

Truly this was the Son of God

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[0 : 00] Now, as the Lord enables us, let us turn to consider the words we have in this portion of Scripture read. Matthew 27, and again reading from verse 45.

Now, from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land, until the ninth hour. 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? And some of the bystanders hearing it said, This man is calling Elijah. One of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink.

But the other said, Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him. And particularly from verse 50 onwards, and Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

[1 : 20] The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

I'm not quite sure what elevation the hill of Calvary was.

Probably not as high as some of the hills or mountains mentioned elsewhere in the scripture.

Example, when we read of the great flood and Noah's Ark landing on Mount Ararat.

It must have been quite a high mountain, Mount Ararat. But that was a landing for Noah and his family that was wonderful in itself.

The flood had abated. The Lord's wrath had passed. It was a new beginning for them. Think also of Mount Sinai, where God revealed himself in holiness.

[2 : 47] And he forbade the children of Israel to approach the mountain because of their sinful, wretched nature. And he revealed the law of God to them at Mount Sinai.

A place of glory in its own light. Think also when the prophet Elijah was there with the prophets of Baal around him, and he offered a sacrifice and called upon the name of the Lord to come down and burn his sacrifice.

The Lord demonstrated his great power over these evil religions that had so contaminated and permeated the minds and the thinking of the people of Israel.

The Lord worked a marvelous victory that day. Think also of Moses when he came to the borders of the promised land.

The Lord commanded him to climb a particular hill and to look north and south, east and west. And he was able to see the land of promise from that particular elevation.

[4 : 08] When we think of Mount Calvary, as I said, I don't know what elevation or how high it was. But something of the utmost significance took place there.

Much more significant than any of the things that I have mentioned already. In fact, all the blessings that Moses was going to inherit as he looked over the promised land.

All the blessings that Israel was going to inherit during the Old Testament years. All were rooted in what was going to happen and what did happen on Mount Calvary.

And I'd like just to highlight two or three things. I was thinking about this a couple of days ago, and I hadn't really prepared a sermon for you.

But the thoughts that I had, I've put them down and I'm going to bring them before you this evening. I didn't know I was going to be here on this Lord's Day until yesterday.

[5 : 11] So first of all, I want to say a few words about the darkness. That there was over all the land, from the sixth hour till the ninth hour.

We have that in verse 45. What darkness was it and what did it mean? And then, one or two words on verse 50.

Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And we see the effect of that loud voice that Jesus cried out at that point.

Verse 51. The things that happened. Immediately after he cried with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. The curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

The earth shook. And the rocks were split. And the tombs were also opened. So that many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and came out of their tombs after his resurrection.

[6 : 27] And went into the holy city and were seen by many. One or two words on each of these. The darkness. The Lord's crying with a loud voice.

The temple curtain being torn from top to bottom. The earth shaking. The rocks rending or splitting. And the tombs opening. It's an amazing field in that succession of miracles that happened at Calvary.

First of all, from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, there was darkness over all the land.

Darkness. When did this darkness come? At the sixth hour. Going according to the reckoning for time at that particular time, this means that this darkness came at midday.

[7 : 36] When the sun was at its highest. And this darkness covered all the land. Some people try and explain that darkness away by saying, well, maybe it was an eclipse.

Well, if it was an eclipse, it was an eclipse that continued uninterrupted for three hours. We've never seen a solar eclipse lasting more than for a few minutes.

So it wasn't a solar eclipse. And in any case, this was the time of the Passover feast. And the Passover feast always took place at the time of the full moon.

And anybody who knows the workings of the heavens will tell you that it's not possible to have an eclipse at the time of a full moon.

So it must have been a supernatural darkness that fell upon Calvary at midday until three o'clock in the afternoon.

[8 : 53] A supernatural darkness. Certainly, up until the darkness came, there was a lot of talking going on.

When you look here at what the chief priests were saying. And the scribes and the elders, they mocked him. He said, he saved others, he cannot save himself.

He's the king of Israel. Let him now come down from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now if he desires him. He said, I am the son of God. And the robbers also who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

And the soldiers had done their utmost to belittle him. It says here that they mocked him and stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

What an amazing few verses we have there from verse 27 onwards. Thinking of the cruelty of these soldiers. The inhumane dealing they had with the son of God.

[9 : 59] Stripping him. Putting a scarlet robe on him. And putting a crown of thorns upon his head. Kneeling before him and mocking him saying, Hail, king of the Jews. There was a hubbub of noise.

There was real animosity against the Lord Jesus Christ. By the soldiers and by the Jews who were gathered there to the place of crucifixion.

But then the darkness falls. And we don't read anything regarding anyone saying anything during the age of darkness.

If you read the other gospels, I don't think you'll find anything that was said during the age of darkness. It's as if the darkness fell like a heavy darkness on the land and on the people.

They were filled with awe. They couldn't say anything. What did the darkness mean? Well, some of the theologians say that this was the act of God himself.

[11 : 14] Drawing, as it were, a veil over his son's sufferings. So that the world couldn't see what was happening.

So that people couldn't see the anguish, the sufferings of the son of man. As he dealt with God on behalf of his believing or elect people.

What did happen in relation to his sufferings there? Well, Isaiah chapter 53 speaks amazingly with insight into the sufferings of Christ.

When he says that he was wounded for our transgressions. And he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was laid upon him.

And by his stripes we are healed. And Professor Finlayson, who was Professor of Systematics in the Free Church College long ago.

[12:24] He said, I'm able to see something here that I'm going to mention to you. He said he was wounded for our transgressions. The word wounded, illustrating the outward or bodily wounding that men inflicted upon Christ.

The nails through his hands and his feet. And what he suffered as he was beaten and whipped. And as he suffered also with the crown of thorns upon his head.

His blood went because he was wounded physically in that way. But then Professor Finlayson says, he was bruised for our iniquities.

It's as if he is talking about an inward bruising. A deeper experience. A more substantial aspect of suffering altogether.

And the Lord Jesus Christ was in the presence of the righteous judge of all the earth.

[13:34] Even God himself. And Jesus Christ was the sin bearer. And he was the focus of the undiluted wrath of God.

As he hung upon the cross of Calvary. Nowhere else in the universe was the focus of God's wrath to be found.

But on the cross of Calvary. And on the head of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord drew a curtain across. Because the sight was so private.

And the sufferings were so intense. And the transaction was so marvelous. That he was paying to God justice the ultimate price.

When he laid down his life as a ransom for many. And when he fulfilled every aspect of God's law. To the perfect degree.

[14:37] There was darkness over all the land. Until the ninth hour. I've just touched on that area of scripture.

But you can examine it yourselves. They say that. When there is an eclipse of the sun. It's when it's at its darkest.

That you see. Aspects of the sun. That you would never see. Except for. The eclipse itself. You see all these people.

Who are interested in astronomy. They get their cameras out. Waiting for the moment. When there is a total eclipse. Then their cameras start clicking. They record the event.

Because they see things then. That they are never able to see. Except when. The eclipse is full. No. No. No. This is what we have here.

[15:39] We see things at Calvary. That we don't see anywhere else. The eclipse is there. The darkness is there.

But we realize. From the teaching of scripture broadly. That what happens is. That Jesus Christ. Is paying the price for our sin. And he.

The righteous. Has taken the place of the unrighteous. That he might bring. Them to God. God. But then going on from that point.

It says here. At verse 50. That Jesus cried out again. With a loud voice. And yielded up his spirit.

The gospel of John chapter 19. At verse 30. Says. That at that very point. Before he yielded up his spirit.

[16:40] Crying with a loud voice. That he said. It is finished. The gospel of John chapter 19. Verse 30. Reminds us of that. One word in the original language.

But a word in the perfect tense. Showing that. What the Lord Jesus has done. Continues to have. Relevance. And power.

And effect. In the experience. Of all of God's people. The salvation. That he brought that day. Is an everlasting salvation. For those.

Who believe in his name. But then coming to this cry. He cried out again. With a loud voice. And yielded up.

His spirit. As a result. As I said. Of that cry. A number of things happened. The first thing to happen.

[17:38] We have in verse 51. Begins with a behold. Behold. The curtain of the temple. Was torn in two. From top.

To bottom. The curtain. The curtain. The curtain. Well this was no mean curtain. It wasn't a flimsy. Piece of. Drapery at all.

If you read in the Old Testament. You'd find. The construction of this. And some people believe it was. Almost as. As thick as a hand breadth.

The kind of. Thickness it was. This curtain. That separated the holy place. In the temple. From the holy of holies. It was a bar.

As it were. To people. Entering into the holy of holies. Because people were sinful. And the only person. To go into the holy of holies. Beyond this curtain.

[18:33] This veil. Was the high priest. And only on the day of atonement. Once a year. And he had to go in. With the blood of the sacrifice. And he had to sprinkle that blood.

On the mercy seat. And before the mercy seat. That was the. Ceremonial law. But now it says here. That when Jesus died. The veil. Or the curtain of the temple. Was torn in two. From the top. Right to the bottom.

I think I'm right. In saying. That the height. Of this curtain. Or the length of it. Was something like. Sixty feet. The temple.

Was very high. And this curtain. Extended from the. Ceiling. Right down. And this. Curtain was.

[19:33] Rent. From the top. All the way to the bottom. Opening. Opening. A way. Into the holy. Of holies.

When did this happen? Well. It happened. At the time. When the priests. Would have been. Officiating. In the holy place.

The time. Of the evening sacrifice. And there. Right in front of them. Would be this. Temple. Veil. Or curtain. That had been there.

For centuries. And now. All of a sudden. These priests. Would have witnessed. The hand of God. At work. Rending it.

From the top. Right down. To the bottom. What a powerful cry. Our savior had.

[20:33] It was a cry. It was a cry. Of victory. It is finished. It was a cry. Of almighty power. As we read. In Psalm 29.

His voice. Breaks the cedars. His voice. Breaks. The rock. Asunder. On this particular day. The curtain. Of the temple.

Torn in two. From top. To bottom. Assuring us. That there is now. A new. And living way. Into the presence. Of God. Through. The rent.

Body. Of our Lord. Jesus Christ. Through that body. Of his. That he yielded.

Himself up. As a sacrifice. And this is now. Illustrative. Of the new. Beginning. The new.

[21:30] And living way. Opened unto us. Into the nearer. Presence of God. Isn't it amazing.

That all the years. Of the Old Testament. This. Curtain. Remained. Standing. Because people. Weren't allowed.

To go in. Apart from the blood. Of the sacrifice. Animal. And that. Animal. Sacrifice. Didn't avail. To cleanse.

One sin away. It was only typical. Of the sacrifice. Of Christ Jesus. And in the fullness. Of times. When he came. And offered. This one.

Sacrifice. To satisfy. Divine justice. And reconcile. His people. To God. Only then. Did this. Curtain. Get torn.

[22:26] From top. To bottom. And God. Says. There is now. A way. Into. My presence. The apostle. Says. Let us therefore. Come with boldness.

To the throne. Of grace. That we may obtain. Mercy. And find grace. To help. In time. Of need. What an amazing.

Happening. At Calvary. That day. The torn curtain. The next thing.

That I want to highlight. Is. The earth. Shook. The earth. Shook. In Exodus.

19. At the giving of the law. Verses 16 to 18. I'm just going to read this. At the giving of the law.

[23:23] We find also. That the earth shook. 19. 16. On the morning. Of the third day. There were thunders. And lightnings. And a thick cloud.

On the mountain. That is on Sinai. And a very loud. Trumpet blast. So that all the people. In the camp. Trembled. Then Moses. Brought the people. Out of the camp. To meet God.

And they took their stand. At the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai. Was wrapped in smoke. Because the Lord. Had descended on it. In fire. And the smoke. Of it went up. Like a smoke.

Of a killen. And the whole mountain. Trembled. Greatly. That was at the giving of the law. When God's. Presence was there.

In all his holiness. And the mountain. Trembled. At his presence. The people trembled with fear.
[24 : 21] Because they asked. That the Lord would not speak to them. Any more directly. They asked Moses. To speak to them. Rather than the Lord. Speaking to them directly. But now on Calvary.

The earth shook again. And what does this. Shake really. Involve. Well while Sinai. Shaking. Showed the sinners. Wretchedness. And the sinners. Sin before God. Deserving of destruction. Deserving of destruction. Calvary. Shows the sinners. Recovery. And blessedness. It's as if. The rocks. At Calvary. Or the. The earth. When it shook. Rejoiced. Because Christ. Had finished the work. That he came to fulfill. The rocks. At Sinai.

[25 : 22] Shook. Trembling. For fear. Because of the sin of man. And what sin deserved. The rock. At Calvary.

It trembled. It shook. Not with fear. But with rejoicing. The earth shook. How does. Your heart. Respond. When you think of the Lord Jesus Christ. Having come into the world. To save sinners. When you think of yourself.

As a sinner before God. How does your heart respond. When you hear. There is a savior. And a savior. Has finished the work of redemption.

And he is calling people to himself. Nothing in my hands I bring. The hymn writer said. Simply. To thy cross I cling.

[26 : 20] And we flee to the cross. We come to Jesus. He is calling us. To himself. Come unto me. All you. Who labor. And are heavy laden.

With your sins. And I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. And learn of me. I am meek. And lowly in heart. And you shall find rest.

Unto your souls. My yoke is easy. My burden is light. The yoke of law was so heavy. And the yoke of sin. Is so heavy. But the yoke of Christ.

Is easy. Why don't you come? The earth itself shook. In response to his cry. Of victory. And then also.

It said that the rocks. Rent. The rocks. Rent. We find that. In the days of Elijah.

[27 : 19] He was there. Having fled from Jezebel. For fear of his life. And he was in a place there. And. The Lord. Appeared to him. But before he.

Made himself known to him. There was an earthquake. There was a fire. And there was. A terrible wind. So that the rocks broke.

But then came a still. Small voice. And this really. I think. Is the effect.

Of this splitting of the rocks here. That the still. Small voice. Of Christ's victory. Has split.

These rocks in pieces. You might find that. Might find that. A conundrum. But I think. Christ's victory.

[28 : 20] Had this effect. This. Marvelous. Finished work. Of the Lord Jesus. Caused this.

Effect. Upon. The earth. Shaking. And the rocks. Splitting. But what about the rest?

Well it says. That the tombs were opened. Many bodies of the saints. Who had fallen asleep. Were raised. The tombs were opened. In the vicinity of.

Calvary. We read that. Jesus was. Buried there. Quite near. Where the crucifixion. Had taken place. And I think it's.

Safe to assume. That there would have been. Quite a lot of. Other burials. And other graves. In the vicinity. But some of these graves. Were opened.

[29 : 21] Some of these graves. Were opened. And many bodies. Of the saints. Who had fallen asleep. Were raised. Came out of the tombs.

After his resurrection. This is. Proof. That his power. Is able to open.

The graves. And. Through his resurrection. The dead also. Will rise. The dead. The dead. The dead.

What an amazing. Saviour this is. What an amazing. Place. Calvary is. We need to visit it often. We need to meditate often.

Upon. The man of Calvary. The man who there. Was put to shame. For his people. The man who there.

[30 : 16] Suffered. The righteous. Or the just one. In place of the unjust. The one who there. Yielded up a sacrifice. Able to satisfy.

The divine justice. And reconcile us to God. The man there. Who cried. One word. It is finished. And as a result of that. Marvellous word. Having been spoken. The veil was rent. The end of the Old Testament system.

The end of separation. Between Jew and Gentile. The end of all of these things. That kept. People. Down through the years.

In kind of bondage. But now. There is liberty. Because Jesus has died. He has. Risen again. And now.

[31 : 15] He is at the right hand. Of God the Father. Able. To save to the uttermost. All who come unto God. By him. Is there a darkness.

Over your own mind. This evening. Is there a darkness. Of sin. And worldliness. Impenetrable. Well. That is the way we are. By nature. But the Lord. Who brought this darkness. In this particular situation. Is able to break through.

With the light of the gospel. In your experience. Is there. A curtain. As it were. A barrier. Between you. And your God.

God. Well. There is a barrier. Of sin. But if you come to Jesus. He has power. To forgive sin. And cleanse.

[32 : 15] From all unrighteousness. He is able to set you free. That you might know. The liberty. Of the sons of God. Lord. Does the earth.

That you are. The human nature. That you have. Need to be shaken. Do you remember. When Paul and Silas. Were in the prison. At Philippi. In Acts chapter 16.

At midnight. They sang. Praise to the Lord. And an earthquake came. And the earthquake. Opened the prison doors.

But I think an earthquake. Also came into the experience. Of the prison jailer. And he came. And asked this question. Sirs. What must I do. To be saved.

Believe on the Lord. Jesus Christ. And thou shalt be saved. The apostle Paul said. And that man believed. Because an earthquake had come.

[33 : 16] Christ had come into his life. With power. The rocks. That were his hard heart. Were split apart. Isn't it amazing.

That our hearts. Which are so hard. By nature. Can be broken. And you ask the Lord. To break your heart. In true penitence. In true sorrow.

For your sin. And ask him. Lord come with you. A word to my heart. And the Bible says of itself. That it's like a hammer. That breaks.

The hard and stony heart. In pieces. So may the gospel hammer. The word of God. Break our heart. In such a way.

That we will be. Reduced. To confession of sin. And blessed richly. With eternal salvation. Through faith.

[34 : 13] In Jesus Christ. Well you can think of these things. Yourselves. A little bit more. And read around them. Think it's such an amazing place.

To visit. Calvary. The cross. The word crucial. The word crucial. Is from the same. Root as the word cross.

And Christ. Is crucial. If we are to have salvation. It is. Crucial. That we believe in him.

That we come to his cross. Commit ourselves. To our crucified. And risen saviour. Who is able. To lead us. Every step of the way.

And at last. Receive us. Into glory. May it be true. Let us pray.