

# **“Jesus’ Sacrifice for the World”**

*April 14, 2024*

Matthew 27:45-66

## **I. Introduction**

In **John 21:25** the Apostle John wrote, “**Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.**” Since it would be impossible to compile all of Jesus’ teachings, miracles, and other actions in one gigantic book, God had 4 different writers write four different Gospels. Each of the four Gospel writers had a slightly different purpose for writing his particular book. The miracles, actions, and teachings of Jesus that each recorded varied depending upon the writer’s theme or objective.

Matthew’s main purpose for writing his Gospel was to prove to his readers—especially Jewish readers—that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. (Someone, with more time than I have, has counted over 120 quotations or allusions to the Old Testament in The Gospel According to Matthew.) With this theme in mind, Matthew didn’t record much of what happened during the first 3 hours when Jesus hung on the cross. **Mark 15:25** says, “**It was the third hour when they crucified him,**” i.e., Jesus’ crucifixion began at the third hour or 9 am. It wasn’t until “**the sixth hour,**” i.e., noon, that “**darkness came over all the land.**” It’s here that Matthew began his account of Jesus’ sacrifice for the world. Matthew recorded 6 miracles that emphasized the meaning of the cross from God’s perspective. The first miracle was “The land was covered with darkness.”

## **II. Six Miracles**

**A. The land was covered with darkness.** When Jesus was born, the night sky around Bethlehem was filled with light. **Luke 2:9** says, “**An angel of the Lord appeared to**” the shepherds, “**and the glory of the Lord shone around them.**” But now, as Jesus was dying on the cross, the land was covered with darkness—a supernatural darkness. This was not a solar eclipse, for Passover occurred at full moon when the moon and the sun were on opposite sides of the earth. This was a heaven-sent darkness—a God ordained darkness and it lasted for 3 hours.

Since the Bible doesn't explain the reason for the darkness, many have tried. Some suggest that the darkness was a way for God to hide the sufferings of Jesus. Others feel it was to hide the nakedness and dishonoring of His Son. Others feel that this miraculous darkness was a symbol of judgment. In many Old and New Testament passages, the judgment of God is directly associated with darkness. **Turn to Zephaniah 1:14-15.** When Jesus spoke of judgment, He said that those judged “will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8:12). The cross was definitely a place of divine judgment. Here the sinless Son of God took on the sins of the world. **2 Peter 2:24** says, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.” It would be appropriate that a supernatural darkness would demonstrate God's reaction to sin during this time of judgment.

**B. Jesus was abandoned by God.** The second miracle was announced towards the end of the 3 hours of darkness when “Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ -- which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” Jesus was abandoned by God.

Of the 7 last sayings of Jesus from the cross, this is the only one that Matthew and Mark recorded. This is also the only time that Jesus did not address God as “Father.” Because the Son had taken sin upon Himself, the Father turned His back on Him. Jesus was forsaken—abandoned by God. In **Habakkuk 1:13**, Habakkuk said of God “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.” Not only did Jesus bear the load of humanity's sin; He was sin—**2 Corinthians 5:21** says, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us.” For this reason, God turned His back—He abandoned Jesus when Jesus was on the cross because God the Father could not look on sin, even in His own Son.

When Jesus was forsaken and abandoned by the Father, He didn't cease to exist as God or as a member of the Trinity. He didn't cease to be the Son. Jesus was still God. But for a time, Jesus didn't experience the intimate fellowship with His heavenly Father. Just as a disobedient child ceases, for a while, to have an intimate, normal, loving relationship with his human father, on the cross Jesus was all alone—totally and completely abandoned by all. As He willingly took on our sins and the sins of the world, Jesus suffered from the wounds on His back and the thorns that pierced His head and the nails that held Him to the

cross, but the greatest pain and suffering was the loss of fellowship with His heavenly Father that His becoming sin for us had brought about.

Soon after He cried out to God about being forsaken, [John 19:28-29](#) says that “**knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, ‘I am thirsty.’ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.**” It was at this time that one of them ran and brought back the wine vinegar. This wasn’t a gesture of kindness; it was an attempt to extend Jesus’ time on the cross. So, they then mocked Jesus by saying, “**Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him.**” They were so caught up in their mocking of Jesus that even the darkness at midday didn’t seem to bother them. Their single thought was to make Jesus’ death as painful and humiliating and long as possible.

**C. Jesus gave up His spirit.** Matthew wrote that “**when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.**” The third miracle of the cross was that Jesus “**gave up His spirit.**” By crying out in a “**loud voice,**” Jesus demonstrated that even after all that had been done to Him in the preceding 24 hours, He was not at the point of total exhaustion. If He desired, He had the strength to stay alive.

[John 19:30](#) adds that just before He died, Jesus cried, “**It is finished.**” The work His Father had sent Him to do was finished—the debt was paid in full. Then, once again addressing God as “Father,” “**Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit’**” ([Luke 23:46](#)). None of the Gospel’s describe Jesus’ death by saying, “*He died.*” Jesus’ death was different—unique. Jesus’ life wasn’t taken from Him by men; He voluntarily yielded up His spirit and died as a conscious act of His own sovereign will. As He had told the disciples in [John 10:18](#), “**No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.**”

Even considering all that Jesus had suffered, from the human point of view, Jesus died sooner than expected. That’s why, when Joseph of Arimathea informed Pilate of Jesus’ death and asked for His body, Pilate was surprised and asked a centurion to verify what Joseph had said ([Mark 15:43-45](#)). On the cross the

Father judged the sin of the world that the Son took willingly upon Himself, and the Son, who as God divinely controls living and dying, willingly surrendered His life as penalty for that sin.

**D. The curtain in the Temple was torn.** The fourth miracle that occurred during the crucifixion was that the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies in the temple “**was torn in two from top to bottom.**” This curtain was made of an elaborately woven fabric, and it was 60’ high and 30’ wide and tradition says 4” thick. It was a barrier separating God’s presence in the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple; from all mankind. Only once a year was anyone allowed to pass through the curtain into the Holy of Holies. Only on the Day of Atonement was the high priest permitted to go into the Holy of Holies in order to sprinkle blood on the Ark of the Covenant for the sins of the people (**Leviticus 16**).

When Jesus Christ gave up His spirit, that once-for-all sacrifice for sin was completed and there was no longer a need for a curtain. By tearing the curtain from the top down, God was abolishing the separation of the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple; from the rest of the world. The death of Jesus had opened the way to God for everyone. Now everyone can come before the Almighty God. As **Hebrews 10:19-21** says, “**We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body.**” The sacrificial system of the Mosaic Laws and the duties of the priesthood were no longer of any value. Jesus said in **1 Cor. 11:25**, “**This cup is the new covenant in my blood.**”

**E. There was a supernatural earthquake.** The fifth miracle that occurred during the crucifixion was a supernatural earthquake. There was an earthquake at Mount Sinai when God gave the Law of the Old Covenant to Moses. **Turn to Exodus 19:16-19.** The earthquake at Calvary signified that the demands of the Law had been met and the curse of the Law abolished, and a New Covenant in Christ’s blood had been established. **Turn to Hebrews 12:18-24.**

**F. Holy people were raised from the dead.** The 6<sup>th</sup> miracle at the crucifixion was closely related to the earthquake—“**tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.**”

There is no record of who these saints were, only that this resurrection was restricted to a limited number of

believers. They had trusted in God during the time before and under the Old Covenant—possibly some had been dead for years. “And after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.” Just as there isn’t a record of who they were, there is no record of what these saints said, but they, along with Jesus, would have been a powerful witness that Christ had defeated death. Their resurrection demonstrated that the promise of God to raise all those who put their trust in Christ (1 Cor. 15:51-52) was true.

### III. Two Groups Who Watched Jesus

**A. The Soldiers** Matthew wrote of two groups of people who watched Jesus as He willingly gave up His life on the cross. First, there were the soldiers: “When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, ‘Surely he was the Son of God!’” Jesus’ response to the beatings, the flogging, and words he spoke during the crucifixion had been like nothing the soldiers had ever seen before. Now, after the miracles they had experienced, they were terrified. The awesome power they had seen touched their hearts, Jesus was the One He claimed to be, “He was the Son of God.”

**B. The Loyal Followers** As well as the soldiers, there were “many women watching from a distance.” From John 19:35 it seems that John was the only disciple at the cross with the women. The women had helped Jesus in His ministry and they stayed with Him through this ordeal, too. They were there to support their Messiah. It may have been one of them who went to Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus and told them that Jesus was dead.

Jesus died around 3 pm. It was Jewish custom that the bodies should be taken down before evening, especially before the Sabbath, which began at sundown on Friday—approximately 6 pm. Joseph and Nicodemus only had time to get some essentials done before the Sabbath. The rest would be taken care of in 3 days. Jesus was hurriedly put in a new tomb and a stone rolled before the opening.

## IV. Conclusion

Romans describes the hopeless situation before Jesus' sacrifice. Turn to Romans 3:10-12, 20, 23. But it doesn't stop there, look at Romans 5:8. Jesus died as a sacrifice to pay the penalty of death that we deserve because of our sin. Hebrews 9:26 says, "He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself." On the cross Jesus took the wrath of God for our sins. Romans 5:9: "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" Jesus experienced separation from God to overcome our separation from God. Jesus' death provided reconciliation for us to be brought back into fellowship with God. Turn to 2 Cor. 5:18-19. Through Jesus' death, we can experience redemption from bondage to sin and Satan so that we can now live in newness of life in the Spirit in the kingdom of the beloved Savior. Colossians 1:13-14 "He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Jesus' death is a time of sadness and thankfulness. God the Son, the Creator of the world (Col. 1:15-16), experienced all this and died in your place for your sins. What He went through, each one of us should have experienced. Romans 6:23 summarizes it this way, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Salvation is a gift—one doesn't work for a gift. Ephesians 2:8-9 puts it this way: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." Or as Romans 10:9 says, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

As you think of all Jesus went through for you, what is your reasonable response? Is He really your Lord as well as your Savior? Joshua's challenge in Joshua 24:14-15 is appropriate today, "Now fear the Lord and serve him with faithfulness. ... But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Who do you serve?