

Resolution on the Cross

WHEREAS the subject of the cross of Christ is central and indispensable to the gospel (1 Cor. 1:17—2:2) and is vitally related to Bible doctrines such as substitutionary atonement, propitiation, redemption, justification, and reconciliation; and

WHEREAS the cross of Christ reveals to humankind something about the very nature of God, including His justice (Rom. 3:25, 26), His love (Rom. 5:8), and His wisdom (the message of the gospel, including the crucifixion of Christ, is the very wisdom of God; 1 Cor. 2:6–8); and

WHEREAS the death of Christ on the cross is the basis for the believer's justification (Rom. 3:25, 26), the ground for the believer's cleansing (1 John 1:7), and victory over sin (Rom. 6:1–10), and the foundation for the judgment of Satan and his demons (Col. 2:15; John 12:31); and

WHEREAS the cross of Christ influences the believer's life by ensuring peace with God (Rom. 5:1, 9, 10; Col. 1:20), by fostering a changed relationship to the world (Gal. 6:14), by establishing a new life of faith (Gal. 2:20), and by supplying a model for Biblical love (Eph. 5:1, 2); and

WHEREAS the cross of Christ is a prominent theme in Scripture, evidenced by Isaiah's reference to the suffering Servant Who was "wounded," or "pierced," for our transgressions (Isa. 53:5), by David's description of the pierced hands and feet of the Messiah (Ps. 22:16), by Jesus' foretelling His own crucifixion as He moved toward Jerusalem (Matt. 20:17–19), by Jesus' indication that He, the "Son of Man," would be "lifted up" (John 3:14; 12:23–33), by Peter's preaching after Jesus' death and resurrection that Jesus was murdered, crucified, and hung on a tree (Acts 2:23, 36; 4:10; 5:30; 10:39), by Paul's teaching concerning Christ's suffering and execution (Acts 13:28, 29; 17:3), and by John's revelation of the glory and praise that Christ, the slain Lamb, will receive in the future for His suffering and death (Rev. 1:5, 6; 5:5–9, 11–14; 13:8); and

WHEREAS the cross of Christ is an offense to many (Gal. 5:11), an object of stumbling to some (1 Cor. 1:23), and foolishness to others (1 Cor. 1:23); and whereas some even posture themselves as enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:18); and

WHEREAS there are those today who deny that Jesus really died on the cross or deny that His death was a vicarious sacrifice for sin, some advocating that the only real value of Jesus' death was its moral influence, or its example, and some who, while regarding themselves as evangelicals, contend that the traditional view of penal substitution is wrong and describe it as "a form of cosmic child abuse";¹

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the messengers of the churches in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting for our 76th Annual Conference in Ankeny, Iowa, June 24–27, 2008, affirm that we believe "Jesus Christ, the

Son of God, . . . took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, . . . that by the shedding of His blood in His death He fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin; that His sacrifice consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree"²; and

BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED that we faithfully proclaim the cross of Christ, that we not be drawn to the supposed wisdom of the world but value the message of the cross (1 Cor. 1:17, 18), that we remain willing to bear any persecution related to identifying with the cross (Gal. 6:12; Heb 13:12, 13), that we not boast in the flesh but rightly boast in the cross (Gal. 6:14), that we live in the light of the rich benefits of the cross, and that we thank God for Christ's sacrificial death on the cross on our behalf.

1. Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 182.
2. GARBC Articles of Faith, Article VIII.