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*His Wonderful Cross*  
*The Story of Our Redemption*

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## Introduction

### The Answer From Above

“If I cried out, who would hear me among the hosts (groups) of angels?”  
—Adapted.

With that painful question, the German poet Rilke asked what people have been asking about the universe for a long time.

Evolution teaches that about fifteen billion years ago a terrible explosion created matter,<sup>1</sup> energy, time, and space all at once. Atoms<sup>2</sup> turned into gaseous clouds of fire and light, which created stars. From those stars came forth large balls of burning rock that hardened into planets. One of these planets was Earth. After billions of years, shallow water began to create simple forms of life. And millions of years later, humans came forth. Suppose the temperatures had been a little too warm or a little too cold, or the force of gravity had been too weak. Then none of us would be here.

No wonder Rilke and other people have asked if anyone above is listening. Is there anyone above us? Or is there something out there that is beyond our understanding, even with our modern scientific equipment? Are we here only because of cold, lifeless forces that seem to work without reason or purpose, but that still gave us hearts and minds that cry out for reason and purpose?

The only picture worse than the picture without a creator would be the picture with a creator that had evil plans for us. The idea that there is a god (or gods) does not add up to good news. Ancient<sup>3</sup> myths fill the heavens with gods who are cruel to humans. It would be better to take our chances with the cold, lifeless forces of the universe than with an evil god who takes pleasure in our pain and suffering.

But fortunately, the Bible teaches that there is a Creator-God and that this God loves humans. He does not take pleasure in our pain and suffering. He has shared our pain. He has gone through worse suffering than any of us ever could. This God is Jesus. Jesus' suffering ended on the cross. The Cross is the topic for this quarter.

Many years ago, the author Nietzsche wrote about a crazy man who ran through a marketplace. The man shouted, “What were we doing when we unchained this earth from the sun? Where is it moving now? Where are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we falling all the time? Backward, side-ward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we wandering through an endless nothing? Do we feel the breath of empty space?”

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<sup>1</sup>matter—what things are made of.

<sup>2</sup>atoms—the smallest part of a chemical such as oxygen.

<sup>3</sup>ancient—very old.

Nietzsche's point was that in the modern world all good and spiritual standards (rules) have been destroyed. So humans wander without purpose in all directions through an endless nothingness.

But the Bible tells us that, through Jesus, we are tied to heaven forever. The spikes (nails) in His hands and in His feet both nailed Jesus to the cross and nailed earth to heaven. Through the Cross, God shows us we are not alone. Our Creator has connected Himself to us by becoming a human and accepting our pain.

At Creation, God first breathed into Adam the breath of life. From Creation through the birth of Jesus, God has shown to us that He is involved with us. He cares about our future. As the Son of God, Jesus became a human to live with us. This tells us God is very much involved with us. But even more amazing is the fact that God, in Jesus, died on the cross for our sins! He died for us to save us from being separated from God forever. We can never begin to fully understand what Jesus' death means. We will need all eternity<sup>4</sup> to understand Jesus' death. Meanwhile, we will study about the Cross from this Bible study guide.

We will start studying with the fall of Adam and Eve. We will follow the plan of salvation throughout history. But the important focus will be on the last week of Jesus' life.

If we cried out, who would hear us from above? The Cross gives us the answer. Jesus would hear us.

The author of this quarter's lesson is Brian Jones. He recently developed materials for a Bible information ministry (work) that will be printed in many languages. The Upper Columbia Conference, in Spokane, Washington, is helping with this ministry. Jones also has written two other adult Bible study guides. He has a Ph.D. in Christian counseling. He and his wife have a young daughter.

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<sup>4</sup>eternity—life without end; forever.