

## **six straight lines**

**mark this: Luke 23:33, 39-43**

Take a look at the picture (of "six straight lines") above. It will not be new to you. You've seen it a thousand times. You've seen it recreated on roadsides and billboards. Perhaps it has even found its way through the back door of your dreams.

If we were to graphically represent what life on earth boils down to, it would be just this: a central cross flanked by two other crosses, formed hieroglyphically by just six straight lines.

The psychologist C.J. Jung postulated that ideas, like DNA, are transmitted from generation to generation in the form of archetypes. These archetypes are derived from the experience of the race and are stored as images in the "unconscious" of each individual. If that is true, then six straight lines will stand as the archetype of archetypes.

In theatrical terminology, the three crosses are a tableau--a scene presented by silent and motionless actors, arranged to depict their essential relationships. The tableau freezes a moment in time, producing a photographic effect on the stage.

Six straight lines paint the essential picture of our earthly experience: the Savior, with a thief on either side. *Numbered with the transgressors* (Isaiah 53:12), he was one of us. But two of the six lines are longer, for his cross was "bigger," somehow. It must be, for the sin of the whole world was hung upon it.

The thieves represent the varying answers to the central issue of our existence:  
*"But who do you say that I am?"* (Luke 9:20)

One thief just saw somebody dying. One thief saw something else.

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We're introduced to the two thieves far before they appear at Golgotha in tableau. We saw them in Cain and Abel, on the Bible's first pages.

We saw them in Jacob and Esau; in David and Saul; in Peter and Judas Iscariot.

In Solomon, we saw the two thieves in one man. We do not know which of the thieves prevailed in Solomon's spirit; but we will find out, by and by.

John the Baptist looked at Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of he world."  
Pontius Pilate looked at Jesus and said, "Behold the man."

Each of us appears in the tableau. Which thief are you? Which thief am I? We will all find out, by and by.

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## **lamps aglow and hearts aflame**

**mark this: Luke 24:27, 31-32**

**and this: Psalm 119:105**

Remember the story about the magic lamp? If you rub the lamp three times, a genie appears who will grant your wish!

I guess I've lived backwards in a way, because when I was a kid I didn't believe in any of that stuff. I didn't believe in anything past the freckles on my nose.

But when I was born again, I grew down instead of up. I became younger than ever before.

I remember making a wish when I first read Luke 24. I wished and prayed with all my might that by magic or by miracle I could be with Jesus on the Road to Emmaus.

Then I closed my eyes and waited. But when I opened them and looked around, I was still in the same old place. But that didn't deter me. I figured that if I were to pray three times, I'd be on the Road to Emmaus for sure.

So I closed my eyes and said my prayer twice more. But when I looked around, the world was the old world yet. So I gave up hoping that I'd ever make it to Emmaus.

But on about my tenth trip through Luke 24, there were echoes in my head as I read. They were echoes from Genesis and Exodus, from Leviticus and Ruth, from Joshua and Esther and Job. There were echoes of Kings and Chronicles, of prophets and Psalms. And all of them were echoing "Jesus."

In fact, there was a veritable cavalcade of horses and kings, with their trumpets and swords. They were in dazzling array and I was swept away until lo and behold I was on Emmaus Road!

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The magic number wasn't three for me. It was more like ten or twelve. I had to go all the way from Genesis to Revelation ten times or more before I found myself on the road with Jesus, my heart burning within me as he opened the scriptures and made them as alive as himself.

You're probably quicker in your mind than I, and more open to faith and miracles. So maybe it won't take you the ten tries it took me before I found myself on this magic road with this magic man who, starting with Moses and all the prophets, pointed out all of the thousands of times that we'd already met!

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## **the stranger on the road**

### **mark this: Luke 24:27**

On the road to Emmaus, a stranger happens alongside two disciples who were disheartened following the death of Jesus, and puzzled about reports they'd heard--that he was alive again.

So the stranger proceeded to give them a guided tour of Scripture. Starting in the beginning, then going verse by verse, he pointed out references to the Christ, the Savior.

It wasn't until they'd stopped for a meal that they realized the "stranger" was Jesus. All the way down the road, the stranger had been explaining what the Bible says about Him!

Then, just as suddenly as he'd appeared beside them, he was gone. The two disciples asked each other, (Luke 24:32)

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It wasn't the first time that Jesus had taught this lesson:

**(John 5:39)**

**(John 5:46)**

The Bible isn't just about Jesus. The Bible is Jesus. Or, to say it another way, Jesus is the embodiment of scripture:

**(John 1:1, 14)**

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You, too, will have your Road to Emmaus experience if you continue to systematically study the whole Bible. One day the key--Jesus--will be placed in your hand and the Old Testament will open before you as if you'd never seen it before. Suddenly, it's not about lambs and burning bushes; and it's not about Abraham and David. You will clearly see that those are just props and role players in what the Bible really is--the Story Of Jesus.

But why wait? Let's pretend we're on the road to Emmaus right now. We've tried to imagine what Jesus said along the way...

*And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself....*

He is the Word, spoken by God. (Genesis 1:3; John 1:1)

He is the Light in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it. (Genesis 1:3, John 1:5)

He is *the express image of God*. (Genesis 1:26; Hebrews 1:3)

He is Life. (Genesis 2:7; John 20:22)

He is the Sabbath of God. It is finished! (Genesis 2:3; John 19:30)

He will leave his father to become one with us in the flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

He is *the seed of the woman*:

*I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.* (John 12:24)

Bearing the curse, he will wear the thorn. (Genesis 3:18; John 19:2)

He is the atonement, the covering blood. (Genesis 3:21)

He is *the sword of the Spirit, the word of God*, which lights and keeps the way. (Genesis 3:24)

He is the offering of Abel. (Genesis 4)

He is *his brother's keeper*. (Genesis 4:9)

He is the ark of refuge. (1 Peter 3:20-21)

He is *the sign of the covenant*. (Genesis 9:12)

He is the rainbow, the complete spectrum of God's illumination. (Genesis 9:12-17)

He is the sole guarantor of the covenant. (Genesis 15:17)

Standing in the stead of the covenant breaker, his flesh will be torn asunder. (Genesis 15:17)

He is our Melchizedek, king of Salem; our Shalom, our Prince of Peace; our priest of God Most High. (Genesis 14:18; Romans 5:1)

He is the Promised Son. (Genesis 15)

He is the Promised Blessing. (Genesis 12:2)

He will carry his own altar up Mount Moriah. The hand of judgment will be stayed by his sacrifice. (Genesis 22)

He is the provider. (Genesis 22:8)

He is the provision. (Genesis 22:8)

He is the eternal king; the scepter who will not depart; the lion of the tribe of Judah. (Genesis 49:10; Revelation 5:5)

He is the Way: (John 14:6)  
he is the Exodus, the Way out;  
he is the Door, the Way in. (John 10:9)

He is Aaron's staff; becoming sin to vanquish sin. (Exodus 7:12)

He is Aaron's staff; the *dead Branch which blossomed*. (Numbers 17:8)  
He is *the shoot come forth from the stump of Jesse*. (Isaiah 11:1)

He is the brazen serpent, who stems the evil tide for those who look to him. (Numbers 21:8-9; John 3:14-15)

He is the angel (Messenger) of the LORD. (Genesis 16:7, etc.)

He is the Message (Word) of the Lord. (Hebrews 1:2)

He is Jacob's Ladder, the conveyance of the covenant, *Mediator between God and Man*. (Genesis 28:12; 1 Timothy 2:5)

He is the Contender for your soul. (Genesis 32:24)

He is the rejected brother, through whom God will turn *bad into good*. (Genesis 50:20)

He is the bush that burns but is ever green. (Exodus 3:2)

He IS the great I AM: *Before Abraham was, I AM*. (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58)

He is the Passover Lamb. (Exodus 12; 1 Corinthians 5:7)

He is *a consuming fire*. (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29)

He is *a refining fire*. (Malachi 3:2)

He is our shield. (Genesis 15:1)

And our great reward. (Genesis 15:1)

He is the *Baptizer in the Holy Spirit*. (Luke 3:16)

He is the *Baptizer in fire*. (Luke 3:16)

He himself would undergo the baptism of fire in the believer's stead. (Luke 12:49-50)

He is Manna, our daily bread. (John 6:58)

He is--What? (Manna means, "What is it?") (Exodus 16:15)

He's the question each one must answer:

*"But who do you say that I am?"* (Matthew 16:15)

He is the Vision of Ezekiel: mysterious and immaterial, enigmatic and unconfined. (Ezekiel 1)

He is the Presence, (Exodus 33:14)

the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, (Exodus 13:22)

*Immanuel, God with us*. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23)

He is the Smitten Rock; (Exodus 17:6)

*The stone cut out without hands*. (Daniel 2:34)

He is *the stone the builders rejected*,

*Which became the cornerstone*. (Psalm 118: 22-23; Matthew 21:42)

He is the centerpiece of the sacrificial system;

The offerings are abstract renderings of him.

The feasts are impressionistic portraits.

He is Israel, the son called out of Egypt, (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15)

who was tested in the wilderness. (Matthew 4)

He's the tabernacle, (Exodus 25-27)

the dwelling of God in the midst of his people.

He's the glory of the LORD. (Exodus 33:21-23; Matthew 24:30; 2 Corinthians 3:18)

*He is the Star out of Jacob*. (Numbers 24:17-19)

He is *the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings*. (Malachi 4:2)

He is *the bright and morning star*. (Revelation 22:16)

He is the Elect. (Isaiah 42:1)

He is the Anointed. (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18)

He is the Plan.

He is the Promise and the Promise Keeper. (2 Corinthians 1:20)

He is the Lawgiver and the Fulfillment of the Law. (Matthew 5:17)

He is the Deliverer. (Psalm 18:2)

He is *the Prophet like unto Moses*; (Deuteronomy 18:15)

He is the cupbearer, who drank the cup of the wrath of God; (Nehemiah 1:11; Jeremiah 25:15; Matthew 26:42)

He is the fourth in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (Daniel 3:25)

He is prophecy's destination. (Revelation 19:10)  
He is genealogy's terminus.

*His blood cries out from Abel to Zechariah.* (Genesis 4:10; Matthew 23:35)  
Crying "Condemnation" to some, "Forgiveness" to others, (2 Corinthians 2:16)  
it winds through scripture to the cross,  
the scarlet thread which makes the whole cohere. (Joshua 2:18)

He is *the Son of God*; (Mark 1:1, etc.)  
With no mother in heaven and no father on earth.

*He is The Son of Man*, (Ezekiel 2:1; Daniel 7:13; Matthew 8:20))  
*The Son of her Sorrow* in his first advent,  
*The Son of His Right Hand* in the kingdom to come; (Genesis 35:18)  
*The Son of David*; (Matthew 15:22)  
*The Son of Mary*. (Mark 6:3)

*He who has the Son has life;*  
*He who does not, has not.* (1 John 5:12)

To be without him is hell;  
To be with him is heaven. (John 17:3; 1 John 5:20)

He encompasses his creation;  
*For He is all in all.* (1 Corinthians 15:28; Ephesians 1:23)

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