

# Are you “CRUCIFIED with Christ” (Galatians 2:20)

## (Updated content)

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Light on the Rock

All scriptures are NKJV unless otherwise noted

by Philip Shields

As we come to Passover, it is appropriate we examine why Christ had to die by the intensely painful death of being crucified for our sins and why Paul says HE was crucified with Christ. God’s plan of redemption begins with Yeshua’s crucifixion, pictured by the sacrificial Passover lambs. The reality is Christ on the cross. So Passover and the crucifixion go hand in hand. Yeshua tells his followers they must take up their cross daily and follow him. Are YOU crucified with Christ? What does that mean? This has everything to do with being “in Christ” and understanding Passover.

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Greetings, brothers and sisters of the House of YHVH, the House of Abba our dear Daddy Father. In a few weeks we’ll be remembering our Savior as we partake of His Passover. We’ll be washing feet, drinking from the Master’s cup of red wine and remembering our Savior’s sacrifice for us. The Apostle Paul says in Galatians 2:20 that in fact HE had been crucified with Christ. But we know Paul was never actually crucified. So what does that mean, for in fact we have all been called to take up our cross – Yeshua says that in Luke 9:23-- and be crucified with him. What does all that mean?

Crucifixion – especially that of Yeshua, is at the root of Passover. Don’t get hung up on whether or not he was nailed to a tree or to a cross. Romans used both profusely. What matters is that he was crucified – a most painful death, giving us the word “excruciating” – meaning “the pain associated with being crucified”.

There are two Greek words related to Christ’s “cross”. The most commonly used one is *stauros* – a cross, stake or crosspiece. The other is *xulon* – often translated “tree” in relation to Christ’s crucifixion (1 Peter 2:24; Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29). But *xulon* can also refer to “wood, stump, post or tree”. So don’t get hung up on whether he was on a cross or tree. The Romans used both, often, sometimes even using an X pattern or just an upright post with hands above the head. They did whatever was easiest for them with the wood and materials available. Some get hung up on this because the “Cross” has been used in pagan religions as well. So has the mother-and-child motif. This does not invalidate the true religion’s claim to the cross and mother and child. Keep the main thing the main thing. It’s about Yeshua and how he was crucified for us, to take on himself the wrath and penalty for our sins.

### **Acts 13:28-29**

“And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. 29 Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree [xulon – wood, tree, post] and laid Him in a tomb.”

Many have made the story of the Passover lamb the core of what they discuss on Passover. I tell you: the lamb pointed to the crucifixion tree, to the cross of Christ. Remember to always keep the main point-- the main point. Yeshua our Savior is the main point. The cross on

Calvary starts the plan of God Most High to redeem someday almost all of humanity from the grasp of the evil prince of darkness, Satan.

In Roman times, criminals were crucified along the main road in/out of the cities so all could see what happens to bad people. In 70 AD, after Jerusalem rebelled and was sacked, burned to the ground and destroyed – about 100,000 Jews, men-women-and children-- were savagely nailed to crosses all up and around Jerusalem. They couldn't find any more wood or trees to do this with by the time they were done. This savage punishment is being done all over again to Christians in Iraq and Syria by extremist Muslims in the name of Allah.

But Yeshua was innocent. So he “became sin for us” to redeem us. This is the central message of Passover. Focus on it – and not the OT lamb and all that.

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that WE might become the righteousness of God in Him”.

Though I've spoken on this topic before, there will be some crucial updates in today's sermon. Even if you heard the previous one, I recommend you hear this one as we come to Passover. Passover, more than anything else, is *about the blood of God's son Yeshua being shed for us, from a crossbeam on a tree*, so that God could pass-over our sins. I also strongly recommend you hear/read my sermon from April 2014 about “When I See the Blood”; it's a 2 part sermon.

As we come to Passover, I believe this is a wonderful topic to delve into so we fully appreciate the service we'll be participating in. This message will be very personal – for me and for you – and will help you ponder deeply what we're doing as we drink of Master's cup on Passover.

**WHY Did Yeshua (Jesus) have to die by CRUCIFIXION?**

WHY did Christ have to die such a horrible death? I'll give the quick version this time around so I have time to cover newer material:

**1. The Death Yeshua suffered had to be by execution to pay for sin; it was a criminal's death.**

The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). It's real death, not just a spiritual death of “separation from God”. Yeshua really died, for real. His Spirit went back to the Father, and the body without the spirit is dead (**James 1:26**). Remember? “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (**Luke 23:46**). So the wages of sin is not - - as so many believe – eternal life separated from God. No! It's really death.

When Yeshua took on our sins, he had to pay the death penalty for our sins. He became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). He could not have just been “put to sleep” gently by His heavenly Father. He absorbed all of the wrath for us, in our stead – Romans 5:9-10. So he had to be flogged, tortured and then killed.

He was crucified beside 2 other criminals, to enhance the “guilt by association”, as well as fulfillment of the prophecy that He was “numbered among the transgressors” (Luke 22:37 and Isaiah 53:12b). The thief who repented pictures the vast number of people who will repent in the future and be forgiven of all their sins and be accepted into the kingdom of God. The other one never repented and he represents those who will not repent and have to experience their 2<sup>nd</sup> death themselves.

**Isaiah 53:12b**

“...and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many,  
And made intercession for the transgressors.” (Father, forgive them...” from the cross.)

Christ had to become a curse for us, taking the curses we had on us – on to himself (Galatians 3:13-14)

**2. Jesus also had to die by shedding His blood**, for “without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” (**Hebrews 9:22**). In fact, blood was the means in the Old Covenant by which things were purified. Hebrews 9 is all about that. The very word “covenant” in Hebrew means “cutting”. He shed a lot of blood in the scourging; “marred more than any other man” (Isaiah 52:14).

How did Yeshua die? Of a broken heart? Not at all. He died by the shedding of blood. John 19:34 says a Roman soldier *had* taken (as it should be translated) a spear, like a bayonet, and used it to rip open Yeshua’s sides, and “out poured blood and water”. The English makes it sound like it was after His death, but the Greek actually reads that a soldier “*had* pierced...” Either way, he had shed a lot of blood for us and died by shedding of blood.

**John 19:34** “But one of the soldiers [had] pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.”

He had to die before the Romans came to smash his kneecaps (nice folks), so that He could also be the perfect sacrifice, without any broken bones (John 19:35-37). He was pierced, definitely, for “all shall look upon Him whom they *pierced*” (Revelation 1:6-9).

**3. The way Yeshua died had to be painful and brutal to picture how brutal and painful sin’s end result is. Crucifixions were painful.**

Sin has its pleasures for a moment, and how well we all know (Heb. 11:23-24). The high of the drug; the buzz of alcohol, the stolen pleasures of fornication or adultery, giving in to covetousness, letting loose with profanity when you get mad enough, getting away with a lie to keep yourself out of trouble.

But, because of the passing pleasures of sin, we can forget how brutal sin is in the final outcome. Your sins, MY sins – have caused people a lot of pain. It goes way beyond ourselves.

- The adulterer who breaks up a marriage and smashes the family unit – that’s brutal to all those affected. May God forgive all who have been involved in that when they repent.
- The buzz of alcohol hurts terribly when as an intoxicated driver, you bring incredible sadness to a family whose loved ones you’ve killed or maimed for life.

Yeshua’s suffering is to remind us that our sins left a lot of wreckage in our wake. Why are you looking at me? Your sins have left a path of wreckage too. Don’t kid yourself. Christ wasn’t scourged and tortured just for me, but for all of our awful sins...yes, yours too.

So there are many verses that say “it was necessary for Christ to *suffer* and die...” (**Luke 24:46**; 1 Pet. 2:23, 3:18, 4:1, etc). It pictures what happens when we don’t obey God. In the end, we suffer. So the way Jesus died had to be by extreme suffering. That’s where the word “excruciating” comes from – the pain of the cross.

Now – let me make a quick point here: if you really understand that YOU and I also have to be crucified with Christ, it will at times be very painful and difficult to fully follow our Master,

## The first Bread and Wine

In the Old Testament, the Passover was foreshadowed by **Melchizedek in Genesis 14** *bringing bread and wine* to Abraham after he defeated the 4 kings who had captured Sodom and its surrounding cities, including Lot and his family. If you continue reading into Genesis 15, it is clear that this was right at the Passover, at the same time Yeshua took the bread and wine. Then the next day there was the sacrifice of the cut-up animals –again pointing to the crucifixion – and then darkness, picturing Christ in the tomb.

Later we know the Old Testament Passover in **Exodus 12** was about a head of household picking a perfect lamb for his household that was killed and whose blood was splattered by using a *hyssop* branch splashing the lamb's blood at the top and sides of the doorpost and lintels (the side posts) going into one's home. In Exodus 12, first we're told to take "A lamb" (Ex. 12:3) and then later it changes to "YOUR lamb" (verse 5). *We must take ownership of this sacrifice that WE cause and that we slay for our household.* Paul does this also in 1 Cor. 5:7 when he speaks of "Christ OUR Passover". So though we are remembering how Yeshua died for all humanity who will accept him, it's more personal than that: he died for YOU, for YOU.

The blood was placed on the door, over the threshold where the "basin" was. Who is "the Door"? Of course. Yeshua is what the door pictures (John 10:9-10). We enter into His presence through the Door of His blood. The cross had blood at the top lintel where His head would have been and also on the side posts, where his hands would have been. The blood on the lintels and posts pictured the cross. That is why we glory in the cross of the Lamb of God, as Paul himself often said. Don't hesitate to speak of the cross, even though pagans indeed also used that symbol. Paul and the apostles certainly used it (1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2; Gal 6:14).

Then YHVH said when He sees the blood (Ex 12:12-13), He would strike all the gods (elohim) of Egypt and then Pass-Over that home and no one in there would die. He did not say, "When I see your perfect life, or your wonderful heart, or all your acts of service...", no, He says, "When I see the blood."

Brethren: *We cannot ever be good enough on all our best behavior and good works to merit God passing over our sins. Period. We can't.* God Most High, our Father, passes over our sins only when Abba sees we are covered by Yeshua's crucifixion blood. So where should our focus be? On HIM, in Him – not on all the rituals and good works *we* do.

We can have by grace what we could never earn.

I gave a sermon last spring with that title: "When I see the Blood", and I recommend you hear it. There's so much that can be said about that.

Then God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son to come and die for all who would accept him, that we would not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). God the Father wants to be a real father of a real family. All who do accept Yeshua as their Savior are included in the New Covenant and given them a right to be born of God.

### **John 1:11-13**

"He came to His own, and *His own did not receive Him*. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His

name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Did you get that? Born of GOD, not born of man, nor of the flesh, in this verse not even "born of the spirit" – but "born of GOD".

When John the Baptist saw Yeshua he said, "Behold the Lamb of GOD, who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). Let's get that again:

- He's God's lamb for HIS household; the "Lamb of God" – ultimately his sacrifice will be for anyone in all the world who will accept His blood in their stead. Isaiah 53 makes clear that God himself ultimately sacrificed Christ – for all of us.
- His blood *takes away* our sins, and therefore its penalty and wrath associated with it'
- In my sermon "When I See the Blood" April 2014 I go into many, many more deep meanings of the blood of Christ.

### **HIS CUP**

**So on the eve of Passover day**, Yeshua passed around HIS cup with red wine, symbolizing His blood of the New covenant (Luke 22:20), that we take inside of us, cleansing our heart and soul. We don't drink of "A cup" or vial. NO—we must be thinking we are drinking of HIS cup. The difference is profound. But drinking of His CUP was more than just drinking of his blood/wine. It also pictured being willing to accept whatever Abba makes us go through in our life as one of His children – the good stuff and the severe trials too.

Then Yeshua was illegally arrested, scourged and beaten with a terrible flogging prior to being nailed to a tree and crossbeam. The Romans were not limited to 39 lashes as the Jews were. And they knew how to make it be as painful as possible. Then they pounded nails into his hands/wrists – and his heels as they crucified Him as a common criminal. GOD KNEW, even in **Genesis 3:15**, exactly what would happen, as He prophesied that the serpent would "bruise his heel". *The part of the heel where they'd pound in the nail was full of nerves. It was the most pain-sensitive part of the foot.* But in the crucifixion the son of God smashed Satan's head – defeating Him – in the lives of all who would accept Yeshua as their Master.

**Please be turning with me to Galatians 2:20**, a memory verse for many of you perhaps. So now we have Paul saying, years later, that he had been crucified with Christ. Let's read it. What does that mean? We know he wasn't literally crucified with Christ, ever. So what did Paul mean? What does it mean for you and *me*? You might be surprised at what Paul was getting at.

### **Galatians 2:20-21**

**"I have been crucified WITH Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;** and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in [of] the Son of God, who loved ***me*** and gave Himself for ***me***. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

I've found reviewing this passage this year has been very piercing to my heart – even as I exult in the Master's love for me and all his brothers and sisters.

As we go into this verse in depth, let's remember our Christian brothers and sisters who, though they may not have exactly our beliefs in all areas of doctrine, are being literally

*crucified*, tortured, beheaded and suffering for the Name. Let's be praying for them and honoring their faith and sacrifice.

### **Called to Carry our Cross**

Yeshua says clearly:

#### **Luke 9:23-24**

"Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let *him deny himself*, and take *up his cross daily, and follow Me*. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever *loses his life* for My sake will save it."

He can't mean literally carrying a cross around daily. Some wear crosses as jewelry. I'm sure that's not what he means. In context he had just mentioned how HE was going to have to die. Then he says WE must LOSE OUR LIFE "for MY sake" – in HIM. Watch this now.

And Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:30-31 that he died daily also – for Christ, in Him, in all his jeopardies. I'm not so sure that we today have any inkling of that, compared to what risks they endured in just being Christians. **Christians in Syria and Iraq** are going thru that now too. And so though they may have different doctrinal beliefs than yours – I salute them, I pray for them, because anyone willing to be literally crucified, tortured, beheaded, sold into slavery because of their faith... that's saying something. Would WE be so brave?

Yeshua says to DENY yourself. Paul uses the same terms when describing that as a child of God we have to deny the pulls of the flesh: wrong thoughts, lusts, discontent,

#### **Titus 2:11-14**

"For **the grace of God that brings salvation** has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, ***denying ungodliness and worldly lusts***, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that *HE might redeem us* from every lawless deed **and purify for Himself His own special people**, zealous for good works."

So Paul equates what Yeshua says about denying ourselves with denying the pulls of the flesh, fighting those things by the power of the Holy Spirit, even as we acknowledge that HE is the one redeeming us, HE is the one purifying us – which lead us to do good works.

It's too easy just to give in and not fight the cravings to drink too much, eat too much, to watch the shows that show some nudity or uncontrolled lusts going on, or to get involved in shows that basically are about gossip and everything contrary to God's way.

Surely I should say also that many of God's people aren't denying their desire to spend hours and hours each week on Facebook, late into the night, while denying time for Bible study! FB is fine if you're controlling it and still getting your priorities done. But if you see it's taking over your life, cut it off.

**Paul says "being crucified with Christ" has to do with nailing our old carnal self down and tackling sin.** We no longer want sin as a way of life. We no longer serve sin. In fact, someone who has truly died, cannot sin and will not sin.

- “Crucifying” our natures means we’re taking extreme action. Drastic action, to finally nail sins in our lives. It means we’ve declared total war on our sin nature and we’ve signed its death warrant – by crucifixion with Christ.

**Galatians 5:22-25** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 **And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”.

There are passions of the flesh and there is a godly passion that evidences itself in enthusiasm and zeal. Elijah was a man of like passions as we are. But fleshly passions have to be nailed down.

**Colossians 3:5** “Therefore *put to death* your members [sinful nature] which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” It goes on to say a few verses later that we instead put on Christ, just like Gal. 2:20 says.

I’ll bet it took considerable effort on the Roman soldiers’ part to nail a person to a stake or cross or tree. I’ll bet they were squirming, screaming, kicking as a rule. I would be, if some foul breathed Roman soldier was trying to impale me, or nail me to a tree or something! Your passions are going to not go down without kicking and screaming as well. But I can see several Romans holding this guy down while one of them pounds the spikes in. *That squirming convict represents our fleshly passions and desires that have to be nailed down! It won’t be easy.* Our passions don’t want to get nailed down. And we can tend to feel sorry for ourselves and be easy on ourselves.

So don’t think nailing your wrong passions and sinful desires will be easy. It won’t be! But how do we do it? We can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (**Phil. 4:13**). *Have we decided on all-out war against sin? No quarter will be given, no prisoners taken – nope. We’ve decided to totally put to death all aspects of our sinful nature. Totally. Or have we?*

*I preach to myself! This is tough to do when we still like certain passions, certain sins. Let’s face it. But if you and I are to follow Christ we have to come to love Him more than the pulls of the flesh.*

**What is it that we each need to finally crucify?** What carnal desires do each of us need to put to death in our lives? **What sins are each of us giving safe harbor to,** that will keep us from being given a great reward in the kingdom – if we’ll be there at all, if we are giving safe harbor to any sins in our lives? Some of sin’s pleasures seem so harmless. So cute. “Come on, I can hang on to this little weakness, can’t I?” Goliath was once a “harmless baby” who was allowed to live – but grew up to become a giant problem to Israel. Sins are like that. We have our baby sins that don’t seem so bad – but which can grow up to plague us if we don’t get them nailed down first!

## WHATEVER ‘MEANS THE WORLD’ TO YOU IS ALSO CRUCIFIED

There’s more. Turn to Galatians 6:14.

Galatians 6:14 “But God forbid that I should boast except in *the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world*”

So we’re crucified with Christ, and we have our own cross, and now the world has been crucified to us as well. A lot of neat stuff, at least to a natural mind, is getting nailed down here. The whole world.

Yeshua at one time said **whatever “means the world” to you must be put behind what Christ means to us.** We can gain the whole world, but if you forfeit your very soul, what has it gained you? (Matthew 16:26).

**Matthew 10:37-39**

“He who loves father or mother **more than Me is not worthy of Me.** And he who loves son or daughter **more than Me is not worthy of Me.** 38 And he who **does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.** 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”

If a brother or sister or father or wife makes you decide – “It’s either me – or that belief of yours, that church of yours” – what are you going to do? Jesus says we better have that straight in our hearts, that the love for God comes first. So there are times when we must sacrifice a relationship if it means a choice of either God’s way or a relationship with a loved one.

In the first 15 or so verses of Romans 6, Paul speaks over and over as well about being baptized into Christ’s death, and being buried with him so that we can be raised in Him, a new life, a new being, with a new direction and goals and priorities.

**So first and foremost, I think it must be clear that being “crucified with Christ” means we surrender the “self”, our own goals, our fears, our worries.** We have to hand over to God anything that is a big concern, worry, or even desire of our heart. He very oftentimes will actually let us have the desires of our hearts – and even many times over – if we first are willing to give them up.

**Psalms 37:4-5**

“Delight yourself also *in YHVH*, and *He shall give you the desires of your heart.*  
5 Commit your way to YHVH, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.”

You see the sequence: delight yourself – not in your own plans and goals – but “in the Lord”. And then what? Instead of having to forego whatever dreams you thought you had, “and He *shall* give you the desires of your heart”.

Now I want to focus on the *personal* nature of Christ’s sacrifice.

**“...loved ME and gave Himself for ME” Galatians 2:20**

Before going too far into this, let me *first* hit on a very important and *personal* point:

- This was done because Yeshua, the Son of God, loved specifically you, loved ME – that’s what it says... so much so that He gave himself for ME, for YOU.

This is a very personal passage to Paul and should be for us. As we come to Passover and drink of His cup, let’s remember he took the penalty of sin for you specifically, because he loves YOU specifically. My brothers, my sisters, I don’t know if we often enough personalize it like Paul did here. Instead we talk about how Yeshua died for the world, for all mankind. I’m saying He suffered and died for you, whatever your name is.

As you examine yourself and prepare for Passover, in prayer be thanking Yeshua personally for being willing to suffer and die for YOU, so you would not have to. For YOU, personally.



In early 2014 I gave a sermon about what Yeshua is doing as our High Priest of the order of Melchizedek. In the last 15 minutes of the sermon, I went over the scriptures of **Exodus 28** where it so personalizes what Aaron – who pictured Yeshua – did every time he went once every year into the Holy of Holies. I'll summarize and you can read the text below.

**Exodus 28:9-12**

"Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them **the names of the sons of Israel**: six of their names on one stone and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth. **With the work of an engraver in stone**, like the engravings of a signet, you shall **engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel**. You shall set them in settings of gold.

12 And you shall **put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod** as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before YHVH on his two shoulders as a memorial."

You are now a part of the Israel of God, so *you* are included in that. Your name has been engraved and *you're* carried into the Holy of Holies by Yeshua, our High Priest, as He comes before God Most High.

Then in Exodus 28:29-30, we are told there were also TWELVE stones on a "Breastplate of Judgment" that Aaron wore over his heart, when he enters the Most Holy Place, as a memorial before YHVH continually. And it ends by saying "so Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before YHVH continually." Again, remember you are a spiritual Israelite in Christ.

**Exodus 28:29-30**

"So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the Lord continually.  
30 And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the Lord. So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the Lord continually."

Now get this: there are several scriptures that say God knew us, you and me, personally – and every day of our lives – *before* we were born. There are scriptures that speak of being "predestined". That's not my topic today except to ask: "Is it possible that on that cross YOUR exact name was on Christ's heart?" I personally think so.

Paul says, "he died for ME, because he loved ME..." – Gal. 2:20. Now I want you to take that sacrifice on Calvary just as personally for yourself. Because Christ loves you!

**HOW could Messiah love someone like me (or you)? (Gal 2:20)**

Let's kick it up a couple notches. If you're like me, you don't always focus on Christ, but on your failures, on your past, on your sins, on your weaknesses... and get depressed. Maybe even worse, not only do *you* do that, but others do it. Others – maybe even some of your own family members – want nothing to do with you. Maybe you've lost your friends. Maybe because of your stupidity and sins, you're truly alone in this world. Some of you may be hearing this or reading this in jail!

So how could a perfect Son of God carry you on His shoulders and over his heart- and even pay the penalty for you, when you know how bad you are?

Well, first the good news. **We never see a verse where Yeshua is called “the friend of priests and Pharisees.”** Some, like Paul, *became* His friend later. But the verse isn't there. But we do find verses that **describe him as “the friend of sinners” (Luke 7:34).** They felt comfortable around this Man, even in his perfect holiness (Luke 15:1-2). Yeshua went to dinner with a Pharisee – who criticized our Master. But Yeshua invited himself to dinner with Zacchaeus, a very crooked tax collector – and in that dinner salvation came to good ol' Zach (Luke 19:1-10). Yeshua told Zacchaeus “I MUST come stay with you.”

Have you been a sinner-- a really, really bad one? Well, if you look to Yeshua, he loves you. You know why? Because you know you're a sinner who needs saving and He came to save sinners, not the self-righteous who think they're so good.

Our King- - when he went to dinner with the self-righteous Pharisee, had a “bad woman” come in who wept and shed her tears over Yeshua's feet as she repented. Yeshua made this classic statement:

***Luke 7:44-48***

Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon [*which means “stone”*], "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. 45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47 **Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.** 48 Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

**So if you've sinned a lot, and now want to be different, and have a Savior – he loves it!** He loves YOU! He died for YOU, because he loves YOU, because he knows that you know what you are, and what horrible things you've done (maybe unknown to most) and because of that, he knows you love Him – a lot once you understand his forgiveness. The apostle Paul saw what he had been. He realized he had caused the beatings, torture and even death of some Christians. After his conversion, his regrets were deep but his appreciation for a God who could forgive, accept, love and even use him—was profound to Paul. Paul called himself “chief sinner”. So because he knew he had been forgiven much, his love for Yeshua just jumps out at us on every page of his writings. I know I have been forgiven much by Yeshua and my dear Abba and especially at Passover, it is very real to me.

***Now dear sister or brother in Messiah: it's time we all start behaving the same way as our Master does towards repentant sinners who are struggling to change, want to change, are changing, in spite of anything in their past.*** And frankly, that horrible sinner could be ME, could be you... wouldn't you say, if all your evil thoughts and deeds could be played on a large screen for all to see, would you be so confident? So let Christ in you live again by YOU becoming more accepting of repentant people, regardless of their past. Christ said to a woman caught in adultery just MINUTES prior – “Neither do I condemn you”.

Would YOU have said that? But in the churches, we have people who will condemn people for sins done years and *years ago*. That's not showing the presence of the heart of Messiah. It's just not.

Do you remember the man in Corinth who had to be thrown out of the church for his sensational open sex with his step-mother? By the time we come to 2 Corinthians, Paul is telling the church to bring him back. He had repented. Don't leave him out there, Paul says (2 Cor. 2:5-11). He urges them to reaffirm their LOVE for him. You know what, it's so much easier to forgive yourself – when your family does, when your friends do, when society does.

Now most of us commit the same problem more than once. Remember what Yeshua told Peter: forgive 70x 7, or even 7x in a day, forgive that person (Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4)

### **Luke 17:3-4**

“Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall *forgive him*.”

Yeshua made a point to make disciples of a tax collector (Matthew), of commercial fishermen and their crude tongue (oh yes, Peter knew how to curse and swear; it came out fluently as he denied His Savior – Matthew 26:74.) He called a political agitator as a disciple. And a tax collector (Matthew). He revealed himself as the promised Messiah to the sinful woman at the well in Samaria (John 4). He revealed himself to a woman – Mary Magdalene – out of whom had come 7 demons. (Luke 8:2). Are you getting the picture? Are you seeing the kinds of people Yeshua accepted?

Would you have chosen a woman out of whom 7 demons had once lived – to be one of your leading followers? And she was! She was the first to see and touch the resurrected Christ. He did not choose the “leading men and women” of society as a rule. He did not choose the highly respected folks. No, He did not. Because they thought highly of themselves and did not see themselves as they really were: sinners, like everyone else. My POINT: are you crucifying THAT part of yourself and reach out to people who normally would have been outside of your circle of daily life? Are you becoming more like Christ in this way?

All this was done by our Yeshua, who is now our high priest.

### **Exodus 28:36-38**

"You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet:

HOLINESS TO YHVH”.

37 And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. 38 So it shall be on ***Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that THEY may be ACCEPTED before YHVH.***

The Hebrew word there for “accepted” is “*rason*” – meaning accepted, favored, liked. Aaron, picturing Yeshua, is bearing your iniquity on HIS forehead, so that holy Father will accept YOU, because He sees Yeshua's perfection and perfect thoughts, instead of yours.

Yeshua knows what it's like to be rejected, and not accepted. He truly understands your rejection. The difference of course, if we're honest, is that he did absolute nothing to warrant the mistreatment he got, whereas most of us can't say that about ourselves.

Scriptures say he was "rejected by man". Rejected by his fellow Jews. **Yeshua was betrayed by a disciple whose name was Judas – but that's the Greek form for, are you ready? – for JUDAH.** How appropriate. How would you feel if you came to your own and your own tribe rejects you? If the Roman Empire rejected you. If your top disciple disowned you. If your other friends and disciples – except for John and a few loyal *women* – all deserted you. Judah, for the most part, continues to betray and deny their Master and Messiah. But some of you in Israel are starting to have the veil lifted from your eyes and you're starting to see your Yeshua, your fellow Jew, who DID come to be your Messiah.

I'm saying all this by way of looking closely at Galatians 2:20 – that "he died for me because he loves me..." I hope you can start to feel the same as Paul did.

Not ashamed to call us his brothers –

### **So – how was Paul crucified with Christ?**

In context, Paul was discussing the righteousness of God that is given to us. So many misunderstand that point. So many can quote Gal 2:20, but not verse 21. So many don't know the context. The whole context of being crucified with Christ is that in Christ we are covered by HIM, by HIS goodness, by HIS righteousness – and we live in him.

Let's really get this and then come back to Galatians 2. Paul teaches over and over that our life today, as believers, must be "IN Christ" – or "IN HIM". Over and over and over Paul talks about this. If we don't understand the deep meaning of being "in Him", we will miss so much of the New Covenant's better promises.

OK – so first of all, you all know that we are said to be "in Him", right? It's easy to understand how God is in us and that is by His Spirit. But we are also in God, through Christ. Now follow me on this, as it's vitally important. It has to mean something to us; it's more than just a bunch of words. When you UNDERSTAND this concept, you will understand how you are crucified with Christ and much more. So we have to review this concept first.

First of all, Christ came to teach perfect unity and oneness. The power of a lot of beings being one in mind and heart and soul. He said He and God the father are ONE (John 10:30) – and yet they are separate individuals (John 16:6). He also prayed that the 11 remaining disciples when he prayed the beautiful prayer of John 17 – would be one as one as Yeshua and Father are one. Now we have 11 who can be ONE. How? He even said how: IN GOD, they could be one.

#### **John 17:21-23**

"that **they all may be one**, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; **that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

Elsewhere Yeshua speaks of being one body – and that one body is HIS body. So HOW do we become ONE with Yeshua? By joining HIS body, becoming a “body part” of Christ! That’s made clear in Romans 12:4-5 and 1 Cor. 12:12. Take time to read that.

All of this has everything to do with understanding being crucified with Christ, so bear with me.

### **But HOW are we made a part of Christ’s Body?**

#### **1 Corinthians 12:12-14**

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 **For by one Spirit we were all baptized [immersed] into one body** — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.”

So when God immerses us in his spirit, it somehow makes us a part of the body of Christ. No matter where people meet, if they have his spirit, they are a part of the spiritual body of Christ and children of God (Romans 8:14).

This is also how —by being IN Christ, that we can come boldly before the heavenly mercy seat. This is how we are in God the Father — through Christ. This is such a profound concept Paul is trying to teach us: that were buried in him, resurrected in him, even circumcised in his circumcision. Paul is saying, “now that we’re in him, everything that happened in the past, and is happening now, also happened in us, for us — for we are a part of him”. Please get that concept.

So Paul goes so far as to say to Gentile uncircumcised Colossians that they in fact *are* spiritually circumcised. Did you realize that? How? IN Christ, when he was circumcised at 8 days old, if you are really a part of him, you were circumcised too!

#### **Colossians 2:11-12**

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead..”

Really now, we just mostly read right past that verse, didn’t we? Paul is saying to us all — “Get this”, so HIS goodness is what God the Father sees.

#### **Ephesians 2:4-7**

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 *even when we were dead* in trespasses, made US alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Pretty cool, eh? I think I’m getting to really like this idea of being “in him”. Own it. Love it. Understand it.

**Romans 6:1-14** explains how we are crucified with Christ and die with Christ – and yet we still are physically alive.

**Romans 6:1-14**

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,* 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

8 *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,* 9 *knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.* 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God IN Christ Jesus OUR LORD.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

So then Paul says that He understands that since we are IN Christ, it is HIS righteousness that God sees covering us, not our own. WE have to have faith that this is the case. As in all cases of faith, we don't yet see the end result, otherwise there'd be no need for faith. So though we have faith that we are covered by the righteousness of Christ, we still stumble and fall in sin, as Paul says so plainly in Romans 7, even WITH God's Spirit in us --- we still sin. since we are in Christ, Paul says triumphantly at the end of Romans 7 that God will save him through Christ.

And so get it now: So with the fact the Yeshua took on himself ALL the wrath for all of our sins, all the condemnation for all of our sins... ALL OF IT... we shouldn't feel condemned any more. The condemnation is gone. WHY do we so often still feel condemned? Because we don't really GET this doctrine of being IN Christ.

**Romans 8:1**

“There is therefore now **NO condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,** who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

If the woman CAUGHT in the act of adultery 5 minutes earlier could hear her Master say, “Neither do I condemn you..” – minutes after her sin – how much more should WE be hearing that, for sins repented of long ago?

So when you go back to Galatians 2, Paul is simply explaining that our righteousness is not from obeying the law (Gal 2:16), but by having faith in the life of Christ, of which we are a part now. That faith in HIM and HIS righteousness does not give us license to keep sinning as a way of life (Gal. 2:17-19), then he says his powerful verse 20 – that because we are IN HIM, we were crucified with Christ, when HE was crucified. We are a part of His body, so yes, we were circumcised in him, crucified in him, buried in him, resurrected in him, because he died for ME, and gave himself up for ME.

So Paul is not saying he literally was there on a cross beside Christ, but that IN HIM Paul was also crucified. Do you get the vast difference? And since he was crucified, HE died, and since Christ was raised from the dead, Paul says the life he now lives is not his own but Christ living in him. This is something Paul repeats so often.

John speaks of us being in God the Father. There's NO way we can be in God the Father with our imperfections, unless.... Unless we are in Christ, who is perfect.

- **We are in God the Father through Christ, when we confess Jesus is the Son of God who came to live and die for us – and lives again in us.**

**Colossians 3:3-4**

“For you died, and **your life is hidden with Christ in God.** 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

**1 John 4:15-16**

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, **and he in God.** 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who **abides in love abides in God**, and God in him.

Paul understood what Yeshua had done. Paul realized HE- Paul - should have been the one crucified for his own sins, but in accepting Yeshua's sacrifice, he was accepting also his crucifixion.

**FOR THE JOY SET BEFORE US**

One final thought as we wrap up: How does a Christian who is crucifying himself have any joy? The joy comes in that we know what follows! There's going to be a new creation, a resurrection of Christ in us. And we know there is going to be tremendous JOY in our lives that we've never experienced the likes of before, when we have truly, unconditionally surrendered.

**Hebrews 12:1-2**

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Brethren, just as Yeshua was glorified and exalted and blessed – so shall we be, if we follow in His steps and go through at least the figurative crucifixion of the self.

And in the meantime, our lives right NOW can have so much more joy and peace – when we let this carnal self finally be crucified. I believe it's such a giant key to peace and joy.

God willing, and time permitting, we'll cover more Passover topics in the coming weeks. **Be aware I also have the Passover service already recorded** for you to use this year if you're doing it by yourself. Just do a search – “Christian Passover” and it will pop up – April 2014. **The BLOGS** will also have a lot of Pre-Passover and Passover material.

Pass the word. Tell others about this website and the good news you are hearing from it. Till next time, your brother in Yeshua our Messiah... as we all try to learn what it means to be in him and even crucified with him and raised in him. Praise you Yeshua, our Lord and Savior.