

## **MATTHEW 27:51-54-MIRACLES DURING THE CRUCIFIXION**

There were supernatural events happening at the crucifixion of Jesus. These were miracles that should have gotten everyone's attention. As usual, however, most people do not heed to what God is doing at the most important time of the history of mankind. The darkness of the universe was a symbol of judgement by God on the sin that was being paid for by His Son at that moment. That was a dark period for mankind as they crucified the Savior, but at the same time God manifests His great grace and love. His glory was done even though it was missed by almost everyone. We ended up last week with Christ stating that the work of the cross was finished as he committed His spirit to the Father. We now observe more spectacular, supernatural occurrences at the cross.

### **1.THE TEARING OF THE VEIL**

#### **V 51**

The curtain that blocked the way to the Most Holy Place Ex 26:33

The veil was the divider between the holy place of the Temple and the inner sanctuary. That was where the ark of the covenant was. No man could go in that area, except for the High Priest and that being once a year. It represented the presence of God, His dwelling. Once a year the High priest would go through the veil on the Day of Atonement to put blood on the altar that represented the sins of the nation. It pointed to the time when Christ would be sacrificed which would take away the sin of His people. It was a very large veil and was actually torn from top to bottom implying that God did that. The veil pointed to the enormous gulf that was between the holy God and the people who were sinners. The veil meant, you can't come any farther. The access to God was limited.

This was a great illustration of judgment, because the holy God of the universe looked down on the law that had been in the ark of the covenant, knew it had been broken and He had to punish the people for their sin. When the blood was sprinkled there, however, the act showed that an atonement for sin had been made, illustrating God's grace and mercy. This pointed to the ultimate, final, and true atonement of the sacrifice of Christ.

#### **A.CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE TEMPLE OF CHRIST'S BODY**

Christ was the true Temple in which dwelt the fullness of the Godhead. Death is the rending of the veil of flesh which stood between us and the holy of holies.

#### **B.THE FULFILLING OF THE OLD SYSTEM OF SACRIFICES**

When Jesus died, everything the OT sacrifices pointed to were fulfilled. There was no more need for such kind of sacrifices and the way to God was open for all. God demonstrated this in a dramatic way when He tore the veil.

This happened at 3 P.M. when the Passover sacrifice started. The priests would have been at the Temple doing their duties when the veil tore. Some of the ones who witnessed this might have become believers a short while later. Acts 6:7

2 Cor 3:13-16      Heb 9:25-28

The old age had ended and a new age had begun. The ceremonies and priestly functions remained until the Temple was destroyed, but the significance was ended at this time. The New Covenant started.

### C.THE UNITING OF JEW AND GENTILE

It had been only for the Jews but now it was open to the Gentiles also.

The new age incorporates both Jews and Gentiles within the church.

Eph 2:14-16

### D.OPENING A NEW AND LIVING WAY TO GOD

People could not go into His presence in such a full way before Christ died. They had to have a priest to intercede for them. Now the way is open for everyone.

Heb 4:16, Heb 10:19-24

We have free access through Christ to the throne of grace. Nothing can obstruct our way into the holies. He threw open His holy presence to all who will come in His name.

## **2.THE SHAKING OF THE EARTH**

### **V 51**

Earthquakes happen, but this is miraculous because it was right at the time of Christ's death.

God makes yet another statement to the world as God brought a devastating earthquake to Jerusalem and the area surrounding. This earthquake signified two things.

God shows His great displeasure on the sin of mankind and puts His power on display.

### A.THE JUDGEMENT OF WICKEDNESS

We see many texts in the OT which signifies His judgement with earthquakes and shaking of the land. This probably corresponded to the giving of the law at Sinai, when the earth also trembled. That was a time of fear for God is holy and the law is a terrible thing for those who have broken it.

Heb 12:21,26-27    Ex 19:18    2 Sam 22:8,

Ps 18:7, Isa 29:6    Jere 10:10

When God shook the earth that day He showed a preview of what He will do when He shakes the earth in judgement at the coming of the King.

### B.THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

Christ dealt a fatal blow to Satan at His death

John 1:17 The law was given through Moses, grace and truth through Christ.

### **3.THE SPLITTING OF THE ROCKS                    V 51**

Rock is the hardest and firmest part of the earth and it felt this mighty shock.

When God's fury is poured out like fire, the rocks are thrown down by Him. Nah 1:6

1 Kings 19:11

### **4.THE GRAVES WERE OPENED                    V 52**

This can raise a lot of speculation. We are not given much detail about this and there are no other scriptures that mention it. No doubt it happened. The Lord selectively raised the bodies of certain believers who had died.

#### **A.QUESTIONS WE CAN'T ANSWER**

Who were they ? Ancient patriarchs, modern day saints ? What happened after this ? Did they die again or go to be with the Lord? I believe they might have ascended with the Lord never to die again, but there is no proof to that.

John MacArthur "When Jesus died, their spirits came from the abode of righteous spirits and were joined with their glorified bodies that came out of the graves. This was full and final resurrection and glorification, making this miracle another foretaste of God's sovereign work during the end times, when all the dead in Christ shall rise. They didn't appear in Jerusalem until after the Lord's resurrection, because He was divinely appointed to be the first fruits of those who sleep. They probably appeared to only believers as did the resurrected Lord.

#### **B.LESSONS WE CAN LEARN**

1.The believers of the OT period will be raised    The resurrection of those people attested to the promise that God would raise the ones who trusted Him.

2.Jesus conquered death    1 Cor 15:55-57    There will be a resurrection of the body. The power of death was now destroyed

3.The bodies of all the saints will rise again    1 Thess 4:16

1 Cor 15:51-54    John 14:19

### **5.THE CONVICTION OF THE ENEMIES    VV 53-54**

This is the greatest miracle of them all. The Roman centurion who was the leader of those who crucified Jesus makes quite a confession.

#### A.WHO THEY WERE

Soldiers, Romans, Gentiles He was probably pagan but God quickened him to spiritual life and he cried out with a true faith. It wasn't a full confession but you have to believe this was a conversion for he knew this was no mere man. Here, we see the Gentiles softened as the Jews were hardened. They had reviled and killed Christ but God worked a work of salvation here. They had probably been with Him most of the time including the arrest and the things that intervened the cross. They beat Him spit on Him and scourged Him and made verbal abuses.

#### B.THE MEANS OF THE CONVICTION

The terror that was struck upon them. They feared greatly. Guilt puts fear into men.

#### C.THE EXPRESSION OF THE CONVICTION

##### 1.Frightened (Phobeo) sheer panic, absolute terror

The darkness and earthquake had to have a lot to do with this. But there was something more. There was a divine power they were aware of.. they had heard the Jewish leaders say that Jesus called Himself Son of God.

Mt 14:26, 17:6 Isa 6 Luke 5

##### 2.Confession Luke 23:47 Matthew 16:16-17,Jn 12:32

Truly suggests a certainty of salvation. God inspired them to be able to say this.

The Jews who saw Him die on the cross looked on Him as not the Son of God because He did not come down from the cross. What a contrast between the Jews and the Gentiles. Yet these guys make a confession that the best of His disciples could not have said more at any time

Jesus had prayed Father forgive them Luke 23:34

3.Contrasting response Luke 23:48 These Jews showed no sign of repentance. They knew they were under judgment but they didn't seek His mercy.

##### 4.Later responses Acts 2:36-41

There are two responses to Jesus when it comes down to the bottom line. You can call Him Lord and confess Him as that. Many people do not want to put themselves into His hands. They might full well know His claims and even believe the miracles but He never becomes personal to them. This is what we see here. He can draw the very ones you would least likely think. The ones who know who He is may turn and walk away.

We plead follow Jesus.

