

Calvary's Astonishing Events

No Ordinary Death, Part 2

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The miraculous events surrounding Christ's crucifixion on Calvary point us to the redemptive love, majesty, and salvation of Jesus...

Review — Six astonishing/astounding events at Calvary—purpose is to see the signature of God authenticating Jesus as Savior of the World. His was no ordinary death. Last week we walked through the timeline of last 12-15 hours of Jesus' life on earth; then unpacked the first of the six events, miraculous Darkness which covered the land from 12-3 pm.

Anchor Scripture

- **Matthew 27:45,50-54**

Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had died were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Second Astonishing Event — Veil of the Temple torn from top to bottom

- Separated God and the Holy of Holies from men
- Once yearly High Priest enters, on Day of Atonement
- Blood of bull, goat which had been sacrificed, sprinkled on altar
- Ark, Mercy Seat, in the Holy of Holies
- Veil was 60' high, 30' wide, 4" thick, 8,000 lbs.; woven by 82 young women, twice a year; blue, scarlet, purple, cherubim embroidery; took 300 priests to immerse and clean it
- **veil torn astounding** — torn from **top to bottom**, by God above, not man beneath; **access is by God's work, not ours**. Miracle due to **timing... came at exact time** priests would have been before it **preparing the evening sacrifice**; no wonder "many priests became obedient to faith," Acts 6:7.
- **At the moment of Jesus death**, after "Finished," "Father" He cries out, darkness ceases, veil splits earth quakes, rocks split graves open — **what a cry!**

Question — *What is the spiritual symbolism of the veil being torn from top to bottom?*

Answer — *God is signifying that the sacrifice and suffering of Jesus satisfied His justice—that man*

can be forgiven of their sin, and **have access to God through Jesus!**

The torn veil also symbolizes the torn and sacrificed body of Jesus...

- **Hebrews 10:19-23**

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

FACT — the torn body of Jesus...

- gives **boldness to enter into Holiest** — God's very Presence, Shekinah
- allows us to **draw near with true heart** — truthful, honest, transparent
- gives us **full assurance of faith** — no need to doubt or question if Jesus is enough
- **cleanses our conscience and body** — sin and guilt removed inside and out
- exhorts us to **hold fast confession of hope without wavering** — hold on to these facts without wavering, because God is faithful, not changing His mind on sufficiency of Jesus!

One more word of hope...

- **Hebrews 6:19-20**

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Application — *let the **hope of Jesus' sufficiency**, His entering behind the veil for you, let it anchor your soul! Jesus is enough! The veil has been torn, access granted, sin cleansed, nothing's changed, never going to! Assurance and peace are yours!*

Third Astonishing Event — Earth quakes, rocks split

- Earth quakes, rocks splitting
- Shaking earth followed the moment of Christ's death
- What was going on?

FACT — at death, Jesus instantly passes through the veil, descends into the lower parts of the earth

- Ephesians 4:8-9, 1 Peter 3:18-19
- The waiting place of the dead prior to Jesus' resurrection
- Preaches gospel, believers liberated
- *Death itself, in the lower parts of the earth, received such a jolt at Jesus appearing — that the surface of the earth shook!*

“Christ descended into hell in order to acquaint the patriarchs and prophets with his redeeming mission.”¹
Tertullian

“Christ appeared to them in the lower regions, and thus they too benefited from his coming. When the gatekeepers of hell saw him, they fled; the bronze gates were broken open, and the iron chains were undone. And the only-begotten Son shouted with authority to the suffering souls, according to the word of the new covenant, saying to those in chains: ‘Come out!’ and to those in darkness: ‘Be enlightened.’ In other words, he preached to those who were in hell also, so that he might save all those who would believe in him.”²
Cyril of Alexandria

Interesting — Mt Sinai quaked when God’s law was given (Exodus 19:18). Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.

Question — Why was law given?

- **Romans 3:19-20**

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

- Law was never a goal to justify us, it was a tutor to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:24)
- Mt. Sinai quakes at law and guilt

Astounding — Mount Calvary quaked as well, but this time declaring all believers innocent and free before God, through faith in the crucified Jesus!

**God’s signature is all over these events
authenticating the Person and work of Jesus,
His is no ordinary death!**

Fourth Astonishing Event — Rocks split, certain graves were opened...

- **...because of the quake at the death of Jesus!**
- **“certain” graves were opened by God’s design — that’s miraculous!**
- from Friday at 3 pm until early Sunday morning those graves sat there open, anticipating Sunday’s resurrection! Jesus had to be first!
- by His death, Jesus conquered death, hell, and the grave for all of us who believe—do you believe?
- **John 11:25-26**
I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?

¹ Thomas C. Oden, James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude (Routledge, Oct 31, 2013)

² ibid

Huge — the open graves symbolize the **defeat and destruction of every obstruction to eternal, resurrection life in Jesus. All graves and tombs of death must open to the Prince of Life and His followers! That's what the open graves are saying!**

No wonder after witnessing these miracles, the Roman soldiers at the cross was greatly afraid and said, "Truly this is the Son of God." (*Matthew 27:54*) And many Jewish priests believed. (*Acts 6:7*)

Jesus cries

Darkness ceases

Veil torn

Earth quaking

Rocks splitting

Graves opening

This is no ordinary death

This is the death of the Son of God

**Who came in fulfillment of the ancient prophets —
to save peoples souls!**

Discussion Questions

1. Had you ever viewed the crucifixion as the "signature of God authenticating Jesus as the Savior of the World"? Can you see that now?
2. How does the tearing of the veil in the temple symbolize our having direct access to God?
3. Read Hebrews 6:19-20. Respond to the words, "anchor of the soul," and "sure and steadfast." How does that make you "feel"?
4. What did Jesus do between the time of his death on the cross and his resurrection from the tomb? How does that answer the critic's question, "What about those who lived and died before the time of Christ?"
5. What was the purpose of "the law"? How did the death and resurrection of Jesus affect the law?
6. What did the open graves symbolize? What do they say to us today?