



“The Evangelists’ Cross”

Ezekiel 1:4-14; Galatians 1:6-10; Mark 10:35-45

Grace, Merc, Peace, and Forgiveness are yours from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen!

A quick recap: The “**Latin Cross**” is the most familiar of all crosses and is the most familiar symbol in the world. “**The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are saved it is the power of God**” (1 Corinthians 1:18). What often happens with the cross is that we strip it of its power. St. Paul wrote, “**Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel – not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.**” Don’t let the cross become sterile by taking it for granted. Remember an excruciating death took place on Calvary through our Savior Jesus Christ by which death itself was destroyed. You have life because of both deaths.

The “**Tau Cross**”, many believe, may have been the cross Jesus died on. It is a reminder of how we often grumble against God, not trusting Him to provide for all our needs as He has promised to do. Remember the Israelites grumbling in the wilderness, thus this cross. The “Tau Cross” is a reminder of how there was a need for Jesus to be lifted up on the cross to pay for our lack of contentment with the blessings of God. Jesus said (John 3:14-15), “**Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.**”

Tonight we are focusing on the “**Evangelists’ Cross**”. This cross, as it stands alone, is also known as the “Greek Cross”. However, this cross tonight, and in the future, as you place it on your crosses at home, I want you to imagine four images at the four corners of the cross. This transforms the “**Greek Cross**” into the “**Evangelists’ Cross**”. These images are derived from the vision of the four living creatures seen by Ezekiel in the Old Testament reading (Ezekiel 1:4-14) read earlier, and in Revelation 4:7 of the four beasts around the throne. [Not a foreshadowing of the Gospels. Just used to depict them.]

What are those images in Ezekiel and how are they depicted in art and on the “Evangelist Cross”? The first of the beasts is a **Winged Man** often used to represent the Gospel of Matthew. “Why Matthew?” Man is the symbol of the crowning glory of God’s creation. Man was placed in charge of all creation, and it was Jesus, as a man, who came to redeem the world, to live under the law, and to die for the sins of the whole world (1 John 5:2). The Gospel of Matthew (1:1) begins with the lineage and human ancestry of Jesus: “**A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.**”

The second image is that of a **Winged Lion**. The lion is the strongest of the wild beasts and rules his kingdom. This image is the image of the Gospel of Mark. “Why Mark?” you ask. **Mark** begins his Gospel with John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness:

² *As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, ³ the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”* (Mark 1:2–3, ESV)

The third image, as recorded in Ezekiel (1:10), is of an **ox**. The ox is the strongest of domesticated animals. The ox is used to represent, depict, the Gospel of Luke. “Why is the ox chosen for Luke?” I am glad you asked once again. As you may have figured out, each symbol for each Gospel was chosen based upon the Gospel’s beginning, so it is true of the **Gospel of Luke**. The Gospel of Luke begins with the priest named Zechariah. Zechariah is the father of John the Baptist. The lot had fallen on Zechariah to serve in the temple and the Holy of Holies. The priest’s responsibility was to offer up the beast of sacrifice which was to be a young unblemished bull thus the ox used for this Gospel.

The fourth, and final image, represents the Gospel of John. The symbol for the Gospel of John is the eagle that soars and rules the sky. “Why this image for John?” The Gospel of John begins,

¹ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* (John 1:1-3, 14, ESV)

The eagle is equated with this Gospel as Jesus soars from the heights of heaven as true God to be true man and to die for man. He then soars/ascends into heaven. From there He will come back to take us to be with Him. There is also this image: With keen eyes and with His wings He watches over us and lifts us up on His wings when in need and weary. Isaiah records,

²⁹ *He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. ³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; ³¹ but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*” (Isaiah 40:29–31, ESV)

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John via these images are placed in the four corners of the cross. These Gospels are to be spread to the four corners of the earth. Jesus said (Matthew 24:14), **And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**”

What is the warning that can be brought before us as we look upon the **Evangelists’ Cross**? “Evangelion” is the Greek word for “Evangelism”. Evangelism means “Gospel.” Gospel is “good news.” There is but one Gospel, not four or any other number. The true gospel, and same gospel, of Jesus is recorded in all four Gospels. The “gospel” / “good news” is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became flesh born of a woman. Jesus died on the “Cross of Calvary” to pay for your sins, but not only your sins but the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Whoever believes in Him has eternal life (John 3:16). Yes, the message of the cross, to those being saved, is the power of God.

Can you imagine why anyone would want to change the gospel? It is so simple, pure, so easy, and beautiful. The Mormons have emptied the cross of its power. The Jehovah Witnesses have no need for a cross. The Muslims have another god and another gospel as well. Scientology, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Unitarians and the like have destroyed the power of the cross and made humans gods. Even with the Christian Church the power of the cross is diminished as sin is no longer being called a sin. **NO LAW – NO need for the cross.** Church after church is preaching Christ crucified along with the message that you also must be good or not bad. Law and Gospel are combined, mixed together, and this could eventually lead to Christ dying needlessly as individuals believe they can earn their own salvation (Galatians 2:21).

St. Paul wrote to the church in Galatia – the Epistle text:

⁶ *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. ¹⁰ For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.*” (Galatians 1:6–10, ESV)

Preaching, teaching, and campaigning for another gospel brings damnation to all who believe in another gospel rather than the true gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected. **LET IT NEVER BE SO!**

One last point, and thought, concerning a sin covered on the “Cross of Calvary” by our Lord and Savior. It seems appropriate to mention this sin for the **Evangelist’s cross**. Too often, because of our “status/position” in God’s kingdom we feel better than others. Two places in the Gospels (Mark 9:33ff & Mark 10:37) Apostles are either arguing who would be the greatest or the desire that one (John and James) would be seated at the right and left hand of Jesus in His glory. Jesus’ response in both situations was, **“Whoever is to be first must be a servant of all.”** Jesus gave Himself as an example (Mark 10:45). **“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”** Rather than be haughty, puffed up, and seeking glory for yourself you should be a servant of all. Whenever you lift someone up in the name of Jesus, you lift up, and campaign, for your Lord and Savior (Matthew 5:16).

God has blessed us with life through His Son’s suffering and death on the cross where He destroyed sin, death and the devil. In doing so, He has paid for all your sins even those of mudding the gospel, emptying the cross of its power, and an attitude of superiority.

May the **Evangelists’ Cross**, with the purity of the gospel, and the love of Christ, be forever before you! **“The message of the cross... to us who are being saved is the power of God.”** Let it be so! Amen!