

THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

Have you ever seen a picture of the gears inside an old-fashioned clock? Wheels with teeth spin slowly around, anchored in time and space, pushing interconnected toothy disks to the next spot in their rotation. The gears are woven together, each one impacting the next. That is how history works as well. As each person acts out their life, other lives are impacted and turned. Events and movements click into place before spinning us to a new time, a new place, and a new event.

This interconnected overlap of people, events, and movements is exactly what makes history so fascinating. The more you learn about the happenings of the past, the more you will see the invisible gears connecting events together, and you will recognize the ways in which those matters affect your life today. Even more important, the more you learn about our great God and his plan for our salvation, the more you will see his hand in our story.

Of all the events which have occurred in the expanse of human history, not one is more important than the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. A cross was a wooden torture device invented by the Persians in the time of Ezra and then used widely in the Roman Empire during the days of Jesus. The Cross is a specific event. It refers to the work that Jesus did on the old wooden structure—a cross.

The Cross is the most important event in all of human history because it is the moment when Jesus, who is God the Son and the Son of God, paid for the sins of all who believe in him. Not only did Jesus bring about the forgiveness of sin for all believers, but at the Cross Jesus also made his followers friends of God. There's more. At the Cross, Jesus conquered sin and death for all eternity.

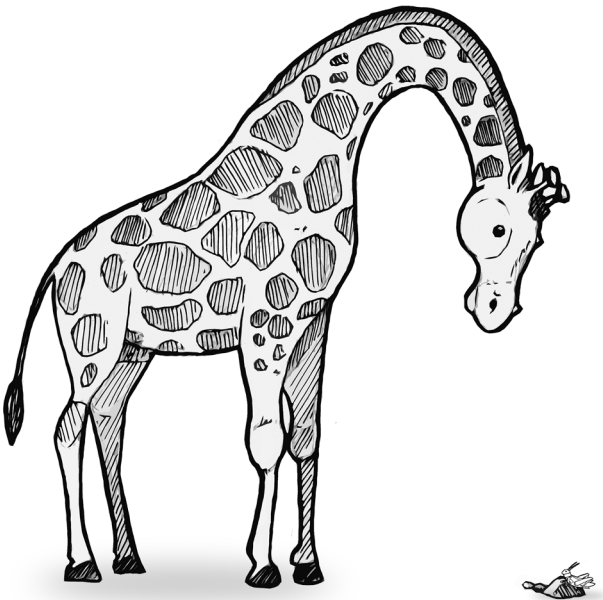
Now, Jesus is often two things at once. Jesus is:

- Both God the Son and the Son of God.
- Both fully God and fully man.
- Both the Creator of the Universe and born of a woman whom he created.

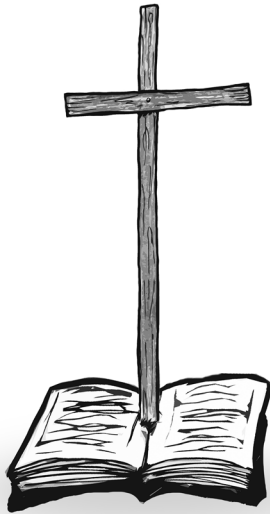
In all of history, these things can only be said of Jesus. There is a mystery to these truths. It's not that

we can't be certain that what God says is true, but the mystery is that we can not understand exactly how it is true. We can, however, understand what God has revealed to us through his Word so that we can know Jesus and be saved forever. So, we may not understand every mystery about God, nor understand why a truth is so, because we are just people and God is God.

We are a little like grasshoppers trying to understand a giraffe. We can see only a little bit of what is real. But we know that God's Word is trustworthy and correct. So, we learn what God says, and we know that what he says is true. We believe him because he is God.



You know that the Cross is the most important event in all of history. It is the most important event in the Bible, too. In fact, over and over again the stories in the Bible point us toward Jesus and toward the sacrifice he made for us on the Cross. Once you see how the Cross shows up in God's Word, you will notice how all of the Old Testament history points forward to the Cross. All of the New Testament points to the work Jesus did on the Cross too.



After Jesus was crucified, resurrected, and then rose to Heaven, the apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Colossians, “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:13-14).”



The Bible is the story of God's great plan for salvation. Paul's words to the Colossians tell us that Jesus carried out God's salvation plan on the Cross. We are all sinners, and the punishment for our sin is death. But, the sins of all who believe in Jesus and turn away from sin (repent), are nailed to the Cross.

The work Jesus did on the Cross to free his people from their sins was planned before the beginning of the Earth. The cross alone was just wood, and it could not have accomplished anything without Jesus. Only Jesus, the Son of God, could be miraculously born as fully God and fully man. Only Jesus lived a perfect life. Only Jesus took the punishment for the sin of every believer in him so that we could be forgiven for our rebellion against God.

This is the story of God's great plan for salvation through faith in Jesus, who—by the grace of God—died in the place of sinners on the Cross. It is the story of how Jesus conquered sin and death. It's the story of the greatest event in all of history—the one that can change your life for all of eternity.