

THE
STRANGER
on the Road to Emmaus

John R. Cross



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THE STRANGER ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Edition 4

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*To my father and mother, both of whom
taught me that the Bible has a message that
cannot be ignored.*

*And to my wife and family, who have been
constant in their support and encouragement.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Centuries ago, a king known for his wisdom, wrote . . .

Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"?

Certainly, as it relates to the Bible, one cannot take credit for original thoughts. I readily admit that I have included outlines and ideas that have been plundered from a thousand sources, both ancient and modern. Many of them are such common knowledge, no one would dare claim them as their own. Where sources were known, I have given credit in the end notes.

Of those I can identify, I especially want to thank Trevor McIlwain, who, in using a broad overview of Scripture, put the message in perspective. His approach to teaching has had a profound influence on my own, and for that I am deeply indebted to him. Trevor also provided many helpful critiques and suggestions on the original manuscript.

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This fourth edition has reaped the benefit of many years of input, with scores of folk making helpful suggestions. Of those listed, and the list is far from complete, some zeroed in on content, simplicity, or grammar, while others helped with the art or administration. To all involved, my many and sincere thanks.

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To maintain ease in reading and remain consistent with the Bible text chosen, in most cases I have used small initial letters for pronouns and certain nouns that relate to God. In areas where there might be confusion about who is being referred to, I have used capital letters consistent with traditional grammar rules.

All Scripture portions are italicized and indented. Where Scripture text is boldfaced, an emphasis has been added. Square parenthesis in the Scripture text indicate additions for explanatory purposes.

PREFACE

It's not easy to write an objective book about the Bible. By its very nature, the Bible demands a response. Unfortunately, people's responses have been determined under less than ideal settings.

Many of us have experienced religious zealots, who cram shattered fragments of Bible down our throats with the predictable effect of stimulating the spiritual gag reflex. This has left people inoculated with just enough Bible information to create misunderstanding, but not enough to generate true comprehension. On such a basis, many have chosen to *reject* the book rather than *accept* it. Most try a neutral platform—they avoid it altogether.

With the above in mind, I've endeavored to stay away from that *preachy* tone that sets one's teeth on edge. I've worked to explain the Bible clearly, allowing it to speak for itself—to say what it says—letting you draw your own conclusions. Some may accuse me of losing objectivity because I've communicated the Bible as being true. I felt that was a risk I must run, as the Bible itself makes that claim. To do otherwise would not be true to the text. Indeed, I've tried to capture the spirit of the narrative to make it interesting as well as clear.

Secondly, I was determined to not *water down* the message. Where the Bible demands a choice, I've tried to illustrate that choice clearly. The Bible is quite direct about what it has to say and I've endeavored to reflect that reality by shunning any sort of vagueness. In keeping with this, I've avoided the confusion of being politically-correct at the expense of the message. Initially, I was perplexed at knowing how to express some words in our gender-neutral society. I eventually gave up on *humankind* and went with the traditional *mankind*.

As with any book, some may find it easy in the first few pages to decide that "it's not for me." I wish to challenge those who are inclined that way, to read the entire volume before deciding what to believe about the Bible. There was a time when I too would have thrown the Bible out with the proverbial bath water—but then I was challenged to pause and look again. I'm still looking, and continue to marvel over this *Book of all books*. There is a good chance you will too.

About the Bible:

...And let the one who hears say: "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wants it take the water of life free of charge.

I testify to the one who hears the words of the prophecy contained in this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.

And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

Revelation 22:17-19 NET