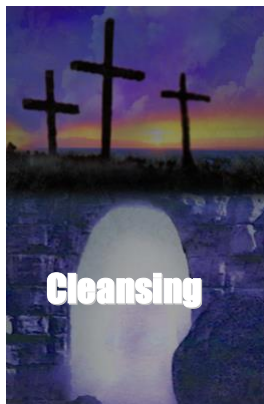
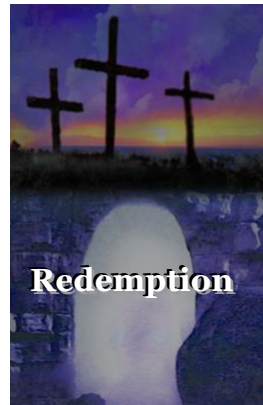
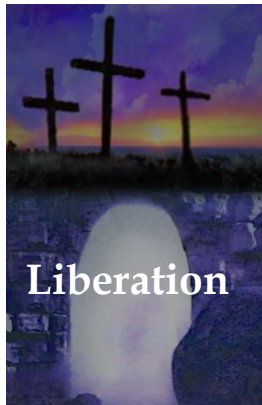
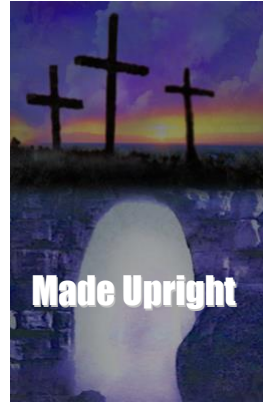
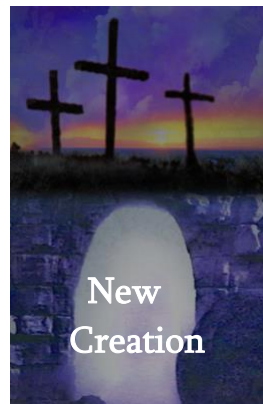


Ten  
Metaphors



of  
the Cross



\*Dr. Whitlock's notes based on Fitzmyer's "10 Effects of the Christ Event" (NJBC, 1397-1402)

# Ten Metaphors of the Cross

## Cleansing

- Paul employs three Greek words to describe this cleansing effect: (1) *apolouō*; (2) *hilastērion*; (3) *katharizō*. The first word literally means to wash away (see Job 9:30; Acts 22:16). The second word and its cognates are used in the Greek OT (LXX) to translate the Hebrew word *kippēr*, which means “to smear” or “to wipe away.” It is used in reference to the high priest, who once a year smeared the sacrificial blood on the lid of the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies (see Leviticus 16:1-34). The purpose of this “smearing” was to cleanse the people of their sins (Leviticus 16:30).
  - **Note and Heads Up:** the latter word, *hilastērion*, is the victim of mistranslation. First, it is often mistranslated as “propitiation,” meaning “the means of appeasing an angry god.” This mistranslation comes from the Greek understanding of sacrifice to the gods!

Second, the day the high priest enters the holy of holies to smear the blood on the ark is often referred to as “the Day of Atonement” or *Yōm Kippūr*. In English, “atonement” literally means at-one-ment, meaning people are reconciled into one community again. But even more, atonement, due to Christian influence, has become associated with propitiation, and too often carries the idea of appeasing an angry God!

The third word, *katharizō*, should sound familiar. For the English word “catharsis” comes straight from Greek!

- **References in the Uncontested Letters:** 1 Cor 6:11 (*apolouō*); Rom 3:25 (*hilastērion*); 2 Cor 7:1 (*katharizō*).
- **References in the Pauline School:** Eph 5:26 (*katharizō*); Titus 2:14 (*katharizō*).
- **References in those associated with Paul:** Heb 1:3 (*katharismos*); 9:14, 22-23; 10:2 (*katharizō*); Luke 4:27; 5:12-13; Luke 7:22; Luke 11:39; Luke 17:14, 17; Acts 10:15; 11:9; 15:9 (*katharizō*).

## Deliverance

- *Sōtēria, sōzō*. In the Greek OT (LXX), God saves his people from calamity after calamity (Isa 45:15; Zech 8:7; Ps 25:5; Mic 7:7) or raises up saviors for them (Judges 3:9, 15; 6:36; 2 Kings 13:5; Isa 19:20). Salvation denotes deliverance or rescue *from* evil or harm, whether physical, psychological, national, cataclysmic, or moral. In Luke-Acts, for example, it is used to depict healings (Luke 18:42; Acts 4:9). When reading the NT and Paul, it is vital that we consider context and ask, “What is the author saying people are saved from and when?”

Contrary to what is taught today, salvation is never used by Paul in the sense of being saved from Hell. First, Paul never talks about Hell. Second, salvation has more to do with restoration to wholeness than salvation from punishment. Third, when Paul does speak of escaping God’s wrath on the last day, he says that the Thessalonians will be “rescued” (*rhuomai*), not saved, from the wrath to come (1 Thess 1:10). In one place, he does speak of the hope for a future salvation as opposed to wrath (1 Thess 5:8-9). But the hope is not escape from wrath (who hopes in escaping from wrath?), but hope in restoration to wholeness.

- **References in the Uncontested Letters:** Rom 1:16 (power of God for the salvation of everyone; in Romans, it is salvation from Sin, Death, and Satan); 1 Cor 1:18, 21 (being saved, as opposed to perishing; context is being saved from Death); 1 Cor 15:2 (being saved from Sin and Death); 2 Cor 2:15 (being saved, as opposed to perishing; context is being saved from Death); Phil 3:20-21 (Jesus is savior who in the future will save us from Death); Rom 8:24 (in hope we have been saved); Phil 2:12 (work out your salvation in fear and trembling).
- **References in the Pauline School:** In those after Paul, salvation is referred to more in the perfect tense. Eph 2:5, 8-10 (by grace you have been saved through faith). But Eph 2:1-5 makes it clear what one has been saved from: deadness, transgressions, sins, the world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit at work in the sons of disobedience, desires from the Flesh and mind.

## Glorification

- *Doxa*. Related to the Hebrew word *kābôd*, which is used in the OT to describe the “heavy” splendor of God’s presence (Exod 24:17; 40:34; Num 14:10).
- **References in the Uncontested Letters:** Rom 8:17 (will be glorified with Jesus); Rom 8:30 (glorified); 1 Thess 2:12 (called into God’s kingdom and

glory); 1 Cor 2:7 (wisdom given by God for our glorification); 2 Cor 3:18-4:6 (transformed [*metamorpheō*] by God's glory through image of resurrected Jesus, by revelation of the Holy Spirit)).

- **References in the Pauline School:** Paul's school took this concept one step further. Whereas Paul saw glorification as a future event that is tasted now via the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:18-4:6), his followers saw it as something already realized in the Spiritual realm: Col 1:13 (God has brought us to the kingdom of his Son); Eph 2:6 (God has raised us up with Jesus and made us sit with him in the heavenly places); Col 2:12; 3:1 (raised with Jesus). *Doxa* is not in these letters, but the idea of being raised into God's presence is in them.
- **References in those associated with Paul:** Heb 2:10 (bringing many sons to glory); Acts 7:55 (Stephen sees the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God); Acts 12:23 (the opposite of glorification happens to Herod, who fails to give glory to God and is publicly eaten by worms).

## Liberation

- *Eleutheria*. Related to the Greco-Roman idea of freedom as the social status of citizens in the Greek or Roman city-state. This freedom is not license. It is intricately linked with the rights, responsibilities, and honor of citizenship.
- **References in the Uncontested Letters:** For Paul, one key is asking "freedom from what?" Rom 6:18-22 and 8:2 (freedom from slavery to Sin); Rom 8:21 (freedom from Death); Rom 7:3 (free from the Law); 2 Cor 3:17 (freedom from the Law); Gal 2:4; Gal 4:21-31; Gal 5:1; Gal 5:13 (freedom from the Law, Sin, Death, etc.)
  - For Paul, another key is asking "freedom for what?" Rom 6:20 (freedom for uprightness); Gal 5:13-15 (freedom for loving each other and walking in the Spirit, and NOT the freedom for allowing the Fleshly realm to set up camp in your back yard); Rom 6:22 (freedom from Sin and for slavery to God); 1 Cor 9:19 (free from all in order to serve all).
  - Note: the citizenship a Christian receives is not earthly, but heavenly (Phil 3:20).
- Note that Paul's school does not take up this idea of freedom. In fact, outside of 1 Pet 2:16, Paul is the only author in the NT to link freedom to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Neither Matthew, Mark, Luke, nor John depict Jesus using this concept.

## Made Upright

- *Dikaios, dikaiosunē, dikaiōsis, and dikaiōō.* The first word is often translated as “righteous,” the second as “righteousness” or “justice,” the third as “justification,” and the fourth “to justify.” With these translations, the relationship between these words is severed. The most literal translation at least preserves the relationship between these words: “upright,” “uprightness,” “the process of becoming upright,” and “to make upright.”

These Greek words are derived from the OT and are used to describe the relationship between God and human beings or between human beings and themselves. If all is okay, the relationship is said to be “upright.” It is usually someone with official status or authority who declares this uprightness, such as a judge, God, etc. Hence, God declares Noah upright (Gen 6:9 and 7:1); God declares Abraham upright because of his trust (Gen 15:6).

The issue between Paul and his opponents was over what makes someone upright (*dikaiōsis*). See Gal 2:15-21. For his opponents, uprightness (*dikaios*) was achieved by obeying the Mosaic Law. For Paul, it was achieved by trusting God. So Paul points to Gen 15:6 to show that God declared Abraham upright because he trusted God’s promise . . . and now God declares Christians upright because they trust God’s promise in Jesus trusting what he did, is doing, and will do.

Christians today debate whether there is a difference between God declaring someone upright and making someone upright. But the two go hand in hand. God’s words are always creative and “making” (e.g., God spoke the universe into existence in Gen 1-2; see “New Creation”). Moreover, the verb *dikaiōō* is grouped together with *-ōō* verbs, which have a causative, factitive meaning (e.g., the verb “to enslave,” an *-ōō* verb, does not simply mean that a prisoner is just declared a slave, but he is actually put into slavery). Therefore, when God declares someone upright, she or he is actually made upright.

Why was Paul so concerned about how his Gentile churches behaved? Because he wanted to show his opponents that uprightness was achieved through trust in God and Jesus, not through the Mosaic Law. In other words, God’s declaration of uprightness should have a creative effect his churches, so much so that he wanted to display this effect to his opponents and the world, so much so that he said that they were God’s uprightness (2 Cor 5:21)!

- **References in the Uncontested Letters.** These *dikaio-* words are by far the most common metaphors in Paul; however, *dikaiōsis*, the process of making someone upright (a.k.a. “justification”), only shows up in Romans, where Paul debates with his opponents on what makes someone upright. The list of the *dikaio-* passages below is by no means exhaustive.

Rom 4:25 (Jesus was raised by God for making us upright); Rom 3:26 (God, who is upright, makes those who trust Jesus upright); Rom 5:1 (we have peace with God because we are made upright); 1 Cor 1:30 (Christ is our uprightness); Rom 5:18-19; 1 Cor 6:11 (many are made upright through Jesus); Phil 3:9 (uprightness comes from God); Rom 10:3 (uprightness does not come from us). This last verse should make a lot more sense now, since it is God who declares and creates uprightness, since it is God who makes us upright through what Jesus did for and to us.

**References in the Pauline School:** Titus 3:7 (made upright through His grace); Eph 4:24 (our new self created in uprightness); Eph 6:14 (breastplate of uprightness); 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22 (pursue uprightness); 2 Tim 3:16 (scripture for training in uprightness; cf. Heb 5:13); 2 Tim 4:8 (crown of uprightness).

## Metamorphosis

- *Metamorphōsis* and *metamorphoō* are derived from Greco-Roman mythology (e.g., snakes into stones; a human into an ass). For Paul, the image is more positive. The risen Christ shines upon believers to change them into glorious creatures. This change progresses as the day of our resurrection approaches. This metamorphosis is not a change into the “perfect moral person.” It is a change into a glorious creature, free from the bondage of Sin, Death, the Flesh, and Satan. See “glorification.”
- **References in the Uncontested Letters** 2 Cor 3:18-4:6 (see entire context for understanding “glory” and the role of the Holy Spirit in this “metamorphosis); Rom 12:2 (*metamorphoō*); Phil 3:21 (this passage employs a similar word: *metaschēmatisō*).
- **An Interesting Reference outside of the Pauline School:** Paul’s use of *metamorphoō* is not unique among early Christians. The term is used in Matthew and Mark, is translated as “transfiguration” (Mark 9:2; Matt 17:2), and refers to the transfiguration or metamorphosis of Jesus!

## New Creation

- *Kainē ktisis*. Derived from OT, where God is the creator of the world and human beings (Gen 1-2; 14:19, 22; Ps 89:48; 104:1-30). For Paul, God has created a new humanity. An effect of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is a new creation! And not just humanity (Rom 8)!
- **References in the Uncontested Letters:** Gal 6:15 (circumcision or uncircumcision means nothing; all that matters is a new creation); 2 Cor 5:17 (whoever is in Christ is a new creature); Rom 8:19-22 (all creation groans in childbirth for this new creation, which reaches its climax when Death, the last enemy, is conquered). This new creation is also expressed by newness of life: Rom 6:4 (we died in baptism and were raised into newness of life). And as Adam represented the old creation, Jesus, the last Adam, represents the new creation (1 Cor 15:45).
- In the **Pauline School** and **those associated with Paul**, Paul's idea of a new creation leads to identifying Jesus with the creation of the universe (see Heb 1:1-2:3; Col 1:15, 23).

## Reconciliation

- *Katallagē, katallassō*. This comes from the Greco-Roman world. In the secular Roman world, it was used to denote a positive change in relations between enemies, between nations, groups, or individuals. In the Roman religious world, it was used to denote reconciliation between the gods and humans. In both cases, people are reconciled from a state of enmity and alienation.

If the modern word "atonement" fits anywhere in these metaphors, it is here. For it means "at-one-ment."

- **References in the Uncontested Letters:** Rom 5:10-11 (we were formerly God's enemies reconciled to him); 2 Cor 5:18-20 (God is reconciling the world to himself). Rom 11:15 (reconciliation of the world).
- **References in the Pauline School:** Col 1:20-22 (reconciled everything through Christ's death); Eph 2:11-19 (alienated groups reconciled into one Body, the Body of Christ).

## Redemption

- *Apolytrōsis, agorazō, exagorazō*. In the OT, these words described the redeeming and freeing of a slave by purchase. It was used to describe God

redeeming Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt (cf. Exod 6:6; 15:13-15; Deut 6:6-8; Ps 111:9). God was Israel's redeemer, the kinsman who had the duty of buying back an enslaved captive or relative (Isa 41:14; 43:14; 44:6; 47:4; Ps 19:15; 78:35). God acquired them as a possession for himself (Exod 15:16; 19:5; Mal 3:17; Ps 74:2). It was used for the hope of redemption when Israelites were in Babylonian captivity (Isa 51:11; 52:3-9). It was expected that God would redeem them at the end of days (Hos 13:14; Isa 59:20; Ps 130:7-8).

- ☉ **References in the Uncontested Letters:** 1 Cor 1:30 (Christ our redemption); Rom 3:24 (redemption which is in Christ); 8:23 (await the redemption of the body); 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23 (bought [out of slavery] with a price; Paul never specifies what this price is or to whom it is paid).
- ☉ **References in the Pauline School:** Col 1:14; Eph 1:7 (redemption and forgiveness); Eph 4:30 (the Holy Spirit as a down payment of the day of redemption).

## Set Apart

- *Hagiasomos, hagiazō.* Otherwise known as “*holy*,” “*holiness*,” “*sanctification*,” “*saints*.” Better known as “*set apart*,” “*the process of being set apart*,” “*the set apart ones*.” I prefer “*set apart*” for three reasons. First, “*set apart*” is what the term literally means. Second, “*set apart*” can be rendered in one English word; otherwise, if one sees “*sanctification*,” “*saints*,” and “*holiness*,” how would he know they have the same meaning? Third, the term describes one's position or location in relation to God (realm of the Spirit) and the secular world (realm of the Flesh). It does not describe one's internal “*holy*” or “*sanctified*” state.

“The term did not express an inner, ethical piety or outward sanctimony, but rather the dedication of things [Exod 3:5; Isa 48:2; Isa 64:10; Exod 26:33] or persons [Exod 19:14; Lev 19:2; Isa 62:12] to the awesome service of Yahweh. It was a cultic term that marked off from the secular or the profane such persons or things for this service,” *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 1401.

Note that when God says, “be holy, for I am holy,” God is talking about being set apart from the earthly realm and the profane. It is a claim about position, not an internal state.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: the “*holy*” Spirit is a Spirit set apart from all other spirits. It gives tastes of the glorified place where God is. Location, location, location.



- ☉ **References in the Uncontested Letters:** 1 Cor 1:30 (Christ the is means of us being set apart); 1 Thess 4:7 (God called us to be set apart); 1 Cor 1:2; 1 Cor 6:11 (we have been set apart by Jesus); Rom 15:16 (set apart by the “set apart” Spirit); Rom 6:22 (set free from Sin, and as a result, set apart).

Paul calls his communities “saints,” or more properly, “people set apart” (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; 1 Thess 3:13; Phlm 1:5). He understood his communities as “set apart” for Jesus to gather them to God upon his return. So he is not talking about “holier than thou” individuals! He is talking about communities “set apart from the world” for a purpose.

ANOTHER VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: For Paul, being “set apart” does not mean escaping the world into the wilderness or not going out with friends because they are “spiritually dirty.” Paul understands himself as “set apart” with and for God (via the “set apart” Spirit), and because of this understanding, he safely goes into the world in order to bring others into this position. In fact, this is the only reason why he lives (Phil 1:21-24). Just as Jesus modeled, he is not afraid of the world. He might have been at the corner bar every night. Think about Neo, Trinity, and Morpheus plugging back into the Matrix in order to rescue people.