"THREE MIRACULOUS SIGNS AT CALVARY"

Matthew 27:45-54

4-14-2018

INTRODUCTION: Matthew 27:27-44

I. Sign # 1 <u>DARKNESS</u> (v. 45-50)
(The Sin of the World Had Been Paid For)

II. Sign # 2 <u>THE TORN VEIL</u> (v. 51a)
(A New Covenant Had Been Provided)

III. Sign # 3 <u>EARTHQUAKE</u> (v. 51b-53)
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V. 45-54

These verses are among the most awesome in the Bible.

God is making a powerful statement by three supernatural events that occurred ont he day Christ died.

The crucifixion lasted a total of six hours (from 9:00 a.m. [Mk. 15:25} until 3:00 p.m.). Verses 45-54 focus on the last 3 hours.

Whether Wednesday or Friday, this was no normal day in human history.

I. Sign # 1 DARKNESS (v. 45-50)

(The Sin of the World Had Been Paid For)

V. 45

The last 3 hours of Christ's death on Calvary are the most important and significant moments of human history.

During these short 180 minutes (or 10,800 seconds), the most vital work for humanity was accomplished.

After the scorning of the crowd and after the saving of the penitent thief (Lk. 23:43), a mysterious, eerie darkness started to fall upon the earth.

A "shepherd stands staring at the now blackened sky. Only seconds before he had stared at the sun. Now there is no sun. The sky is black. No thunder. No lightening. Noclouds. Thesheepareрestless. Thefeelingiseerie. Whatisthishellish darkness? What has happened?" (Max Lucado)

Perhaps a scream is heard in the distance. Many, pointing to the sky, momentarily forget about those on the crosses. Then the crowd begins to break up and hurry toward the gates. The men cease their work, and the women fling their shawls over their heads and run with their children to get shelter from what seems to be a brewing storm.

People in fear say: "What is this? What's going on?"

What is amazing is that noon time is the time that the sun is at its highest point, at its zenith.

The means God used to darkness the earth is uncertain. We know that *"the sun was darkened."* (Lk. 23:45)
A prolonged eclipse is one answer, or a miraculous Heaven-sent darkening of the sun is another.

"Over all the land" - the word *"land"* can also mean "earth" (SEE: quote from Jim Bishop, *"The Day Christ Died"*, p. 327).

This darkness "was as though all of creation was sympathizing with the Creator. There were three days of darkness in Egypt before the Passover (Ex. 10:21-23) and there were three hours of darkness before the Lamb of God died for the sins of the world" (Wiersbe, p. 103).

The darkening of the sun marks the time of God's Judgment. God's Son was judged for our sin! (NOTE: The "Day of the Lord" will be initiated by darkness! - Joel 2:31; Rev. 6:12, 17; cp. Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1;14-15).

God's judgment of those in hell involves darkness (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Mt. 8:12).

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" - This is a quote from Psalm 22:1; read Ps. 22:1, 7-8, 13-18).

From 12:00 - 3:00, Christ fully drank of that bitter cup He so much dreaded. (SEE: Mt. 26:36-42).

The phrase *"exceedingly sorrowful"* (mt. 26:38) indicates an unfathomable depth of anguish and sorrow.

What was that *"cup"?* It was the spiritual suffering (the *"travail of his soul"* - Is. 53:11) as He took upon Himself the full brunt of the sin of the world (Is. 53:4-6).

The contents of this cup involved the poisonous, toxic, dark, putrefying, cursed sin of the world that Jesus took upon Himself (II Cor. 5:21).

This horrible cup of agonizing pain and suffering was a cup given by God the Father.

> Jesus was *"smitten of God, and afflicted"* (Is. 53:4).
> *"The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all"* (is. 53:6)
> *"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; he hath put him to grief. . . [the Father made] his soul an offering for sin"* (Is. 53:10)

The most horrible contents of the cup of which Jesus drank was the momentary yet infinite separation between He and the Father.

As Jesus *"bore our sins in his own body ont he tree" (I Pet. 2:24)*, the Father as it were turned His back on His Son and forsook Him. For the first time in eternity, a split, a schism, a separation between the Father and the Son occurred.
At no time in history or eternity past had the Son ever been abandoned by the Father.

Christ experienced not only a physical death, but during those 3 hours on the cross He "tasted" a spiritual death (which involved the separation of his soul from the Father.

God the Father and the Son had known perfect intimacy in eternity past. Together, the triune Godhead planned creation. *"Let us make man in our image."*

Together, the Father and Soon created the universe - *"by whom also he made the worlds"* (Heb. 1:2; cp. Col. 1:16; Jn. 1:3)

The Father and Son both confused the languages at Babel (Gen. 11:7); the Father and Son both desired that a prophet be sent to preach to Israel - Is. 6:8).

Together the Father and Son had an unfathomable love (Jn. 17:23-24, 26). Since they shared the same nature, they knew each other more fully and completely than any other could (Mt. 11:27). While on earth, Christ desired nothing more than to please the Father (Mt. 3:17; Mt. 17:3; Jn. 8:29).

The Father and Son had a unity that was so personal and intimate (Jn. 17:21, 23) because together they were one in essence and nature (Jn. 10:30).

Yet on the cross an abandonment occurred.

Jesus *"endured the cross despising the same"* (Heb. 12:2)

He was made a *"curse for us"* in order to remove us from *"the curse of the Law."* (Gal. 3:13).

"The Bridge Story"

V. 50
What did Jesus cry out with a loud voice? Two cries -
1) *"It is finished"* (Jn. 19:30)
2) *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"* (Lk. 23:46)

II. Sign # 2 THE TORN VEIL (v. 51a)

(A New Covenant Had Been Provided)

As the sun begins to shine again, a man rushes into his house. His wife, huddled with her children and about to blow out the flame in her lamp, hears him breathlessly say: *"The temple curtain. . . torn!"*

V. 51

"Behold" - Look! See! God is grabbing our attention to a significant fact.

Each year on "Yom Kippur" (the Day of Atonement) the High Priest would enter where no one else was allowed. He would go into the Holy of Holies with blood to make atonement for Israel. This was the most somber of all Jewish holy Days. (Lev. 23:26-32). Such mourning and gloom over their sin perfectly corresponds to the dark and somber day Christ died.

The "*veil*" - was the curtain which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place and the rest of the Temple (In the holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat).

"Josephus reported that the veil was four inches thick, was renewed every year, and that horses tied to each side could not pull it apart. (cited by Ryrie).

"top to bottom" – The fact that the veil was ripped in the direction from the top to the bottom shows that it was God who tore the veil and not man. It was God who completed the Old Covenant and provided a New. It was God who now invites all of His redeemed children into His immediate presence without any further need of a human mediator. The torn veil was the Lord's way of showing that the Old Testament priesthood was completely and totally done away with and that we now have complete and total access into God's presence.

The tearing of the Temple veil symbolized the fact that believers (after Christ's one, final, and complete sacrifice) now have direct access into God's presence through Christ (SEE: Heb. 10:19-22)

III. Sign # 3 <u>EARTHQUAKE</u> (v. 51b-53)
(God's Power Over the Grave Had Been Promised)

V. 51

The third climactic sign that occurred was *"The earth shook and the rocks split open."*

One of the most powerful ways for God to make a statement is to send an earthquake.

The timing of this quake has great significance. It occurred at the same moment Christ *"yielded up the ghost."*

So as the draw people's attention to the great significance of Christ's death, God sends an earthquake marking the finality and completion of Christ's work on earth, and marking Christ's grand exit from this world. (EX: the noise and power of the thrust a rocket makes when it launches off of the earth).

The New Covenant had been provided!

Note the parallel: The earthquake at Mount Sinai (when the O.T. Covenant was given - Ex. 19:16ff).

The earthquake at Calvary (when the N.T. Covenant was provided)

V. 52

"The graves were opened" - The earthquake caused the stones to roll away from the burial caves.

NOTE: the connection between this earthquake and the graves opening, and the earthquake and Christ's grave opening (Mt. 28:2).

The last clause of V. 52 must be connected to v. 53. Although the graves were opened at Christ's death, this resurrection of many saints did not occur until <u>after</u> His resurrection. (since Christ is the *"firstfruits of them that slept"* - I Cor. 15:20).

CONCLUSION: (v. 54)

All of Christ's life on earth had been building up toward this great climax. This 3 hour period (a "baptism" of death) was the goal and purpose of His entrance into the human race (Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 1:15).

What do you do with that day in history? What does it mean to you?

If God sent darkness and turned his back on his one-of-a-kind Son, if God ripped the Jewish temple veil in two; if God split the earth's rocks open and flung open the graves, then this was the most critical moment in history!

1. Have you accepted the fact that your sins were paid for on Calvary?

2. Have you understood that a new and living way has been provided for you?

3. Have you trusted in the finished work of Jesus Christ and his promise off life after death?