

The Mystery of the Cross

QUESTION:

How could Paul say this?

Galatians 6:14

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

How is it possible to “glory” in such a terrible thing as the crucifixion of Christ?

ANSWER:

The true meaning of the cross was unveiled after Christ had died. This meaning, previously hidden, is made clear in the Church Epistles of the New Testament, and is indeed glorious.

1 Corinthians 2:6-7:

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a **mystery**, the **hidden wisdom** which God ordained before the ages for our glory. Which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

Romans 16:25:

“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to **my gospel** and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the **revelation of the mystery kept secret** since the world began.”

IMPORTANT POINTS TO GRASP AND APPRECIATE

- 1. Old Testament prophets foretold the death of Christ but this concept wasn't yet understood.**

Two examples of Old Testament statements about this are:

Daniel 9:26

“Messiah shall be cut off; but not for Himself.”

Isaiah 53:11

“My righteous Servant shall justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.”

- 2. Christ Himself knew He would die, and why, and repeatedly said so, but His sayings about this were not understood.**

Two examples of statements by Him about this are:

John 6:51

“The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

Matthew 20:28

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

- 3. Several Scriptures showing these statements by Christ were not understood are as follows:**

Matthew 16:21-22

²¹ “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priest and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

²² Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”

Mark 9:31-32

³¹ “For He taught His disciples and said to them, ‘The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hand of men, and they will kill him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.’”

³² But they **did not understand** this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.”

Luke 18:31-34

³¹ “Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.

³² For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon.

³³ They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.

³⁴ But they **understood none** of these things; this saying was **hidden from them**, and they **did not know** the things which were spoken.”

John 20:9

“For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

4. But in the Church Epistles of the New Testament, the true meaning of the cross is made clear:

Galatians 3:23

“Before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would **afterward be revealed**.

Romans 3:21-16

²¹ “**But now** the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

²² Even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe; for there is no difference;
²³ For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
²⁴ Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is Christ Jesus;
²⁵ Whom God set forth as propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God has passed over the sins that were previously committed,
²⁶ To demonstrate **at the present time** His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

5. The very heart of Paul’s Gospel message is that Christ died for our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

¹ “Moreover brethren, I declare to you “the gospel;” (*good news*) which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,
² By which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain.
³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
⁴ And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

2 Corinthians 5:21

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”