



***Once Upon a Tree* by Calvin Miller**

Reviewed by Dr. Franklin L. Kirksey

Calvin Miller, *Once Upon A Tree: Answering the Ten Crucial Questions of Life* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., Inc., 2002)

Calvin Miller's signature book titled *Once Upon a Tree* presents *the significance of the cross* of Jesus Christ as it relates to salvation, suffering and self-sacrifice among other things. He cites John 14:6 and clearly presents the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ alone for salvation. He also emphasizes "the crucified life" (Galatians 2:20) for the believer.

In this informative volume we learn about *the scandal of the cross*. Under the heading "Calvary: User-Unfriendly", Dr. Miller perceptively explains, "In a sense, the church-growth movement has contributed to this loss of transcendence. It has majored on the gospel that twenty-first-century people want to hear rather than on the one they need to hear. Many of the megachurch pastors speak with pride of building multi-thousand-member churches with a gospel that is 'user-friendly.' To start these churches, they often, of their own admission, asked their community constituency what kind of church and sermons it would take to get them to attend church. Once the community had dictated what the church must be to get their support, the church determined to become all its constituents demanded."

Calvin Miller tells that some evangelicals once rebuked him for mentioning hell in a sermon. This account paints the picture of the situation faced by today's sound biblical preacher.

Dr. Miller shares *the sublimity of the cross*, by citing these words from William R. Newell's hymn titled "At Calvary", "In the cross of Christ I glory / Tow' ring o'er the wrecks of time. All the light of sacred story / Gathers round its head sublime."

Once Upon a Tree gives the reader a deeper appreciation of Christ's substitutionary atoning death on the cross. It will inspire you to preach the cross of Christ with passion. As a believer you will benefit from a careful reading of Calvin Miller's retelling of *the story of the cross*. I commend it to you.

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