

Proof of the Historical Truth of the Cross

A verse in the Koran about Christ says: "They did not kill Him nor crucify Him, but it appeared so to them" (Sura al-Nisa' 4:157). Scholars disagree about the meaning of this text. Some say that He was crucified and did not die but was taken down from the cross. Another group asserts that they crucified another person who was falsely assumed to be Jesus. There are different views among this group concerning the identity of the substitute. Others say that God lifted Him up to heaven while He was still alive. Yet another group says He was put to death and God raised His spirit from death.

Let us now consider the statements of the Holy Scriptures. In its prophecies we find decisive evidence for the death of Christ on the cross.

Zechariah prophesied that He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver and that with this sum they would buy a potters field.

David prophesied in Psalm 22 that Christ would be tortured and crucified.

In Isaiah 53:7 we read: "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."

In Psalm 22:18 there is a prophecy that says: "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing."

In Zechariah 12:10 we find this prophecy: "They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."

Christ's predictions of His death are clear and cannot be denied.

The gospels record His last days on earth, including the time that He committed His spirit into His Father's hands at death. About Himself He said: "The Son of Man will be handed over into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise" (Mark 9:31). He also said: "The Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified" (Matthew 26:2). "He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and be killed and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life." (John 3:14, 15).

Evidence for the crucifixion of Christ is also found in the testimony of the apostles of Christ. Peter declared to the Jews: "Jesus of Nazareth was... handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross" (Acts 2:23). John wrote: "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from every sin" (1 John 1:7).

The amazing miracles that occurred at His death testify to the significance of that event: The sun was darkened, the curtain in the temple was torn in two, there

was an earthquake and the bodies of holy men were raised to life. Those who witnessed His death were astonished and many believed in the Crucified One.

The centurion exclaimed: "Surely he was the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:54).

The records of history give further evidence of Christ's death:

1. The pagan historian Tacitus wrote about the crucifixion and suffering of Christ in the year 55 A. D.
2. Josephus, a Jew, recorded the event of Christ's crucifixion.
3. The Jewish Talmud witnesses to the fact of His death. In an edition published in 1943, on page 42, we find this sentence: "Jesus was crucified a day before the Passover."

Dear reader, in the light of such evidence we cannot but accept the gospel and believe that Christ was crucified. He shed His blood willingly because He loved us and wished to purify us from our sins. For this reason He endured all manner of pain and unbearable torment. Thanks be to the Lord, who, by His death and resurrection has defeated Satan and conquered death and hell: Thank you, Lord Jesus, the Christ of God, you are our incomparable Savior.

If you wish to learn more about this subject, we are ready to send you a booklet on the same subject free of charge. Write to us with your address printed clearly.

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