It has been said that there are only two things that all can depend on to happen in life...death and taxes! The Bible would remind us of several other important things that we can know will happen sooner or later. Of course, death is one of them, but so is the Judgment Day (Heb. 9:27). And, the Judgment Day implies many other things that are important in the lives of those who want to go to Heaven (II Cor. 5:10-11). The one who wants to go to the “Heavenly city” (Heb. 11:10) must first obey the primary principles of the Gospel, which are hearing the Gospel, believing in the Christ it proclaims, repenting of all past sins, confessing our faith in Christ, and being baptized into the authority of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20). “Faith only,” “Prayer only,” or any other of the false only ways of going to Heaven will not save.

The second important necessity is a faithful life in Christ or in His church (Acts 2:38-42, 47; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6; Rev. 2:10). All are able to live this life, but it seems some think it hard and unnecessary! To live this life successfully, though, one has made these suggestions: In happy moments praise God; in difficult moments seek God; in quiet moments worship God; in painful moments trust God; in every moment thank God! Good Advice!
It never ceases to amaze this writer how some attempt to twist the Scriptures to uphold a man-made creed. Especially is this true of those who want to "prove" that one is saved by "faith only," and not by obedience to the Gospel of Christ. Let us always remember that no two references of the Bible contradict one another, and if our theory would cause this blunder, we must leave our false doctrine rather than leave the Truth. The books of Romans and Galatians have long been favorites of those who want the Scriptures to teach that one is saved by "faith only." Of course, James writes, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and NOT BY FAITH ONLY" (Jas. 2:24). Since the same Holy Spirit guided Paul and James to write, we know we are not saved by "faith only." He certainly did not cause Paul to contradict the teaching of James by saying we are saved by "faith only." Martin Luther wanted the "faith `only" teaching to so badly that he "decided" the book of James was not inspired! What is the answer? It is simply that when Paul wrote of how men are justified "by faith", he meant, as he states at the first and last of Romans, it is by the "obedience of the faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). Please note the article "the" in the front of "faith" in these references, which means the Gospel (Jude 3). Paul stated that the churches in Judea had only heard of him, "That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth THE FAITH (emphasis mine GC) which once he destroyed" (Gal. 1:23). Notice also that the article "the" is used by Paul in the books of Galatians and Romans before "law," and each time, he refers to the old Law of Moses. Therefore it is evident in Galatians 2:16 and 21, Paul states that we are saved by faith (obedience of faith, Rom. 1:5), but not by THE LAW (of Moses GC), because "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." The "grace of God," or the Gospel given to make one righteous in Christ, would be frustrated "if righteousness came by the law" or works of the Law of Moses (Acts 20:32). Jesus would have died in vain, if men could have been justified by the Law of Moses! But they could not be justified or forgiven by the works of the Law of Moses; therefore, Jesus came to nail it to the cross (Eph. 2:15-16; Col. 2:14-17). Paul speaks in his writings of "works" in reference to the old Law of Moses, while James speaks of "works" in reference to obeying the Gospel. There is no contradiction between the two New Testament writers. When our faith acts in obedience to the Gospel (Gal. 5:6), we are not saved by works of the Law of Moses, nor by our own works, but we are saved by the works or conditions taught in the Gospel by God (Eph. 2:9-10).
The Word of the Cross

Paul declares “the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing” (1 Corinthians 1:18) and “a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles” (v. 23). Why was crucifixion so offensive? Below we provide some of the answers the ancients themselves give to this question. This is what they thought about crucifixion.

Who Was Crucified?

Cicero, Roman statesman and lawyer (106-43 BC), tells us crucifixion was intended for noncitizens: “Take away this hope, take away this protection from Roman citizens, establish the case that there is no help in the cry, ‘I am a Roman citizen,’ that a *praetor* or any such man can with impunity set any punishment he pleases to be inflicted on a man who says that he is a Roman citizen. ... Then, if it should seem good to you, you would establish this as a law for everyone, that whomever were unknown to you and could not produce a rich man as his advocate, even if he were a Roman citizen, would be crucified” (Cicero, *Against Verres* 2.5.168). Since this manner of death was reserved for the undignified, Cicero calls the cross the “tree of shame” elsewhere (For *Rabirius* 4.13).

How Was Crucifixion Done?

Josephus, a Jewish historian (ca. AD 37-100), says much about crucifixion. He writes, “Being scourged and having their bodies desecrated, they were crucified, alive and still breathing” (Antiquities 12.2). This quotation indicates scourging was routine as was assaulting and stripping the victim before crucifixion. Again, “He [Josephus] then, having dragged them into the innermost part of his house, and having shut the gate, scourged them until he exposed all their entrails” (Jewish War 2.612). This quotation informs us of the intensity of scourging. Indeed, the Jewish rebels “being both scourged and tortured until their body was no longer able to bear the torments, begged for the sword” (Jewish War 4.329). And “being scourged and tortured with every assault before death, they were crucified before the wall” (Jewish War 5.449). Indeed, crucifixion was a common reality, but it was a terrible way to die.

What Was Crucifixion Like?

Seneca, a Roman aristocrat and Stoic philosopher (4 BC-AD 65), writes, “Is anyone to be found who would wish ... to waste away and die one member at a time, and to let out his life little by little, drop by drop, instead of expiring all at once? Is anyone to be found who would wish to be nailed to the miserable tree, already crippled, already deformed, with horrible, swollen wounds on the shoulders and chest, who endures many causes of death even before his crucifixion, only then to draw breath with constant, drawn-out agony?” (Seneca, *Epistle* 101.14).

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