THERE WERE THREE CROSSES AT GOLGOTHA

By Keith Greer

"And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center." {John 19:17,18}

We can recount the Bible story of our Lord's crucifixion between two thieves. In today's discussion, let's use the three crosses to represent **dying in sin, dying for sin**, and **dying to sin**.

Dying in Sin. *"But exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." {Hebrews 3:13}* Sin causes hardness of the heart. It puts the heart into a condition where it is nearly impossible for it to receive God's word. A person's conscience can be so seared that the truth cannot touch it. *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron." {1 Timothy 4:1,2}* All sin leads to spiritual death *{Romans 6:23}*. Every rebellious person who is unwilling to submit to Christ's authority is dying in sin. Satan has lulled the majority of the world into believing that sin is fun and has no temporal or eternal consequences. This is wishful thinking. God's book defines death as separation. One who is dying in sin has separated himself from God. Sadly, those who do not repent and who die in this condition will be eternally separated from God in Hell. What is appealing about such a picture?

Dying for Sin. *"Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed." {1 Peter 2:22-24}* Jesus Himself lived a sinless life, then paid the ransom price for our sin. Only by the blood of Christ did redemption become possible *{Ephesians 1:7}*. Christ's death illustrates the extent of God's forgiveness of our sins—He sacrificed His Son. *"He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." {Hebrews 9:26}* Jesus paid the price we could not pay for ourselves.

Dying to Sin. *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 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." {Romans 6:3,4}* The good news is that anyone can die to sin. We accomplish this by obeying the gospel plan of salvation—submitting to the baptism of Christ to contact His blood and wash away our sins *{Acts 22;16; Revelation 1:5}*. Sin's burden and guilt can be lifted—never again to be remembered. We can have clean slates and take advantage of the opportunity to begin new lives. Every person who has obeyed the gospel of Christ understands the feelings of joy and relief that come with knowing that God has forgiven and forgotten his or her sins.

Yes, the day Christ died on Calvary was a dark day and, at the same time, a bright day. He hung suspended between heaven and earth—between two thieves. Why was He there? Simple answer, because the Jews wanted Him dead as they saw Him as a threat to their power and authority. He did not

offer them what they wanted—an earthly king and kingdom. The larger picture— He died to redeem men from the death curse of sin. God provided men a divine redemption so he would not have to die for the sins they committed. Dear reader, what is your attitude today? Christ died for you—are you dying in sin or to sin? ***