

## The Cross and the Yoke

***Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me ; I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls . Matt.11:29***

***Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Matthew 16:24-26***

When training a new ox to plow, farmers in ancient days would often yoke it to an older , stronger , more seasoned animal who would bear the burden and guide the young ox through his learning . The more the young ox fought the yoke the more tired it would become. Only when he learned to surrender to the yoke and leaned into the senior ox would he find rest.

–Sid Halsband

The Jews were familiar with two wooden structures during the lifetime of our Lord Jesus. One being the cross, for tens of thousands of crucifixions were performed in the first century, and the other was the yoke placed on the back of animals , from the beginning of time .

The cross and the yoke communicate two great truths to the NT believer.

The cross of Matt. 16:24-26 is the believer's cross. It is the cross of self -denial . We take it up and follow Jesus by surrendering all to Him. We die to self, that He might be all to us.

The yoke of Matt.11:29 is the yoke of discipleship . We take on the Master's yoke and learn how to walk with Him , to serve Him . As we place ourselves under His authority , and learn how not to resist the yoke , we become meek and find true rest for our weary souls.

The yokes of the Law and the Pharisees brought nothing but bondage and strife .

