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.

*The
Agony
& Glory
of
the Cross*

by Charles B. Hodge, Jr.¹

Big Words of the Cross



RECONCILIATION



RECONCILIATION

TEXTS:

- “. . . God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19).
- “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).



RECONCILIATION

- Salvation was and is by substitution but the object of substitution is reconciliation.
- *Forgiveness & apology* are “in” today, but *repentance & reconciliation* are not.
- *Forgiveness* is not *Reconciliation*.
 - *It only takes one to forgive*
 - *It takes two to reconcile*
 - *Unless forgiveness leads to reconciliation, forgiveness fails.*

Big Words of the Cross



THE LAWS OF
FORGIVENESS



LAWS OF FORGIVENESS

- Shakespeare said, “To be, or not to be, that is the question.” (William Shakespeare Hamlet 3.1.56.); however, Scripture says, “To forgive, or not to forgive—that is the issue.”
- I must forgive.
- I must be forgiven.
- *That is the big issue of life!*
- “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

Big Words of the Cross



THE 1ST LAW OF
FORGIVENESS



1ST LAW OF FORGIVENESS

- The 1st law: *The unforgiving cannot be forgiven.*
- Read Jesus' prayer: (Matthew 6:12–15; Mark 11:24–26; Luke 11:4; see also Matthew 18:35; 2 Corinthians 2:7; Luke 6:37).
- Do not just learn the theory—start the practice!
- Our paramount purpose must be to *learn to forgive.*
- *Be the first to forgive!*

Big Words of the Cross

A blurred background image of a crucifix in a landscape. The crucifix is the central focus, with a cross on top. The background shows a hazy, outdoor setting with trees and a light sky.

THE 2ND LAW OF
FORGIVENESS



2ND LAW OF FORGIVENESS

- The 2nd law: The offended must forgive, if only for sanity's sake!
- *Without forgiveness, one can become bitter, mean, and angry.*
- *Without forgiveness, one lives in chains.*
- If you wait until the offender repents, you may waste your life waiting.
- Once you forgive in your heart, it ceases to be a primary issue—*whether or not the offender repents.*

Big Words of the Cross



THE 3RD LAW OF
FORGIVENESS



3RD LAW OF FORGIVENESS

- **The 3rd law:** There cannot be forgiveness without repentance.
- The prodigal left home to sin; to be forgiven, he had to stop sinning and return home (Luke 15:11–24).
- You cannot have forgiveness while living in the far country and sinning.
- The forgiveness was there—the unmerited yet conditional forgiveness of God.
- The father could not force the prodigal to return nor can God save us until we return.



3RD LAW OF FORGIVENESS

- We are not innocent victims—we are sinners.
- We must own up to our sin (Psalm 51).
- Sin matters.
- When we are violated, then we rebuke; when there is repentance, we forgive (Luke 17:3, 4).
- Nothing is too big or too much to forgive (Matthew 18:21–35).
- Reconciliation is more than forgiveness.

Big Words of the Cross



THE 4TH LAW OF
FORGIVENESS



4TH LAW OF FORGIVENESS

- **The 4th law:** Forgiveness does not guarantee a painless future.
- **Forgiven sin** still has consequences.
- Time and forgetfulness are not forgiveness.
- **God remembers our sins no more** (Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17), but **this is not** “spiritual amnesia.”
- “My sin is ever before me” (Psalm 51:3b).
- Forgiveness **is the most costly gift on earth** (Romans 5:10).

Big Words of the Cross



PROPITIATION



PROPITIATION

- In Jesus' time “propitiation” referred to appeasing the anger of an idol by making a blood sacrifice.
- God did not appease Himself but created a salvation by which He was justified.
- God Himself justified Himself.
- Jesus provided this propitiation through His personal sacrifice.
- In this way, He can be just and *still save sinners*.



PROPITIATION

- Jesus became the final, perfect sacrifice for us.
- He took upon Himself first our flesh, then our sin.
- He is both our sacrifice and our High Priest (Hebrews 2:14–18).
- He is both our Lord and our Savior (Acts 2:36).
- He is our vicarious sacrifice—the fulfillment of all Jewish sacrifices.



PROPITIATION

- He was not made guilty; He was made to be sin as our substitute for our sin (2 Corinthians 5:17–21).
- Propitiation enforces the enormity of sin.
- Love without wrath is *sentimentality*.
- Divine grace satisfied divine wrath by a divine self-sacrifice.

Big Words of the Cross



EXPIATION



EXPIATION

- Propitiation (*reconciliation*) is made possible by **expiation** (*making atonement*).
- Propitiation & expiation are so intertwined that it is difficult to separate them.
- You expiate a sin, but you propitiate a person.
- Expiation is a doctrinal truth; propitiation is a *personal application* of a doctrinal truth.
- Expiation is the removal of guilt; propitiation is the removal of the divine wrath that has come because of the sin.



EXPIATION

- Jesus is our “mercy seat” (Romans 3:25, 26).
 - The blood of Jesus is our expiatory sacrifice.
 - To expiate is to pay the penalty, the price (1 John 2:1, 2); to propitiate is to satisfy the justice of God.
- Jesus is our “Passover” (1 Corinthians 5:7).
 - He covered our sins, allowing God to put them behind His back (Romans 8:1, 2; see Isaiah 38:17).
 - God cannot and will not forgive and accept us *except through the cross.*

Big Words of the Cross



IMPUTATION



IMPUTATION

- Sinful man cannot be righteous; therefore, imputed righteousness is the only kind of righteousness he can have.
- Justification has been called “the supreme paradox of the gospel.”
- Through forgiveness, God makes sinners just, or righteous (Romans 8:1, 2).
- Our sins are imputed to Christ, and His righteousness is imputed to us (Isaiah 53:5, 6, 10, 11; 1 Peter 2:24; Romans 4:11; 14:9).



IMPUTATION

- Read and reread Philippians 3:7–11.
- Tragically, we would prefer to merit grace, but grace cannot be merited!
- “Nothing that man could ever do in a million years of righteous living could ever earn the tiniest fraction of the salvation God gives to men in Christ” (James Burton Coffman, Commentary on Romans (Austin, Tex.: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1973), 122.).
- Furthermore, imputed righteousness eliminates human pride.

Big Words of the Cross



RANSOM



RANSOM

- The best known and most misunderstood facet of atonement is “ransom.”
- A ransom is the purchase price for freeing slaves, and sinners are the servants of sin.
- God forever silenced Satan at the cross (Matthew 20:28; Galatians 3:13; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6; Titus 2:14, 15), where the blood of the Lamb was given to redeem us.
- Our sins will either be paid for at the cross, or they will be paid for in hell.
- We make the choice.



RANSOM

- Jesus died for us—as a price for our sin and a substitute for our death.
- He did not die as a martyr for a cause, but He freely gave His life as a ransom for us.
- Jesus made sin forgivable & man savable.
- To whom was this ransom paid?
 - God did not buy sinners back from Satan.
 - We are “sold under sin” (Romans 7:14; NKJV), but we are not sold to Satan.



RANSOM

- God, not Satan, was satisfied at the cross (1 John 2:1, 2).
- Satan is the “accuser” (Revelation 12:9, 10).
- God cannot be holy without punishing sin.
- The ransom was paid in order to satisfy the justice and holiness of God.
- A ransom is satisfaction for the insult of sin.
- The penalty of law (Romans 6:23) is paid, and its sanctity is vindicated.




RANSOM

- The ransom reveals the seriousness, sheer depth, and horror of sin.
- Salvation is given to us as a gift when we believe and obey.
- Jesus not only dethroned Satan, but He also dealt with sin.
- In overcoming sin, Jesus overcame death.
- The sin-debt is unpayable except through the marvel of His grace.
- The redeemed must never forget what redemption is!

Big Words of the Cross




DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS



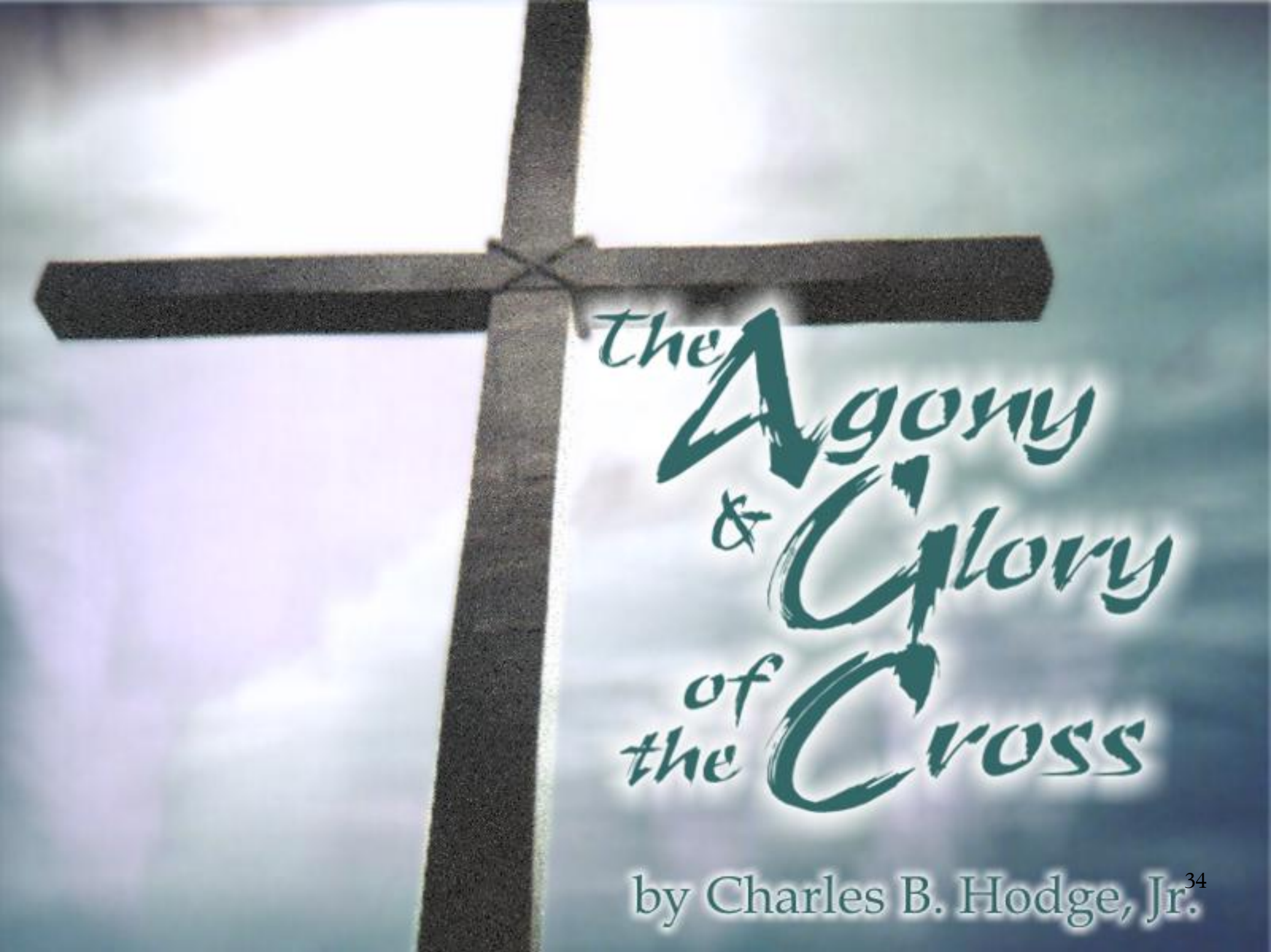
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is society's view of **sin** and personal responsibility?
- Discuss the various definitions of sin proposed by the author:
 - *the supreme choice of self,*
 - *thinking that one knows better than God,*
 - *cosmic treason,*
 - *man's decision to become his own God.*
- Give examples of how these definitions are appropriate.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is said to be the only way to handle sin? Find the verses in Romans 6 which support this idea.
- What is **reconciliation**?
- What is the difference between apology and repentance.
- **Forgiveness** is dependent on what actions on the part of the offender and the offended?

A large, dark wooden cross is the central focus, set against a background of a cloudy sky. The cross is made of two thick, weathered wooden beams. The text is written in a dark, stylized, calligraphic font with a white glow effect, positioned to the right of the cross's vertical beam.

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