A large, dark wooden cross is the central focus, set against a background of a cloudy sky with soft, diffused light. The cross is made of two thick, weathered wooden beams. The text is overlaid on the right side of the cross.

*The
Agony
& Glory
of
the Cross*

by Charles B. Hodge, Jr.

Six Miracles at Calvary



The Wisdom &
Power of God



The Wisdom & Power of God

- **Text:** 1 Corinthians 1:18—2:5
- “Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24).
- “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).
- **Sin drains the gospel’s power out of our lives** (1 Corinthians 1:17; NIV).



The Wisdom & Power of God

- Christianity makes a person a new creation and gives him a new life and mind (2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:1–7; Galatians 2:20, 21; Philippians 2:5–11).
- Jesus calls us to die to sin that we might live to God.
- The cross turns our normal way of thinking upside down—it is an oxymoron.
- A crucified God is an oxymoron--*He is almighty, but He has allowed Himself to be human.*



The Wisdom & Power of God

- A Christian also is an oxymoron--*He has died, yet he is fully alive!*
 - People want life—*but the cross offers death as the way to life.*
 - People crave victory—*but the cross is a defeat that leads to victory.*
 - *People want comfort—but the cross is humiliation that opens the door to forgiveness.*



The Wisdom & Power of God

- People want peace—*but the cross brings us to a war that results in peace.*
- People honor beauty—*but the cross, crude and ugly, expresses a beauty that excels all other beauties.*
- If we wish for the power and wisdom of God, *we begin with* Christ upon a cross.

Six Miracles at Calvary



CHRIST, the
Power of God



Christ, the Power of God

- Paul said that “the power of God for salvation” is in the gospel (Romans 1:16).
- God created and upholds the world by His Word (Genesis 1; 2; Hebrews 1:3).
- He has providential power, for He works out all things for good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28).
- However, *God’s greatest strength is revealed in the weakness of the cross.*



Christ, the Power of God

- God “has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong” (1 Corinthians 1:27).
- He is a God of infinite humility--*He humbly stands at the door and knocks* (Rev. 3:20).
- Jesus is the source of our salvation; the cross was the means of our salvation.
- God’s power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:6–10).
- Although crucified in weakness, Jesus exhibits the power of God (2 Cor 13:4).

Six Miracles at Calvary



CHRIST, the
Wisdom of God



Christ, the Wisdom of God

- Paul said that Jesus “became to us wisdom from God” (1 Corinthians 1:30).
- The sin that underlies all sin is presumption (Psalm 19:13; 2 Peter 2:10).
- Dead men need *life*, not *rehabilitation* (Eph 2).
- Man wants salvation from war, poverty, and disease; *but Christ on the cross saves us from sin.*
- To the intellectually proud, the **cross** is still folly because man wants *power*, not wisdom —*enlightenment*, not faith.



Christ, the Wisdom of God

- Paul determined to “know nothing but Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor 2:1-5).
- Only God could take an instrument of execution (the **cross**) and make it into the greatest motivation upon earth.
- Jesus said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself” (Jn 12:32).
- Jesus was able to draw all men to Himself because the **cross** is invested with God’s wisdom and power.

Six Miracles at Calvary



What Took Place
Before the
Crucifixion



Events *Before* the Crucifixion

- **Texts:** Matthew 27:45-54; Mark 15:33-39; Luke 23:44-47
- “And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised” (Matthew 27:51, 52).
- Jewish leaders **knew that Jesus was divine; but, in their hate and blindness, they killed Him anyway.**




Events *Before* the Crucifixion

- Even Pilate knew who He was, and pronounced Him “not guilty” (Matthew 27:18).
- Consider what took place before the crucifixion.
 - 1st: During the arrest in the garden, when Jesus said, “I am He,” many in the mob drew back and fell on the ground (John 18:6).
 - 2nd: Peter flicked off Malchus’ ear, but Jesus healed it—*This was the last miracle for the Jews before Jesus went to the cross.*
 - 3rd: We must not forget the miracle that never happened—a request for legions of angels!

Six Miracles at Calvary



#1: DARKNESS




Miracle #1: Darkness

- The darkness was a preview of hell (Matthew 8:12; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6, 13).
- This darkness was not an eclipse of the sun because an eclipse lasts only a few minutes and cannot happen during a full moon (Passover came during a full moon).
- The darkness was eerie, providing prevailing quietness, except for the moans of three dying men and the voices of those who were wondering out loud what was happening (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44).

Six Miracles at Calvary



#2: THE VEIL



Miracle #2: The Veil

- At 3:00 p.m. the priests were on duty at the temple when Jesus cried out, and before their startled eyes, the **veil** separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).
- *God had removed Himself from an earthly location and eliminated the law & priesthood.*
- No wonder many priests later obeyed the **gospel** (Acts 6:7).

Six Miracles at Calvary



#3: EARTHQUAKE




Miracle #3: The Earthquake

- The earthquake brought a suspense that was surely terrifying.
- Even Roman soldiers were awed at the earthquake (Matthew 27:51, 54).
- Rocks, some of the hardest substances on earth, were split.
- Everything shook except the cross!

Six Miracles at Calvary




#4: OPENED
GRAVES



Miracle #4: The Opened Graves

- The splitting of the rocks *was brute force*; the opening of the graves *was brilliant design* (Matthew 27:52, 53).
- “And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts” (Luke 23:48).
- God *was still teaching, warning, and reaching out to the Jews.*




Miracle #4: The Opened Graves

- This also proves that the events on the Day of Pentecost (the beginning of the church in Acts 2) were no accident.
- Peter began the first gospel sermon, testifying, “. . . as you yourselves know” (Acts 2:22).
- Before that occasion, God had given them fifty days *to think about the cross*.
- On the Day of Pentecost, Peter gave them the solution to their guilt—**Christ**.

Six Miracles at Calvary




**#5: THE GRAVE
CLOTHES**



Miracle #5: The Grave Clothes


- John outran Peter, yet he stopped at the tomb's entrance and looked in & found only an empty tomb.
- When he followed Peter into the tomb, he saw evidence of a resurrected Savior (John 20:1–9; Luke 24:1–12).
- The last thing the enemies wanted was an empty tomb.



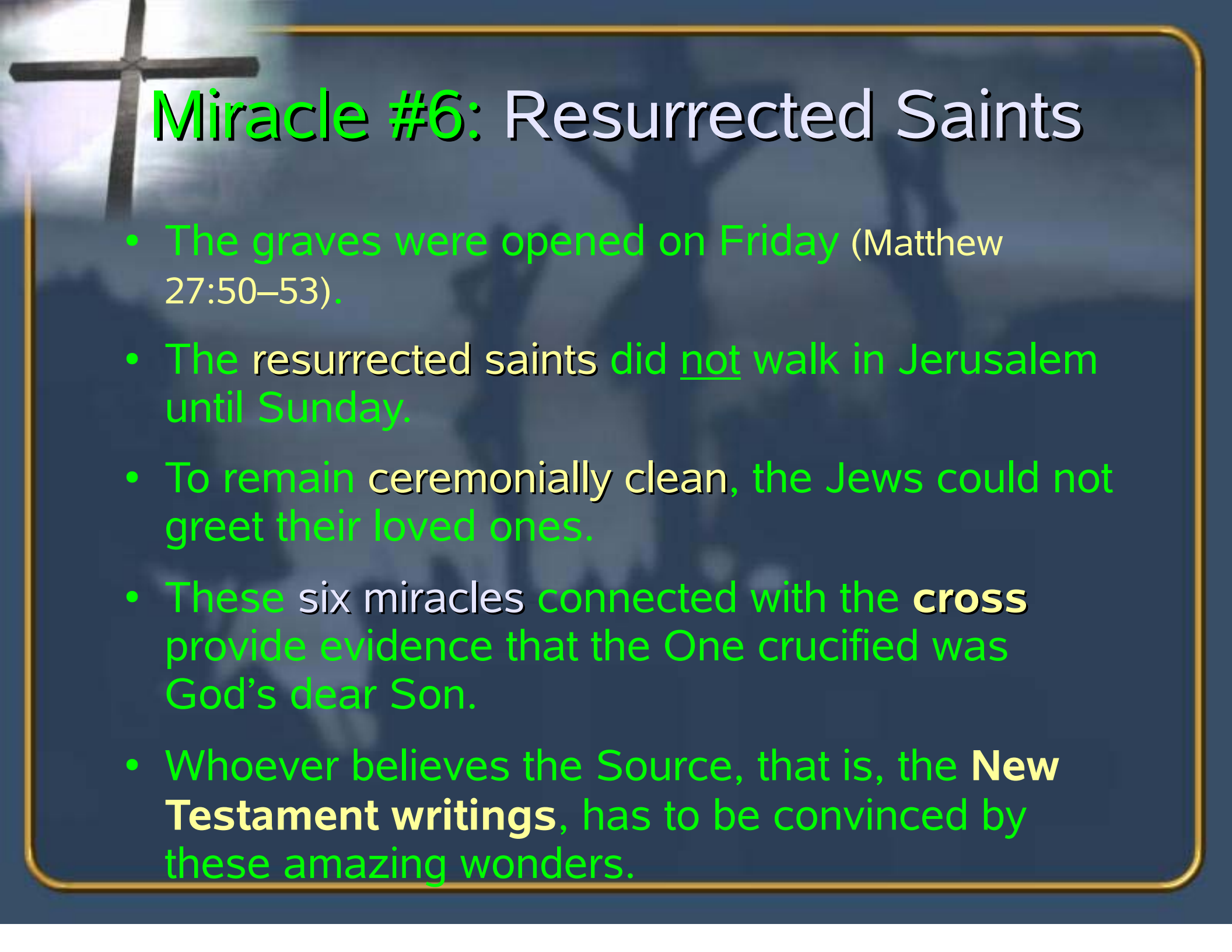
Miracle #5: The Grave Clothes

- The disciples would have clothed Jesus; they would not have disrobed Him.
- Enemies would not have taken the time to disrobe Him.
- Grave clothes were enough evidence for John who was the first to believe!

Six Miracles at Calvary



#6: RESURRECTED
SAINTS




Miracle #6: Resurrected Saints

- The graves were opened on Friday (Matthew 27:50–53).
- The resurrected saints did not walk in Jerusalem until Sunday.
- To remain ceremonially clean, the Jews could not greet their loved ones.
- These six miracles connected with the **cross** provide evidence that the One crucified was God's dear Son.
- Whoever believes the Source, that is, the **New Testament writings**, has to be convinced by these amazing wonders.

Six Miracles at Calvary




DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS



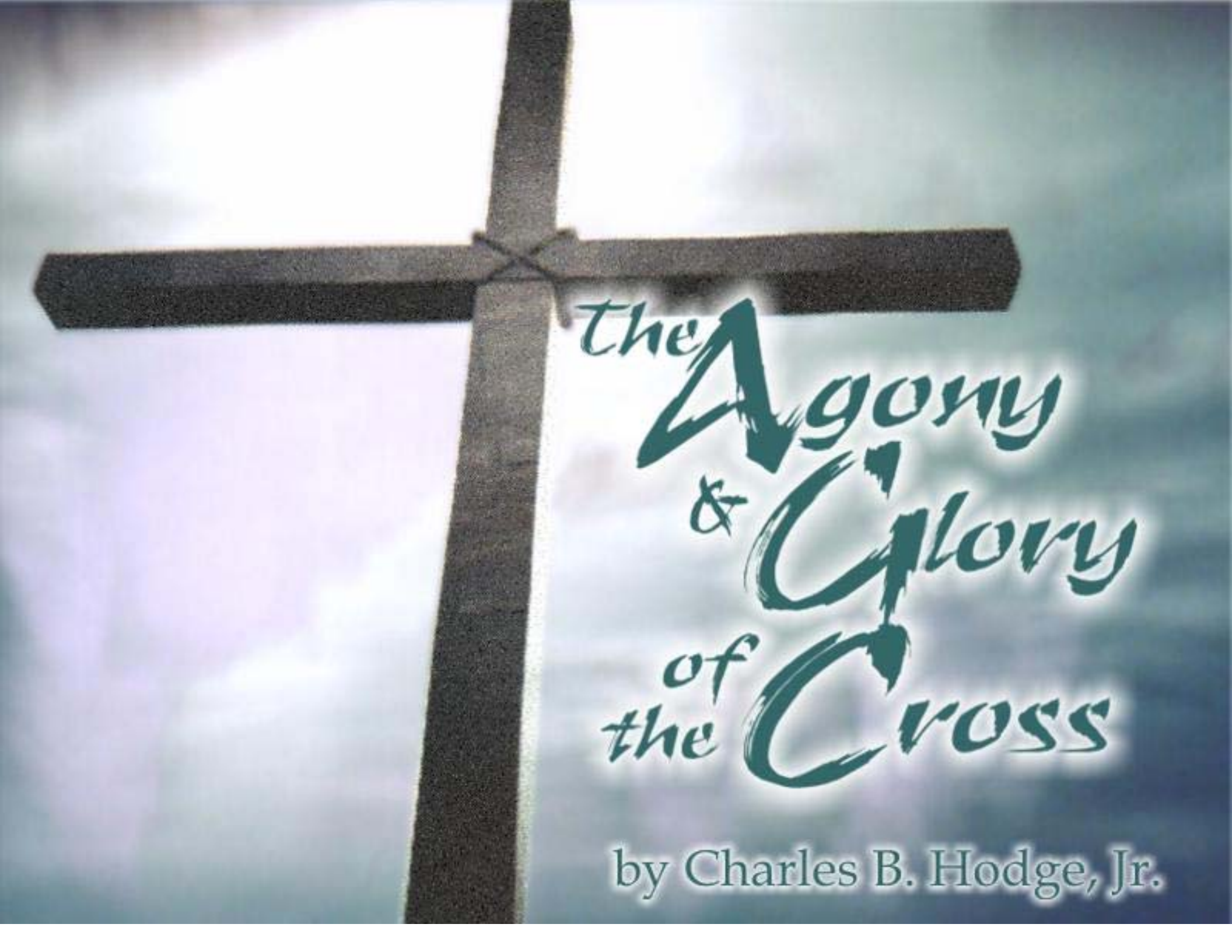
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Review the **oxymorons** given in the Wisdom & Power of God section of this lesson.
 - Give other examples.
 - How have you experienced these in your life?
- Discuss the statement “God does heart transplants.”
 - Give biblical and/or personal examples of **radical change** affected by Christianity.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who was **in control** at the cross?
 - How do the Scriptures make this clear?
- What was the **last miracle** Jesus performed for the Jews?
 - Describe it.
- Name the **six miracles** at the time of Jesus' death.
 - What was the significance of each one?
 - Which do you find particularly intriguing?

A wooden cross is positioned vertically on the left side of the image, extending from the top to the bottom. The background is a soft-focus sky with light and dark clouds. The text is overlaid on the right side of the cross.

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