

197. The Gospel of John 19:17-18, 28-30

The King is Crucified-Part 3

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(10-30-22)

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John 19:17-18a (NKJV)

¹⁷ And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place* of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, ¹⁸ where they crucified Him...

Matthew 27:45 (NKJV)

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus was crucified at the third hour (9am) and from the sixth hour (noon) until the ninth hour (3 PM) there was darkness over all the land.

This couldn't have been an eclipse as some have proposed because it was Passover time—and Passover always takes place during a full moon.

During a full moon the moon is on the opposite side of the earth from an eclipse.

I believe that this was a supernatural darkness—almost as if, as one author put it, *'The creation could no longer bear to see its Creator suffering on that cross and closed its eyes.'*

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*"

This is a direct quote from Psalm 22:1—a psalm that begins with *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*—and ends with *"He has done this."* (verse 31)

In the Hebrew the phrase **"has done this"** is one word: *Asah*, used one other time in the Old Testament—in 2 Chronicles 4:11 where it is used to describe how Hiram finished the work on the Temple that King Solomon hired him to do.

With that in mind we could translate the final words of Psalm 22 **"He finished"** or **"It is finished"**.

So, Psalm 22 begins with **"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"** and ends with **"It is finished"**.

- **Consider this**—In between we have Jesus speaking through David a thousand years before He was crucified looking down from the Cross, as He related what He was feeling and seeing going on around Him.
- Just as Hiram finished his work on the Temple in Solomon's day—a Temple of *literal* stones—so too Jesus finished the work necessary to fashion us into a temple of *living* stones (1 Peter 2:5).

- When Jesus hung on that Cross, the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that *“He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*
- That darkness was a symbol of the judgment that He endured when He was *“made a curse”* for us (Galatians 3:13).

Jesus was made a curse for us—so that we could be blessed by God forever!

When Jesus became sin for us (not *‘turned into sin’*—but *‘became a sacrifice for our sin in our place’*) He was forsaken by the Father because, according to Habakkuk 1:13, God is so pure and holy He cannot look upon sin (in a favorable way in terms of fellowship).

So, when Jesus hung on the Cross and became our substitute, died in our place as our sin offering—the Father turned His face from the Son and broke fellowship with Him—a fellowship that was perfect and up until that point eternal.

John began his Gospel with these words, *“In the beginning was the Word [a preincarnate title for Jesus Christ], and the Word was with God...”* John 1:1)

The Greek literally says, *“...and the Word was toward God.”*

Or in other words, the Word was *“eye to eye with, face to face with or—in perfect fellowship with God.”*

The only time in eternity when that fellowship was broken was when Jesus hung on that cross and became the sin sacrifice for us by dying in our place.

Matthew 27:47-49 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ **Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that*, said, “This Man is calling for Elijah!”** ⁴⁸ **Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.**

⁴⁹ **The rest said, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.”**

Some of those standing near the cross misunderstood Jesus’ words—they heard Him say *“Eli”*—but thought Jesus was trying to call for *Elijah*.

In Greek the word *“Elijah”* sounds more like *“Eli”* than it does in English. Thinking His lips and throat had become dry—someone thought a drink of wine vinegar would moisten His vocal cords so He could speak clearly. This was a fulfillment of Psalm 69:21, *“They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”*

Others, however, said **“leave Him alone”**—so they might see if Elijah would come and deliver Him.

You see, they were looking for Elijah because of a prophecy God gave to them through Malachi 4:5 saying that at one point He would send them Elijah the prophet—so they were looking for Elijah to come—especially at Passover time.

Now as I said Jesus hung on that cross from 9 AM to 3 PM—and those six hours were divided into two parts.

From 9 AM to Noon

- The first three hours were in light—and the last three were in darkness. During the first three hours Jesus spoke three times—
1. A prayer for those who nailed Him to the cross, *“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing”* (Luke 23:34)
 2. Not long after that He said to the penitent thief beside Him, *“Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise”* (Luke 23:43).
 3. And then He said to His mother, *“Woman, behold, your son!”* and to John, *“Behold your mother!”* (John 19:26–27).

In each of these statements Jesus shows His concern and love for individuals—demonstrating that Jesus doesn’t just care about humanity in general—He cares about you in particular!

1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV)

⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Here Jesus is dying a terrible death and yet He is still thinking about the welfare of others!

From Noon to 3 PM

Then from noon to three o’clock darkness fell—yes on Jerusalem and its suburbs—but historical records indicate it might have affected a much larger area than that!

The Greek word for **“land”** can also be translated *‘earth’*—indicating that the darkness could have affected the whole eastern hemisphere.

The early church Father Origen reported a statement by a Roman historian who mentioned this darkness.

There was also a supposed report from Pilate to Emperor Tiberius that alluded to the emperor’s knowledge of a certain widespread darkness—even mentioning that it was from twelve to three in the afternoon.

During the three hours of darkness the Lord Jesus spoke three more times—

1. *“I thirst”* (John 19:28)
2. *“Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ ”* (Luke 23:46)
3. *“It is finished”* (John 19:30)

When He uttered those final words **“It is finished”**—He dismissed His spirit and died.

The Greek word for **“It is finished”** is *‘tetelestai’*.

In Jesus’ day a servant would use it when reporting to his master, *“I have completed the work you assigned to me (tetelestai).”* (see John 17:4)

At the moment Jesus uttered the words, “**It is finished**”—two miracles took place simultaneously—

- *The veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom.*
- *There was an earthquake that split rocks and opened numerous graves in the area.*

There was a *third* miracle that was delayed until *after* Jesus rose from the dead—that some believers in Him that had died and placed in tombs were—resurrected:

Matthew 27:50-53 (NKJV)

⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

I wish Matthew would have given us a little more about these people—such as:

- *Did they die again like Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead; or, as I believe:*
- *Did they have glorified bodies and were taken to heaven with Jesus when He ascended back to His Father after His resurrection?*

Why do I believe that? I believe it because of what Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 15 about the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Jesus rose from the dead on the Jewish feast of Firstfruits—a feast that took place in the Spring of the year, a time when the first stalks or “*first fruits*” of the barley crop would begin to come up out of the ground. Barley was planted in the winter and was the first crop to be harvested in Israel—Spring would bring the first fruits of this crop.

As it would come out of the ground the first stalks of barley would be cut and taken to the Tabernacle and then later to the Temple and offered to God as a ‘*wave offering*’. Also because God’s people honored Him with the firstfruits of the harvest—He would accept it and guarantee them that more barley (a bumper crop) would come up out of the ground by the time of the great harvest.

What seems to have happened was that Jesus rose first and then these (that Matthew mentions), rose right after Him and when Jesus ascended back to His Father all of these went with Him and together presented themselves as the firstfruits of the coming resurrection of all believers in Jesus Christ.

They were accepted by the Father guaranteeing that a great harvest of souls, at the great resurrection (rapture), would come up out of the ground (grave) and be taken to heaven.

So, starting with the **third miracle** Matthew records in Matthew 27:51-53 and working backwards—the **second miracle** that took place when Jesus died was **an earthquake—“and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split” (verse 51)**

Earthquakes were not seen on the earth until *after* the Fall.

After the Fall of man—God has used earthquakes from time to time throughout the centuries as a judgment upon man for his wickedness and rebellion—although, that is not to say that all earthquakes are a judgment from God.

Hebrews 12:26-27 tells us that before Jesus returns to establish His kingdom upon the earth God is going to shake this planet so violently that everything that is *material* will be destroyed—and only that which is *spiritual* will remain (all that is done for Christ and all those who belong to Christ).

The Book of Revelation talks about 3 great earthquakes that will take place during the last seven years before Jesus' Second Coming—the last one being the most powerful of all:

Revelation 16:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

This seems to be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah—

Isaiah 24:19-20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly. ²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.

The **third miracle** that happened the moment Jesus dismissed His spirit and died was that—'**the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**'

Matthew is a Jew writing to a Jewish audience—so his reference to the curtain of the Temple is one that would have been understood by every Jewish reader.

The actual Temple building was divided into two rooms:

- the first was the Holy Place and
- the second was the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies.

The first room contained:

- the Table of Showbread,
- the Menorah and
- the Golden Altar where the priests burned incense while praying to God for the people.

The second room, the Holy of Holies, originally contained:

- the Ark of the Covenant (in the days of Jeremiah it was removed probably by Jeremiah and put somewhere for safe keeping).

The Ark of The Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant was a rectangular wooden box measuring 3'9" long by 2'3" high by 2'3" wide—it was covered with gold inside and out and topped with a lid made of pure gold called the Mercy Seat.

On top of the Mercy Seat there were two cherubs (angels), one at each end kneeling facing each other with their heads bowed and their wings outstretched upward and nearly touching tip to tip directly above the Mercy Seat.

It was on that Mercy Seat between the cherubim that God was symbolically understood to dwell—it was His throne on the earth.

It was called the Mercy Seat because once a year on the Day of Yom Kippur the High Priest was allowed to enter through the veil to sprinkle the blood of the animal sacrifices on it to atone for the sins of the nation which allowed God to show His mercy to the people.

The Veil

The ‘veil’ separating the two rooms was literally a ‘wall’ of woven fabric one layer on top of another. It measured sixty feet high, thirty feet wide, and twelve to eighteen inches thick.

The veil was so heavy that it took three hundred priests to hang it.

This veil was a reminder of how sin had erected ‘*a wall of separation*’ between God and man and how only the High Priest could approach God to make atonement for the people once a year on Yom Kippur through the blood of the animal sacrifices.

When Jesus died on the cross, we read how, the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom signifying that God was the One who ripped the thick curtain in half—not man.

God did this because the Old Testament sacrificial system with all of its ceremonial laws had been fulfilled in Christ—and had now passed away.

We no longer needed animal sacrifices, the blood of which only temporarily *covered* sin—whereas the sacrifice of Jesus as the Lamb of God paid for those sins completely and removed their stain from our lives forever.

We no longer needed a priesthood that would be our mediators between us and God—Jesus is now our Mediator of a new and better covenant Who tore the veil that separated God and man allowing us to have bold access into God’s presence whenever we wanted (Hebrews 4:14-16).

➤ Many say, “How did they know God ripped the veil in two from top to bottom?”

They knew because the priests were in the Temple at 3 PM—the moment Jesus died offering the evening sacrifice—**they heard the sound of God tearing it in two and saw the result before their very eyes.**

What did they do?

Did they fall on their faces thanking God for ending the tedious and burdensome Levitical Sacrificial System and giving them free and unencumbered access into His presence?

No, desiring to keep their religion intact— they sewed the veil back up and continued to offer God their religious works as a means of approaching Him.

Instead of realizing that Jesus had paid the price and opened the way for them and all of us to have bold access into God’s presence through the blood of Christ—they continued to offer Him religion instead of accepting His offer to have a relationship with Him thru His Son.

But from God's perspective there was no more need of temples, priests, altars, or sacrifices—Jesus had finished the work of salvation on the cross. **And that's exactly why He said, "It is finished"** right before He dismissed His Spirit and the veil of the Temple was torn in two—the work of redemption was done—the payment for sin had been made!

Colossians 2:13-14 (NLT)

¹³ You were dead because of your sins...Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. ¹⁴ He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

When Paul says in verse 14 that Jesus took our sins out of the way by nailing them to His Cross, he is referring to a practice by which guilty criminals paid their debt to society.

In Paul's day when a person was convicted of a crime or crimes, the authorities would write those crimes on a piece of parchment and nail it to their dungeon door. When he finished paying for his crimes, they would take the parchment and write across the bottom "tetelestai" which meant "paid in full". It was then given to him and became his 'receipt'—or his proof that his debt to society for the crimes he had committed had been paid.

Paul said that Jesus took all the crimes we had committed and would ever commit—all of the sins that would ever be written in our ledger and nailed it to His cross.

Jesus, before He died, from the cross said, "*It is finished* (tetelistsai—"paid in full").

The result of all of this—

Matthew 27:54 (NKJV)

⁵⁴ **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!"**

➤ *Did this mean they were saved?*

Not necessarily—but it definitely demonstrated that the events of Jesus' crucifixion made a powerful impact on the unbelievers standing there that day—so much so that hopefully they did get saved.

But these pagan soldiers weren't the only ones standing by the Cross when Jesus died—

Matthew 27:55-56 (NKJV)

⁵⁵ **And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar,**
⁵⁶ **among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.**

The only disciple at the Cross when Jesus died was John (John 19:25)—but many women were watching from a distance—undoubtedly those who had assisted Him in His ministry (Luke 8:2).

The Gospel writer's record who they were: Mary Magdalene, who had been delivered of seven demons (Luke 8:2); Mary, the mother of James and Joses, who some believe was actually a reference to Jesus' mother Mary (James and Joses being two of His half-brothers).

But even if she was a different Mary—we know that Mary the mother of Jesus was there at the cross as well (John 19:25).

Salome, the mother of James and John was there also. (This would have been Jesus' aunt, His mother Mary's sister). Salome was the one that had asked Jesus if her sons could sit on His left and right hand in His kingdom—we wonder how she felt as she saw Him hanging on a cross.

- *Did she finally realize the path to greatness in God's Kingdom?*
- *Did she understand that before God's servants can wear a crown—they must first endure the cross?*

Now those that were standing there that day that knew and loved Jesus had no idea that the cross, a symbol of shame, defeat and death would soon be seen as the greatest symbol of victory and blessing the world would ever know—all because of what Jesus did on a hill outside Jerusalem two thousand years ago!

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