

Matthew 27:45-54 – Unraveling the Curse

Huntingdon Missionary Baptist Church – Sunday, March 31, 2024 AM

Opening Reading: [Genesis 2:16-17, 3:17-24](#)

Matt 27:45-54 – Our focus is [27:50-53](#)

Note: Matthew inserts an event timed AFTER the resurrection into his description of the events follow Christ's death.

The question to ask in this passage is WHY was he inspired to do it this way?

It is Finished

Matt 27:50 *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.*

The final two of the seven sayings of Jesus Christ on the cross were:

- It is Finished! ([Jn 19:30](#))
- Father, into Thy Hands I Commit My Spirit! ([Lk 23:46](#))

Matthew doesn't focus on which one of these it was, simply that He cried again with a loud voice.

He does want us to know that Jesus "yielded up" (let go of) His Spirit into the hands of the Father.

John 10:17 *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.*

What is important is that Matthew gives us the sense that Jesus completed His work and then yielded His life.

Matthew doesn't just tell us, "It is Finished", he shows us!

Illus: Pulling on a thread. If you get the right thread, you can completely undo a whole seam. **Work backwards.**

Entrance Granted

Matt 27:51a *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;*

The veil separated the holy place, from the holy of holies, where God's presence dwelt above the ark.

Recall the Garden:

- A paradise created for man to tend and enjoy.
- A place where God walked with man and fellowshiped with him.
- The last thing that happened:

Genesis 3:24 *So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.* **Man was no longer permitted entrance.**

Consider the Veil:

Exodus 26:31 *And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it.* (ESV) **These were God's specific instructions because He was painting a picture.**

The tearing of the veil represents an Entrance Granted into the presence of God.

Present Effect:

Hebrews 10:19-22 *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.* **We can boldly access the very presence of God and fellowship with Him.**

This is also the foundation of our ability to worship outside of Jerusalem... to the ends of the earth, incense offered.

Future Effect:

John 14:3 *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* **Our glorious present access will be eclipsed by our future entrance into the presence of God.**

I am going to break up the next two verses a bit differently than those who inserted the verse marks.

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Curse Broken

Matt 27:51b-52a and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened;

The earthquake clearly took place at the death of Jesus. (27:54 - Centurions)

This earthquake did not produce random results, but likely resulted in the veil being torn and the tombs being opened.

Recall the Garden:

- Man was formed of the dust of the ground and God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils.
- God's curse involved the ground.

Genesis 3:19 *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Returning to dust is the final punch of sin, which produces death... unravelling life.

Jesus' death had the impact of opening some graves, unlocking the hold of the curse. We will get to the rest soon.

Present Effect:

- There is a sense in which the grave is claiming us right now.
Time is ticking, all are aging, and it doesn't take too many years for the turning of the calendar to yield more decay.
- There is a sense in which sin kills us immediately. **Consider Adam & Eve**
Sin → Shame → Separation from God → Separation from one another → Spiral of Sin in Future → Human Suffering
Adam and Eve didn't physically die for many years, but they died spiritually the day they rebelled. God didn't lie.
- Sin ravages our hearts and our bodies.
 - Many of us carry memories that we wish were not there.
 - Many of us carry tendencies or temptations that we wish were not there.
 - Many of us carry scars (some invisible) that we wish were not there.
- When you are saved, you no longer have to be subject to sin.

Rom 6:8-11a, 14 *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin... for sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

Yes, sin is in your past and we do wrestle with it in the present, but it does not have to define us.

In **1 Cor 6:9-11**, Paul lists life-defining sins, by which those who engage in those lifestyles do not gain entrance into the heavenly kingdom. He follows this with "such were some of you."

Future Effect:

Rev 20:13 *And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them.... (ESV)*

A day is coming when the glory of our present freedom from death will be eclipsed by full freedom from the grave.

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Life Given

Matt 27:52b-53 *and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*

Matthew adds a time stamp to this last portion: AFTER His resurrection.

We can ask a lot of questions about this passage. It is intriguing.

- How many? Many
- Who? Saints (no specifics)
- When? After Jesus' resurrection.
- Where? Likely near Jerusalem
- What did they do? They appeared to many in Jerusalem.

Appeared – make visible, make known, tell or report.

They gave testimony to the successful work of Jesus Christ.

No other gospel writers record this. This is all we need to know to get Matthew's point.

Recall the Garden:

- God breathed into their nostrils and man became a "living soul" (**Gen 2:7**)
- God told Adam and Eve something about death before they even ate the fruit.

Gen 2:17 *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. It was life, spiritual life, that was sacrificed immediately.*

We learn that God thinks about (defines) "death" and "life" a bit differently than us.

Present Effect

- **John 10:10** *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

Not only can we be freed from sin, we can live righteously and experience the life of the Spirit today.

- We can have peace that passes understanding (**Phil 4:7**)
- We can experience unspeakable and glorious joy (**2 Peter 1:8**)
- We can love more deeply (**1 John 4:19**)
- Our sins can be put off and the opposite godly behaviors can be put on (**Eph 4:22-24**)

Do not underestimate the power of this present life, for it is the very witness that draws others to Christ.

Future Effect

1 Thess 4:16-17 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

A day is coming when the glory of our present life will be eclipsed by perfect life in both body and soul.

Today we celebrate the unraveling of the curse, the complete victory over sin and death.

Today we rejoice in the first fruits of the resurrection, first and foremost our Savior, and then those who followed Him.

Illus: The Christmas Eve present.

What we have already experienced is wonderful, but it is just pajamas compared to what lies ahead.