

Awesome Scenes About the Cross
I Cor 1:23-24; 2:1-2
Galatians 6:14

INTRO: According to the Word of God, there were a number of awesome events that took place as Jesus hung upon the cross of Calvary.

Those events that took place as Christ hung upon the cross are “God’s own supernatural commentary....proof of the extraordinary importance of what was occurring that day just outside Jerusalem” (MacArthur 227).

What were the events that took place around the cross?

- The Sun Darkened
- The Veil Torn in two
- The Earthquake
- The Dead Raised Up
- The Centurion Saved
- The Savior Resurrected

I. MATTHEW 27:45, THE SUN DARKENED

A. From noon until 3:00 pm, a heavy curtain of darkness fell over the scene. J. W. Shepherd says: “For the three portentous hours of darkness Jesus hung on the cross in silence” (601).

1. This darkness was not caused by an eclipse, for it was the time of full moon of the Passover week. This was a miracle.
2. This three hour period of darkness was supernatural.
3. This awesome darkness came in sympathy with the all important experience which Christ the Creator was going through during those three hours.

B. Throughout scripture, darkness is associate with judgment. Supernatural darkness signifies catastrophic doom (Amos 5:20; Joel 2:2).

1. The cross was a place of judgment. During the three hours of darkness, Christ’s sufferings were most intense.
2. Matthew 27:46 is where Jesus cries out, “....Eli, Eli, la ‘ma sabachthani?” These words, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,” denote the judgment of God falling on Christ as he bore our sins in his own body.
 - a. Christ came to earth, “to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28c).
 - b. Galatians 3:13, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law....cursed is everyone that hangeth on

a tree.”

- c. After Christ had tasted the drags of all our sin, He cried with a loud voice saying, “It is finished” (Mt 27:50).

II. MATTHEW 27:51a, THE VEIL TORN IN TWO

- A. Behind the heavy, ornately decorated curtain that blocked the Holy of Holies is where the ark of the covenant was kept. The ark of the covenant symbolized the presence of God.
 1. Only one person every went behind the veil, the high Priest; and that only once a year on the Day of Atonement. He entered the Holy of Holies with the blood sacrifice on that day.
 2. The heavy veil said that sin separated man from God and, “that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest “ (Heb 9:8b).
- B. The very moment Christ died, the way to God was opened (Heb 9:11-12).
 1. The veil being torn from top to bottom says that God had removed the barrier between Him and God.
 2. Why was the barrier removed? Because the blood of Christ was sufficient to appease the wrath of God against man’s sin.

III. MATTHEW 27:51b, THE EARTHQUAKE

- A. Just as God’s hand was evident in the darkness, and in the rent veil, it was evident in the earthquake. This earthquake was accompanied by another instance; the rocks were split.
- B. Earthquakes like darkness scripturally indicate divine judgment (Nahum 1:3-5; Ex 19:18; Psa 18:7).
 1. Earthquakes, in particular, are expressive of God’s wrath. When Moses was upon Mt. Sinai and the people were in sin, God sent an earthquake.
 2. On the cross, the wrath of God against sin fell upon His own Son (II Cor 5:21). Some call the earthquake a divine punctuation mark.

IV. MATTHEW 27:52-53, GRAVES OPENED; THE DEAD RAISED

- A. This is truly an awesome event. At the very second that Christ “gave up the ghost,” the graves were opened. This was possibly

by the earthquake, “and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.” How many saints were resurrected, we do not know. These saints appeared in Jerusalem after the resurrection of Christ.

- B. The resurrected saints appearing in Jerusalem proved that the Lord Jesus Christ had conquered death (I Cor 15:20).
 - 1. One day, the graves of all the saints will give up the dead within them (I Thes 4:13-18).
 - 2. Christ is the first-fruits (I Cor 15:23).

V. MATTHEW 27:54, THE CENTURION SAVED

- A. The greatest of all miracles, that can happen to man, took place at the foot of the cross at the moment Christ died.
 - 1. The Centurion, it seems, was at the arrest, the trials, scourging, and crucifixion of Christ. This man had heard the Savior as He testified to being the Son of God in front of the Sanhedrin.
 - 2. This man stood at the foot of the cross for hours observing the words of Jesus and the supernatural events that took place.
- B. Luke 23:47 says: “Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.” J. W. Shepherd said that this was, “a frank and fearless testimony.”

VI. MATTHEW 28:1-6, THE SAVIOR RESURRECTED

- A. After His death on the cross, Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, not far from the place where He died. Three days later, He arose and our sins were gone.
- B. The instruction the angel gave to the women at the tomb is important for us today: “God quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead....”
 - 1. The grave is empty! What an encouragement, what calm assurance of life eternal.
 - 2. “Because He lives I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives All fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living Just because He lives!”

CONCLUSION: The awesome scene about the cross point to the supernatural work of God in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ