

THE ETERNAL SYMBOL

Matthew 27:26-54 John 3:14

Introduction: We see symbols, logos, signs and images representing businesses, clubs, sports teams, schools and various organizations. Even our jewelry and rings have insignias embedded on or in them somewhere. Have you ever noticed the steeples on church buildings? Ever wonder what the steeple was up there for? Also did you notice that most often there was a cross mounted on top of the steeple? Some churches even have a hand with a finger pointing upwards mounted on the steeple. Obviously these things mounted upon the roof of church buildings represent heavenly things and especially the cross. Many wear a cross suspended on a necklace around their necks, some have rings with a cross on the ring, some carry a little cross in their pockets. Some even have a cross tattooed on their arms or elsewhere on their bodies. These cross emblems started out representing the cross upon which Jesus died. The cross represented and still represents the Christian faith.

I. THE CROSS: THE SYMBOL OF DEGENERACY OF MANKIND

1. The cross was an instrument of death.
2. The cross was an instrument of shame.
3. The cross was the most horrible way to be put to death.

II. THE CROSS: THE SYMBOL OF A DEED OF REDEMPTION

1. Salvation is something only Jesus Christ could do. Man can add nothing.
2. The death of Jesus Christ was His redemptive act for mankind.

III. THE CROSS: THE SYMBOL OF THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Jesus didn't tell or preach the Gospel - He WAS/IS the Gospel.
2. Jesus was born, lived and died for the single purpose to bring mankind and God together.

IV. THE CROSS: THE SYMBOL OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD

1. God tolerates no sin by any person at any time.
2. God is equally condemning, has not favorites, does not "look the other way." All mankind is guilty of sin.
3. God is just and fair, but is also righteous.
4. God is love and wants all mankind to be saved.

5. God took all the necessary steps to save mankind.

V. THE CROSS: THE SYMBOL OF VICTORY OVER SIN

1. Satan battled with God and said, "*...I will ascend....I will....etc...*"
2. Sin is of Satan and sin and Satan oppose God.
3. Every human being is sinful.
4. Jesus was tempted by Satan to commit sin.
5. God brought sin and the cross together.
6. At the cross Satan and sin were defeated.
7. Jesus was resurrected on the third day thus gaining victory over death, the grave and sin.

VI. THE CROSS: THE SYMBOL OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

1. Christians are told to "*...take up thy cross..*" and are to share Christ's cross in self-denial, witnessing, missions, intercessory prayer, giving good for evil and being like Christ.
2. Jesus Christ came not to be served but to serve. So it is with those who live in the shadow of the cross and are called "Christians."

CONCLUSION:

1. The cross is many things to many people - a charm, a trinket, etc.
2. The cross stands for what it cost God to save those who would believe in Jesus Christ.
3. The cross stands for what Jesus Christ had to do to save us.
4. The cross stands for the way of life Christians are to live.
5. What has the cross meant to you?
6. What does it mean now?
7. Have you accepted all the cross truly represents?