

can live forever with Him. The Bible says that we are “redeemed ... with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18,19).

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Just as we have seen with the two thieves, there are two responses to Jesus—and two eternal destinies. Jesus died on the cross to redeem you from sin, and rose from the dead to offer you eternal life. I pray that you will see yourself as you really are—a condemned sinner—and that you will turn to God, trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior. The choice is yours to make. Which do you choose today: rejection or repentance?

“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. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:16,18)

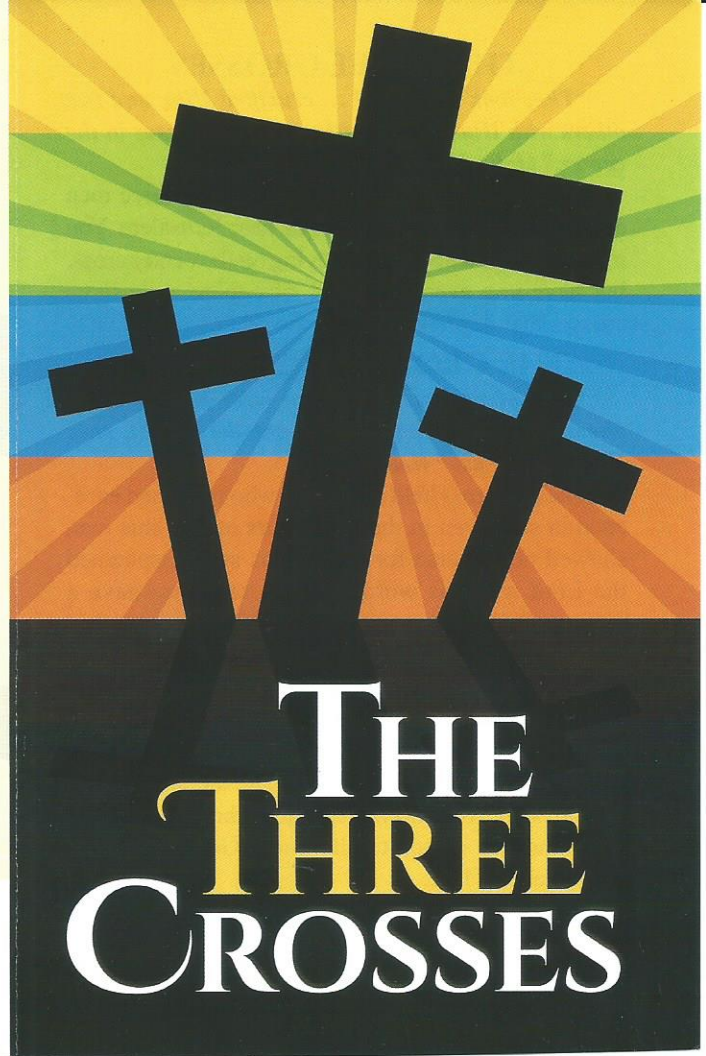
Gospel Series #N256

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®.

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MOMENTS WITH THE BOOK

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THE THREE CROSSES

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"They took Jesus and ... crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center." (John 19:16-18)

On a dark day nearly 2000 years ago, three men died on three crosses on a hillside near Jerusalem. You may have heard about Jesus dying on the center cross, but have you ever wondered why there were *three* crosses that day? What about the other two people?

THE CROSS OF REJECTION

"One of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.'" (Luke 23:39)

The first cross held a criminal who remained hardened in sin. Even in the final hours of life, this man showed no remorse for his actions and blasphemed the Lord with his words. In this cross we have a picture of all who reject the salvation offered by God through His Son. Just like the unrepentant thief, we are condemned to death because of our sin. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). God sent His own Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for our sins. All who reject Jesus Christ will die in their sins and spend eternity under God's judgment in the Lake of Fire.

THE CROSS OF REPENTANCE

"But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying ... 'We receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man

has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23:40-43)

On the second cross we find a thief who admitted that his actions were wrong and that he deserved the punishment he was receiving. This change of heart and mind is called repentance, and is something we all must do. We must see the error of our ways and turn to God's way. Jesus said, "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:5). Turning to Jesus in complete humility, this thief called out to Him for salvation. Think of the great faith this required: Jesus was bleeding and dying right beside him, yet this poor sinner trusted his eternal soul to Him. Because of his repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, he received the promise of everlasting life in Heaven with His Lord.

THE CROSS OF REDEMPTION

"You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." (Revelation 5:9)

On the third and final cross we see Jesus, our Redeemer. To redeem means to buy back. Our sins are like a debt far greater than we can pay. Jesus was sinless and holy, yet chose to take upon Himself the punishment for our sin and the death we deserved. Then, three days later, He rose triumphantly from the grave. It is only through His blood that our sins can be washed away. He paid the price for us, so that we