US:

### Freedom from evil, death, the fear of death, and the "slavery" of law-keeping

Through Jesus' life and death God has overcome. "...by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." (Hebrews 2: 14-15)

This liberates the whole of God's creation.

We are "redeemed" from the slavery of being under a law we could never keep. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us..." (Galatians 3:13)





## Forgiveness and honour

The consequences we might expect from a holy God for sin are removed. There is now “no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1) “He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.” (Colossians 2:14) In a “guilt culture” we could say that God deals with what I have done by taking its consequences away. In a “shame culture” we could say that God restores who I am and my relationship with Him and others..

## Right before God with a clear conscience

Jesus takes on the sin of the world, and human beings now receive His purity in exchange: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21). “...How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” (Hebrews 9:13-14)



## Peace and confidence with God

Through the cross, the peace with God we could never earn for ourselves is achieved. “...we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” (Romans 5:11)

## Only by being fully divine and fully human is Jesus able to do this.

*Because He is divine* Jesus lives a sinless life – God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Only someone who is not standing in quicksand can pull others free.

*Only by becoming fully human* is it possible for a holy God enter into the full depths of sin, evil and death, taking our place and responsibility for our history of failure. Unless He is one of us, He can be our judge but not our saviour.

“What is not assumed is not healed.” (Gregory of Nazianzus).



## Jesus was not protecting us from an angry Father

*God is fully involved in every way.* On the cross “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.” (2 Corinthians 5:19) pouring Himself out in the only way His nature allows.

*God’s self-giving love is on display most fully on the cross.*

