

Mark's Gospel

Lesson 16: The Son of God Finished His Purpose – part 4

Text: Mark 15:37-38; Matthew 27:51; Luke 23:45

Special Lesson

II. The Veil Was Torn In Two: It's Purpose

A. Why did this happen?

1. There were **four** miracles of Calvary recorded in the gospel accounts during the death of Jesus.
 - a. Darkness – **Mark 15:33**
 - b. Earthquake – **Matthew 27:46, 50-52**
 - c. The Veil Torn – **Mark 15:37-38**
 - d. The Dead Raised – **Matthew 27:51-53**
2. The third miracle will take one away from Calvary and into the temple.
 - a. Mark 15:37 tells us that the Lord gave His last cry to His Father, the earthquake shook the land, and something amazing took place inside the temple.
 - 1) **Matthew 27:51**
 - 2) **Luke 23: 45**
 - b. This event happened at the end of the "ninth hour" or 3:00p.m.
Matthew 27:46; Acts 3:1
 - 1) Why is this so significant? Jesus died at the hour of evening prayer.
 - 2) At that time, a faithful Jew, both men and women would gather in the court of the women to pray.
 - 3) While they prayed, a priest would go into the temple to offer incense.
3. Imagine yourself as a priest, having the privilege of going into the Holy Place to offer incense that day. This would be such an honor. Directly ahead of you is the small altar of incense standing in front of the curtain that veils the Most Holy Place. As a priest, the Most Holy Place is the most sacred place on earth. Remember, only the high priest was allowed to enter that sanctuary and then only once a year – during the Feast of Atonement – **Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 16:29-34; Hebrews 9:7**. As you walk forward to the golden altar, you see the massive veil behind it – measuring 30 feet by 30 feet! see **Exodus 26:31-33; 2Chronicles 3:14**

As you being to sprinkle incense on the altar fire, you are brought to your knees as the floor of the temple begins to shake beneath your feet . . . the whole temple area is being affected as well. Then . . . something unparalleled happens: You hear a ripping sound. Looking up, 30 feet above you, you see a tear that has appeared in the middle of the top of the veil. The tear continues straight down the curtain – down, down, until you see the curtain has torn into two pieces. And then what do you see? They mysterious shadow of the Most Holy of Holies! This event will be something you will never forget – something you will tell everyone!
4. There are many critics that have tried to explain away this amazing miracle:
 - a. The curtain was split by the shaking of the earthquake.
 - b. The curtain was probably old and rotten and ready to fall apart.
 - c. The curtain was torn by human vandalism.

5. The only conclusion is that the curtain in the temple was ripped by someone unseen – God Himself!
 6. Another author suggested that the tearing of the curtain down the middle, from top to bottom, was the reason why so many priests became believers and obeyed the gospel, recorded in **Acts 6:7**.
- B. What does this miracle mean to us now? Please remember, it had a divine purpose. see **Ephesians 3:8-13**
1. The destruction of the veil heralded the end of the Old Covenant arrangement. The tearing of the curtain coincided with the death of Jesus, which inaugurated the New Covenant (Testament).
 - a. **Hebrews 9:16-17**
 - b. **Colossians 2:14**
 2. Even as the way into the Most Holy Place was opened by the rending of the veil, so the rending of Jesus' flesh anticipated His return to the Most Holy Place (Heaven). see **Hebrews 10:19-20**
 3. Perhaps the most striking lesson of the rending of the veil is that, through the death of Jesus, **the way to God has been opened for all people**.
 - a. **Hebrews 10:21-22**
 - b. **1Peter 2:5, 9**
 - c. **Ephesians 2:14-16**