

on the cross. Matthew says that expressly in Matthew 27:52. Here we see again the urgency and importance of faith in Christ and life of repentance and obedience before Him. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life", we read in John 3:36, "and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides, [remains] on him." Over and over Scripture makes this distinction between believers and unbelievers, between the god-fearing and the godless, the repentant and unrepentant. Without living in a relationship of faith and humble submission before Him, you remain in your sins, and except you be converted your looming death will bring on eternal death and your resurrection from the dead in the last day will not be a resurrection to glory, but a resurrection to eternal shame and punishment in body and soul for ever and ever.

The bodies of the saints were raised to glory. Saints in the Bible are not people holy in themselves, but all who confess their unholiness before the thrice holy God, pleading His mercy and grace in spite of themselves for Jesus' sake alone. If this day, dear friends, you are yet unsaved, still in the way of sin and darkness, let me call out to you from Golgotha, as it were, "Today is the day of salvation" - hear the Lord God calling - "my son, my daughter, harden not you heart in the way of sin and evil, but give me your heart! Repent and believe in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, the only almighty triumphant Saviour, apart from Whom no one can be saved from sin, and God's just eternal punishment for sin."

We have looked at three of the wonders that took place when Jesus died. The rent veil proclaims there is ready access to God's throne and to His heavenly sanctuary through the death of Jesus, the earthquake proclaims the inheritance of a marvelously rejuvenated universe through Christ's perfect sacrifice on sinners' behalf, and the strange resurrection story proclaims the glorious resurrection of God's people telling of triumphant victory for us even over death. All these signs together emphasize the majesty and perfectness of the Person and work of Jesus Christ who gave His life a ransom for many, even for as many as trust and follow after Him. Does that include you? God-inspired, incredible evidence for an astounding gospel! That is what you just heard. Does it draw you to Jesus the Saviour of sinners, and cause you too to testify, "For sure, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Even a sinner like me! Hallelujah! What a Saviour!" Amen!

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### BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)*



### INCREDIBLE EVIDENCE FOR AN ASTOUNDING GOSPEL

Incredible evidence for an astounding gospel! That is what the Holy Scripture gives us. Matthew 27:50 tells us how Jesus gave Himself over to death. Death didn't overtake Him but He gave up His life as a voluntary sacrifice in payment for sin in the place of sinners, as a substitute for others. Jesus died on the cross not as a helpless martyr or a poor victim of sorts but rather as Saviour of sinners, triumphantly to save His people from their sins!

In proof of this blessed good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, listen now to what happened when Jesus cried with a loud voice and yielded up the ghost or breathed His last. Matthew tells us about three wonders that happened right after Jesus breathed His last that really bring out the value and importance not only of His death but of our believing on Him who died and rose again as triumphant and only Saviour of sinners.

What was the first wonder that happened the moment Jesus breathed His last? Verse 50-51 says, "Jesus yielded up the ghost". He breathed His last, and behold, *the veil in the temple was rent in twain*, ripped in half from the top to the bottom. Here you have the first incredible evidence for an astounding gospel. The veil, the curtain in the temple spoken of here, was that huge beautiful thick curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of holies in the temple. The Holy of holies symbolized the presence of almighty God in all His glory and majesty, and the thick curtain before that Holy of holies reflected how there was no free access to the thrice holy God. If someone would attempt to enter without God's express permission and without the blood of the sacrifice, he would die instantly.

But see now what happens to the veil, that thick curtain, the moment Jesus died and shed His blood as the once for all sacrifice for sin. That veil gets taken as it were in the divine hands of God and just ripped in two from top to bottom. With that event God declares through Jesus' death, 'No one need be kept anymore out of My holy presence. There is access now to Me in My presence and in My eternal home through Jesus and His once for all sacrifice for sinners. Because of sin, man has been separated from Me, but through Jesus Christ and faith in His finished work for sinners, everyone and anyone may be restored to Me in a relationship of peace, and harmony.' Yes, that is the simple gospel, so rich and free! As one commentator expressed it, "Christ, the true and everlasting High priest of God has opened up for us by His blood, through His death on sinners' behalf - He has opened up for us the way into the heavenly sanctuary, the very

throne room of God, that we may no longer stand at a distance within the porch, as it were, but may freely advance into the presence of God!"

With Jesus' death for sinners, God may now invite the members of His Son, even as many as believe and repent, to approach Him with familiarity. The book of Hebrews speaks of having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus and it gives the loving earnest exhortation in chapter 4:16, "*Let us therefore*"—in view of Christ and His shed blood on sinner's behalf, "*come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*" The way is opened for all to come unto the Lord, just as you are, in all your sin and misery, your guilt and troubles. Come, looking to Jesus and you may be sure God is ready to help, ready to forgive, ready to bless, ready to hear, ready to save, even exceeding abundantly above all that you and I could ask or think. Historians have told us that the Jews tried to sew the ripped curtain back together again and that is so typical that we don't think such open access to God can be so simple and so for real, and so freely granted. But it is, even for as many as will trust and obey the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

A second incredible evidence for an astounding gospel is given when Jesus breathed His last, and that is the rock-splitting, ground-shaking earthquake that took place the moment of Jesus' death. It is good to notice that the rending of the veil was not a result of the earthquake, but a separate event from the earthquake, being mentioned by Matthew also before the earthquake. But why this earthquake upon Christ's death on the cross? May we not say it happened by God's design to underscore the universal cosmic fruit of Jesus' saving work on the cross? The death of Jesus Christ on the cross has earth shattering, earth renewing consequences. The earth shook with Jesus' death and once for all sacrifice, convulsed as it were with excitement and anticipation at the significance and worth of what just took place when Jesus the Saviour of sinners died on the cross! In Romans 8:19-21 Paul speaks of the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together until now, and waiting to be delivered "*from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*" So then we have the authority of the apostle for representing the trembling of the earth as a foretaste by God's design of its future new creation, by virtue of the once for all perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

It is striking in this regard that while there came this ground shaking rock-splitting earthquake, on Calvary and the area surrounding Jerusalem, yet the cross of Jesus did not come crashing down. Violent as the earthquake was it disturbed not the cross of Jesus. Rather, the earth shook in honour of Him Who was crucified. God had the earthquake take place to show visibly and dramatically that the death of the Saviour had, and still is having, significance for the entire universe.

That the earthquake was sent to highlight the worth and purpose of Jesus' death also is evident in the fact that in connection with it, some of the

graves were opened. Isn't that most telling gospel news? As the Saviour Himself died and was about to be put in a sepulcher, even at that very instant other sepulchers were opened by God by means of the earthquake. By this God declared that His Son would now enter into the prison of death, not to continue to be shut up there, but to bring out all His people held captive there. There is victory over death through the death of Christ on sinners' behalf. Through Jesus' death and resurrection for sinners, "death cannot keep it's prey, Jesus tore the bars away!" This is the gospel of Jesus Christ. As the rent veil served to glorify Christ the Saviour, so also did the earthquake sent from God just as Jesus breathed His last. Incredible evidence for an astounding gospel, indeed!

This is seen also in the related very astonishing third wonder that Matthew tells us took place when Jesus died. Matthew tells us, not only were "*graves opened*" by the earthquake in the area around Golgotha and outside Jerusalem area, but "*many bodies of the saints which slept arose!*" Those who had been dead and buried arose! And Matthew says, they "*came out of the graves after his [Jesus] resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many.*"

Now this is admittedly a very mysterious text that leaves us with many questions. For sure, however, this is not just an apostolic legend, but historical actual fact. When Jesus died, not only were graves opened, but the bodies of saints revived, testifying to the saving power of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. "*The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" [Romans 6:23] Even as Jesus died on the cross, God makes known something of this amazing far-reaching saving power of God in and through Christ Jesus. And the fact that this resurrection took place when Jesus breathed His last breath shows us the eagerness of God to make known the power of Jesus' once for all sacrifice to save from sin, death, hell, and judgment! Do you see that with me? Never think God isn't eager or very willing to save. He delights to save and to show mercy and to have His Son honored as the mighty all sufficient Saviour of sinners He truly is through His perfect once for all sacrifice on sinners' behalf.

There are many questions you too might have about this true story of many rising from the dead the moment Jesus breathed His last.....but we have to leave those questions, and simply receive the gospel point of Matthew telling us about this supernatural event. The point that should be emphasized is the saving power of Jesus' once for all sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. For as many as trust in that Saviour there is victory over sin, Satan, death and hell, and there is the promise of the favour of God and everlasting life with God in a new perfect and eternal world. The text says that not all were raised, but many, enough to bring out the power of Jesus' splendid sacrifice for sin.

How important not to overlook though that it was only the "*bodies of the saints*" who were partakers in the saving eternal benefits of Jesus' death