

# ***THE ENIGMA OF THE CROSS***

## **(I Corinthians 1:18-31)**

- Introduction:
1. An ***enigma*** is something that is hard to explain and hard to understand.
  2. Thus, the cross of Christ may aptly be called an enigma.
    - a. The Gentiles thought it was foolishness (1:23).
    - b. To the Jews it was a stumblingblock (1:23).
    - c. Today the cross has become a trinket, a beautiful piece of jewelry while its meaning is forgotten.
  3. Let us refocus our eyes on the cross of Jesus and perceive with clarity, the significance of this unparalleled event.

### **I. THE PARADOX OF THE CROSS**

- A. One reason that the cross has been misunderstood is because it is a great paradox.
- B. Notice some of the paradoxes:
  1. It saddens us - but it gives us joy.
  2. It was tragic - but it was glorious.
  3. It was Satan's victory - but it was also Satan's defeat.
  4. It brought shame to mankind - but it also brought glory and honor.
  5. It shows God's hatred of sin - but His love for the sinner.
  6. It brought death - but it also brought life.
  7. On the cross, Jesus won by losing, and He overcame by surrendering.
- C. Although the cross of Christ appears to be full of contradictions, it is the means by which God chose to save us (I Corinthians 1:18).

### **II. THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS**

- A. Why did God send His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross?
- B. (Psalms 8:4) "What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?"
- C. There are two reasons that Jesus endured the cross.
  1. Theologically.
    - a. It was necessary for salvation - atonement had to be made for our sins.
    - b. (II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 6:23).
  2. Personally.
    - a. God loves us dearly (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8).
    - b. (Hebrews 12:1-2).
    - c. (Ephesians 2:16).

### **III. THE PLEDGE OF THE CROSS**

- A. If our reconciliation to God was accomplished by Jesus on the cross, then is the work done (I Corinthians 1:29-31)?
- B. Although we are saved by the grace of God manifest on the cross, some may:
  1. Fall short of the grace of God (Hebrews 12:15).
  2. Receive the grace of God in vain (II Corinthians 6:1).
- C. "***Jesus is the Answer***", but He's not an easy fix.
- D. (Luke 14:25-28; Matthew 16:24-26).

- Conclusion:
1. Thank God for the cross of Christ.
  2. Let us glory only in the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:14).
  3. (Romans 6:1-14).