

Miracles of Calvary

By Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. Thousands of Jews were crucified during the Roman occupation of Palestine. Why do we remember only one of them? Perhaps we can find out if we look at the miracles of Calvary.
- B. Miracles of the Cross:
 - 1. Confounded the enemies of Christ
 - 2. Confirmed the Deity of Jesus
 - 3. Affirms our salvation
- C. There were 12 Miracles connected with the Death of our Savior. We will only consider the six that happened on the cross. Not considered:
 - 1. He fulfilled every prophecy
 - 2. God the Son died
 - 3. Prophesied - Mark 14:62; Thief; Peter's denial
 - 4. Malchus' ear
 - 5. Dream of Pilate's wife
 - 6. Forgave the thief and pardoned all of our sins
- D. Matt. 27:45, 50-54

I. THE SUN DARKENED

- A. Jesus was put on the Cross at 9 o'clock in the morning. At noon an utter darkness settled in. This was not a sandstorm or an eclipse. This darkness lasted for 3 hours.
 - 1. Tertulian wrote to the heathen readers of his day; "this wonder is related in your own annals and is preserved in your archives to this day."
 - 2. Darkness throughout Scripture has been associated with judgment. The Light of this world was going out.
 - 3. John introduces Christ in his gospel as the "light of men" - John 1:4-5, 9
 - 4. The Light of the world had been snuffed out. God's appropriate response was to remove all sun light as a symbol of the removal of the Light of His Son.
 - 5. At 3 in the afternoon the sun reappears. Almost at the same time, Jesus cries out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

II. HE GAVE UP THE GHOST (Departed)

- A. Crucifixions normally took days, not hours, before the victim died. But Jesus was in complete control even in His weakened condition.
 - 1. Our Lord didn't go with death rattle of struggling lungs or thrashing violently against impending death.
 - 2. He dismissed His spirit with an act of His will - John 10:18, 19:30
 - 3. The work of redemption was finished, so He laid down His own life.

III. VEIL OF THE TEMPLE WAS TORN IN TWO FROM TOP TO BOTTOM (Denuded)

- A. Not a little, sheer kitchen curtain. More like a very heavy theatre curtain, 60' long and 20' wide.

1. The veil separated the people from the Holy of Holies, the symbolic dwelling place of God. Only the High Priest could enter in and then only once a year.
2. God tore the veil from top to bottom. He, alone, made the way to come directly to Him. No more need for priests to mediate between God and man. A believer can now go directly to the throne of God through Christ.
3. This was done at the beginning of the evening sacrifice when the temple would have been filled with priests.
4. Historically, what did they do? They made no connection to the death of Jesus. Rather they picked it up, sewed it up and continued on with the sacrificial system that had lost all meaning. And they did so until God destroyed the temple in A. D. 70.

B. 2Cor. 3:13-18

IV. EARTHQUAKE MESSAGE (Disaster)

- A. It was supernatural because it was not the result of any of the natural or normal causes of earthquakes. Because of the significance of the death of Jesus Christ, it was independent of nature: it was the sole act of God.
1. It opened graves, yet not all graves, only the graves of the saints. It worked selectively and intelligently as a miraculous act of God announcing the death of Christ.
 2. There was one other time when God caused the earth to quake miraculously: at Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Law - Ex. 19:16
 - a. There it stood for the absolute holiness of God and warned the people that they could not touch the mount or even approach God apart from the sacrifices of the Law - 2Cor. 3:7
 3. But at the death of Christ, the quaking of Golgotha, God was giving His answer to Sinai and the Old Testament Law.
 - a. Quaking of Sinai stood for the barrier between God and man: God's holiness vs man's sin that keeps him separated from God
 - b. The quaking of Golgotha stood for God's love and grace which, through the sacrifice of Christ, satisfied the demands of a holy God and makes God approachable through the new covenant.

V. THE STONES DEMOLISHED

- A. Rocks are still seen at Mount Calvary thus rent asunder, which are said to be the ones that were convulsed when the Savior died.
- B. Quake and rending of rocks recorded by the following early historians:
1. Phlegon in Logios
 2. Julius Africanus in Chronographia
 3. Eusebius in Chronicon
 4. Cyril of Jerusalem in Cateches
- C. A crack on Golgotha six inches wide and running from the top to near the bottom begins and ends with silver markers and is trimmed in brass.
1. Answers the arrogant might of the Romans who used Skull Rock as a symbol of their death's head hold on life and death in Palestine.

VI. THE GRAVES OPENED AND THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD RAISED (DELIVERED)

A. The earthquake, the rending of the rocks, and the consequent opening of the graves occurred at the moment Jesus died, while the resurrection and visible appearance in the city of the bodies of the saints occurred "after his resurrection," for Jesus himself was the "first-born from the dead" (Col. 1:18). Matthew mentions the last event here because of its association with the rending of the rocks, which opened the rock-hewn sepulchres in which the saints had slept. There has been much speculation as to what became of these risen saints. We have no positive information, but the natural presumption is that they ascended to heaven. (McGarvey)

B. There is nothing said of the reason why they were raised. It is not improbable to suppose that it was, amidst the other wonders attending the death of Jesus, to convince the Jews that he was the Messiah. Perhaps some who had been his open friends were raised up now as an attestation, that he in whom they had believed was the Christ. What became of them after they had entered into the city--whether they again died, or ascended to heaven--is not revealed, and conjecture is vain. (Barnes)

1. These resurrections made a statement of the promise of resurrection for all - 1Cor. 15:22.
2. Only the saints rose, persons that would be known and recognized in Jerusalem.

VII. THE INTENDED EFFECT OF THE MIRACLES (Desired)

A. "They feared greatly." They regarded these things as proof God was angry, and they were terrified at the prospect that vengeance was coming on them.

B. "Truly this was the Son of God." They had heard he had professed to be the Son of God. Seeing these wonders, they believed that it was true, and that God was now attesting the truth of his professions.

1. Mark 15:39 - "this man was the Son of God."
2. Luke 23:47 - "Certainly this was a righteous man."

C. Remember, this man is a pagan with polytheistic notions of deity. Yet the miracles of Calvary made this death distinctive enough to convince him of the true Deity of Jesus.

Conclusion:

A. The miracles of Calvary are a matter of historical record.

1. The opponents of the Lord knew it happened and tried to cover it up - Matt. 28:11-15
2. The pagan military officer knew it happened and was honest enough to admit it.
3. Are you?

B. 1Cor. 15:19-23