

The coming of Jesus to this earth, His crucifixion, death and resurrection was prophesied many centuries before He came to this world:

Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 53:4-5: "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, *He* was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

Then, Jesus himself declared:

Luke 9:22: "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

John 8:28: "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things."

His apostle added:

1Peter 1:20: "He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

Do I realize that the cross was not a mistake, but rather that God chose to send His Son to open the door to salvation? (John 3:16)

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***“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”***

***Luke 14:27***



What were Jesus' commands to carry our cross?

Matthew 16:24-26: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Matthew 10:38-39: "He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."

John 12:25-26: "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor."

Therefore:

John 15:18-19: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

Do I understand that carrying my cross is not simply an option, but a requirement, if I am to follow Christ as Lord into eternal life?

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*“Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”*

*Romans 6:6*



What does the message of the cross reveal to the world?

1Corinthians 1:18: “The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

Jesus’ purpose being that He:

1Peter 2:24: “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness.”

John 12:32: “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself.”

Why?

John 3:14-15: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Galatians 3:13-14: “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

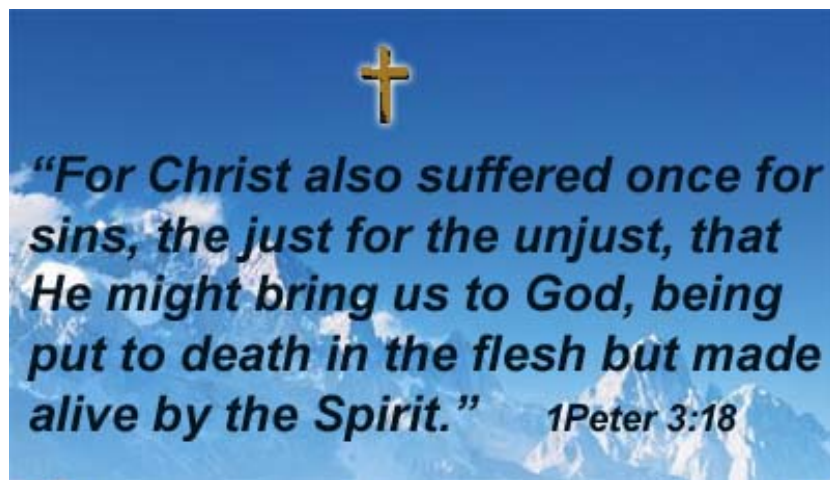
2Corinthians 5:21: “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Therefore:

Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Does Christ live in me, so I live by faith to follow Him?

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Why is the cross the focus for the salvation of the world?

Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 5:21: "So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Galatians 2:16: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ."

The purpose being:

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Therefore:

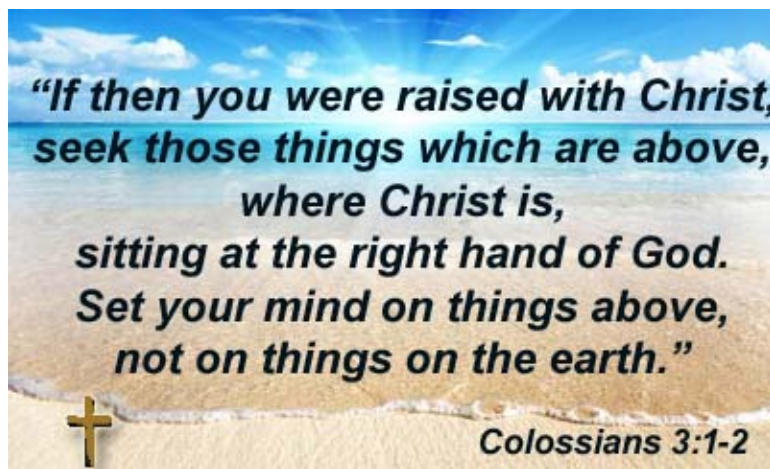
Hebrews 12:1-2: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The reason Jesus clearly declared:

Matthew 10:38: "He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

Clear enough that to follow Christ to eternal life, I must carry my cross?

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How does the Word of God define the path of carrying our cross?

Philippians 2:5-8: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross."

Colossians 2:6-7: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."

Why?

Romans 6:5-6: "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His* resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."

Galatians 6:14: "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Therefore:

Romans 8:1: "Do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

Has the world been crucified to me so I truly follow Christ?

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***“He who loves his life will lose it,  
and he who hates his life in this  
world will keep it for eternal life.”***

***John 12:25***



How does the Word of God describe those who refuse to follow Christ? 1Corinthians 2:14-15: “The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one.”

In Matthew chapter 19, the young rich man claimed to have lived a good life. When Jesus answered Him as to how he can inherit the Kingdom of God, the young man said:

Matthew 19:20: “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

Then Jesus answered:

Matthew 19:21: “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

What happened next?

Matthew 19:22: “When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

Then Jesus said to His disciples:

Matthew 19:23: “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.”

What will it be? Do I choose to follow Christ, or do I follow after the world?

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