

*Thrift-Store Theology*



# The Other Two Crosses

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# The Other Two Crosses

*One, two, three...*

In the book [God@Ground Zero](#), Chaplin Ray Giunta tells of an eerie place in the midst of the rubble that was once the World Trade Center. In what was once the Custom's building, now bombed out by the collapse of Tower One, was created a sanctuary of sorts. The workers called it simply "God's House". For in the midst of deafening, painful noise, this open to the sky crater provided a sanctuary of quiet. And as Chaplin Ray describes it: "And then, rising from the despair, were three broken girders standing against the twisted, crushed wreckage of the building's offices. And they were, all three, broken off in the shape of crosses—distinct and breathtaking." P. 55

But why three? Why not only one? After all, we usually only focus on the center cross, the one that holds Jesus between Heaven and Hell. We have one cross, the Crucifix, as the symbol for Christianity. So why did God think it necessary to "build" three crosses in that sanctuary, supported on several stories of debris, standing literally between Heaven and Hell? Below, in the belly of the wreckage flames of 1600 degrees consumed all dross. And on top the open air, cleared of all competing structures, rose their eyes upwards for relief. Life is a tragedy and never more so then amidst the acts of war. Oswald Chambers confirms this in his book *Shade of His Hand*. Before you think these words came from the thoughtful sanctuary of a Pastor's study, realize his audience was British troops facing death on the sands of Egypt during World War I. These talks were delivered shortly before his own death in 1917. "The mystery of life is really and regretfully the misery of life. Why? Because the basis of things is tragic and no logic can alter this drastic fact that is rooted in man's corrupt nature. It is just here where the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ is to be known in all its

transforming ministry to break the vicious entail of sin and give newness of life and a glorious hope, according to the good pleasure of God's will and the riches of His grace."

Two thieves crucified, one on either side of Jesus. One took the place of those who heap reproach on someone who claimed a special faith. The other takes the place of those who know that they are needy. They look for relief and find it in Jesus. One choice, and that choice is the center cross. Both choices are equally guilty, both equally needy. But they are two very different responses. Both choices represent our own choice. We choose redemption or we choose despair. Two alternatives. Two crosses. One destroys our hope. The other destroys our sin.

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