

The Twelve Did Not Preach the Cross for Salvation

It is evident from 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 that the gospel of our salvation includes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus as payment for our sins. This simple truth is the cornerstone of Christianity. Yet nowhere in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John did the Twelve understand the preaching of the cross. Below are the verses that prove the Twelve were ignorant of the preaching of the cross for salvation.

Ignorant of Jesus' Death, burial, and resurrection

1. **Matthew 16:21-22** – Jesus first began to tell them of his death and yet Peter tried to prevent it.
2. **Mark 8:31-32** – Another account of Peter rebuking the Lord for speaking about his death.
3. **Mark 9:31-32** – After hearing about the death and resurrection of Jesus the disciples “understood not and were afraid to ask him”
4. **Luke 9:44-45** – “But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.”
5. **Luke 18:31-34** – “And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”
6. **John 2:21-22** – They did not understand the resurrection until *after* it happened.

Disbelief in the Resurrection

7. **Mark 16:5-14** – The ladies were afraid when they found the tomb empty. The disciples did not believe after two witnesses testified of the resurrection.
8. **Luke 24:1-4** – The ladies were perplexed about what had happened to Jesus.
9. **Luke 24:8-12** – The stories of Jesus’ “disappearance” were idle tales. Peter wondered what happened.
10. **John 20:2** – Mary Magdalene thought someone had stolen Jesus after he had resurrected.
11. **John 20:7-9** – The disciples after seeing the empty tomb believed Mary that someone had stolen Jesus. They did not know about the resurrection yet.

Did not understand the cross for salvation

12. **John 20:21-23** – Even after the resurrection, the disciples did not understand what it accomplished. Here they are given the authority to remit sins.
13. **Acts 3:14-15** – The crucifixion was presented as a murder indictment to Israel at Pentecost. The resurrection as a warning that he would return to seek vengeance.
14. **Acts 5:28** – Instead of the blood being payment for sins it was presented as the evidence of guilty murderers.
15. **Acts 7:52** – Stephen accuses the rulers of betrayal and murder of the Just One.
16. **Acts 10:39** – According to Paul’s gospel Christ died willingly in the place of sinners. According to Peter he died because he was slain by certain Jews. Could it be that Peter does not yet understand the mystery of the cross?

This list does not prove that the Twelve were disobedient to the gospel that was presented to them. Contrarily, they were some of the first believers in the gospel of the kingdom. They were among the faithful remnant of Israel who trusted that Jesus was the Son of God and promised Messiah.

However, these verses show that the gospel they knew and trusted was not the preaching of the cross that Paul taught. Whereas they knew Jesus Christ as Messiah to Israel, Paul would later teach Jesus Christ on the cross as payment for sins to Gentiles.

The preaching of the cross was offered for salvation first through the Apostle Paul as the Lord revealed the meaning of the death, burial, and resurrection. The Twelve apostles were ignorant of this message.