



## Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts

By Mark D. Baker, Joel B. Green

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For the first-century Roman world the cross was first and foremost an instrument of shameful and violent execution. But early Christians, who had seen their world upended by the atoning power of the cross of Christ, came to view it in an entirely different light. Deeply scandalous, it was paradoxically glorious. For the cross of Christ marked the epochal saving event in God's dealings with Israel and the world. And its meaning could not be fathomed or encircled by a single image or formulation. Since its publication in 2000, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross* has initiated among evangelicals a new conversation about the nature of the atonement and how it should be expressed in the varied and global contexts of today. In this second edition Green and Baker have clarified and enlarged their argument in a way that will continue to provoke thought and conversation on this critical topic.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"Recovering the scandalous nature of the cross demands, Green and Baker think, taking seriously the "melange of voices" present in the New Testament, the power and mechanics of metaphorical language, and the impact of culture on the way we think and speak. These are weighty and at times difficult matters; it is *Recovering the Scandal's* greatest strength that each is treated accurately and comprehensively without ever lapsing into inaccessible academic jargon." (Thomas Andrew Bennett, Fuller Theology News & Notes, Fall 2012)

"Here is a fresh look at the cross of Jesus. . . . I highly recommend it to all Christians who . . . seek to understand and articulate with integrity the saving significance of the cross of Jesus in our postmodern world." (John Driver, Goshen College)

"Joel Green and Mark Baker offer a richly-textured interpretation which does justice both to the variety of models of atonement in the Bible and to the varieties of postmodern culture. This is thought-provoking theology for a mission context." (Stephen Travis, formerly Vice-Principal of St. John's College, Nottingham UK)

"In the second edition of *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, Baker and Green continue the important conversation about the doctrine of the atonement by responding to new proposals and to critics of the book's first edition. . . . Most helpful is their insightful treatment of non-Western views of the cross which pushes forward evangelical attempts at cultural contextualization without sheer accommodation. Everyone interested in cutting-edge theological thinking about the atonement must read this second edition." (Roger E. Olson, professor of theology, George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University)

"By focusing on the importance of narrative context, language and metaphor, this book recaptures some of the mystery and complexity of New Testament views of atonement. Besides engaging recent debates on the salvific meaning of the crucifixion, this revised edition surveys New Testament, historical, and contemporary models of the atonement, revealing unintended side effects of a contemporary model of penal satisfaction. Scholars and pastors will gain from the insights of this clear and well-researched study--one that shows the necessity of doing theology that relates to the mission of the church in every context and generation." (Frances S. Adeney, William A. Benfield Jr. Professor of Evangelism and Global Mission, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary)

### **About the Author**

Mark D. Baker (PhD, Duke University) is professor of mission and theology at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California. He served as a missionary in Honduras for ten years and has written a number of books in English and Spanish.

Joel B. Green (B.S., M.Th., Ph.D.) is professor of New Testament interpretation, Fuller Theological Seminary. He was vice president of academic affairs, provost and professor of New Testament interpretation at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. Prior to his appointment at Asbury in 1997, he was associate professor of New Testament at the American Baptist Seminary of the West/Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

His books include *What about the Soul? Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology* (Abingdon, 2004); *Narrative Reading, Narrative Preaching: The Recovery of Narrative and Preaching the New Testament* (Baker, 2003); *Salvation* (Chalice, 2003); *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology* (with Paul Achtemeier and Marianne Meye Thompson, 2001); *Beginning with Jesus: Christ in Scripture, the Church and Discipleship* (2000); *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* (with Mark Baker, 2000); *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology* (with Max Turner, 2000) and *The Gospel of Luke* in the New International Commentary on the New Testament (1997).

For over 20 years, Green has been the editor of *Catalyst*, a journal providing evangelical resources and perspectives to United Methodist seminarians. An ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, he has pastored churches in Texas, Scotland and Northern California. He has also served on the boards of Berkeley Emergency Food and Housing Project, and *RADIX* magazine.

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