

**Matt. 27:50-53:** And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice & yielded up his spirit. <sup>51</sup> And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, & the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup> The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, <sup>53</sup> & coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city & appeared to many.

**Intro:** Last Sunday, we came to the verse in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus actually died. Jesus died for you, so that you may live forever & never die!

Today, we see that as soon as Jesus died & later rose up from the dead, very odd & miraculous events began to happen: **Vs. 51-53:** the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, & the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, & coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city & appeared to many.

God so loves sinners that Jesus died & rose again to grant us access to God, to create a new heaven & earth, & to abolish death forever!

### **1. Jesus Died & Rose Again To Grant Us Access To God**

**Matt. 27:50-51:** And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice & yielded up his spirit. <sup>51</sup> And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, & the rocks were split.

**a. When Jesus died, the miraculous happened!:** 1) The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom! God showed up & tore the curtain! 2) The earth shook, & the rocks were split! 3) Later, after Jesus rose from the dead, tombs were opened & many dead saints rose from the dead! There was an earthquake when Jesus rose (28:2)

**b. There were two curtains in the temple: D. A. Carson:** There were two temple curtains, one dividing the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place (access to God!) & the other separating the Holy Place from the court (Jew/Gentile)

**c. Jesus' death brought judgment & new access to God through the new temple: Jesus Christ: D. A. Carson:** Destruction of the outer curtain would primarily symbolize the forthcoming destruction of the temple.

- **Matt. 24:1-2:** Jesus left the temple & was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup> But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

- **Jn. 2:19-21:** Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, & will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

- **Jn. 4:21-24:** Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, & is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit & truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, & those who worship him must worship in spirit & truth."

**d. Jesus' death brought salvation & new access to God through the blood of Christ: D. A. Carson:** Destruction of the inner curtain would primarily symbolize access to God. **GOSPEL!**

- **1 Pet. 3:18:** Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God

- **Heb. 6:19-20:** We have this as a sure & steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

- **Heb. 9:1-28:** Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship & an earthly place of holiness. <sup>2</sup> For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand & the table & the bread of the Presence. It is called the

Holy Place.<sup>3</sup> Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place,<sup>4</sup> having the golden altar of incense & the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, & Aaron's staff that budded, & the tablets of the covenant.<sup>5</sup> Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.<sup>6</sup> These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties,<sup>7</sup> but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, & not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.<sup>8</sup> By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing<sup>9</sup> (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts & sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,<sup>10</sup> but deal only with food & drink & various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater & more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)<sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats & calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.<sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats & bulls, & the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh,<sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.<sup>15</sup> Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.<sup>16</sup> For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.<sup>17</sup> For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.<sup>18</sup> Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.<sup>19</sup> For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves & goats, with water & scarlet wool & hyssop, & sprinkled both the book itself & all the people,<sup>20</sup> saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you."<sup>21</sup> And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent & all the vessels used in worship.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, & without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.<sup>23</sup> Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.<sup>24</sup> For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.<sup>25</sup> Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own,<sup>26</sup> for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.<sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed for man to die once, & after that comes judgment,<sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

- **Heb. 10:19-22:** Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,<sup>20</sup> by the new & living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,<sup>21</sup> & since we have a great priest over the house of God,<sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience & our bodies washed with pure water.

- **Heb. 4:16:** Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy & find grace to help in time of need.

**Albert Martin:** Don't restitch the curtain! In marriage: what God has joined, let not man separate. Here: what God has separated, let no man put it back together! [Good works; religious activity; giving; service]

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## **2. Jesus Died & Rose Again To Create A New Heaven & Earth**

**Matt. 27:50-51:** And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice & yielded up his spirit.<sup>51</sup> And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, & the rocks were split.

**Earthquakes in the Bible:** God's presence; God's judgment; God's mighty action; God's power; God's glory!

**a. This earthquake was a sign of God's judgment: Klass Schilder:** The earthquake served as a woe which heralded an advent, as a sign of the coming day of judgment, as a sign of the coming of God with eschatological intent. God took this means to say to Israel that Golgotha was not a forgotten little place in which a certain case of a certain Nazarene had been executed; but that His death is a sharply accentuated moment in the day of the Lord, & a beginning of the last judgment. An earthquake always serves as a catastrophe of the last day in all advent-prophecy. This goes to prove once more that Golgotha is indeed a place of judgment, & that it was not an exaggeration but a declaration of the truth when we chose in this book to relate the events to catastrophes of judgment. This catastrophe points out the attitude we must take. We must look here for an extreme act of judgment.

**b. This earthquake was a sign of the coming new heaven & earth: John MacArthur:** Very often in the O. T. when God appeared there was an earthquake. We find Him in Ex. 19:18 appearing on Mount Sinai & the mountain begins to shake. We find another earthquake in 1 Kings 19:11. Another time when God appears in 2 Sam. 22:8 there's an earthquake. In Psalm 18:7 & Psalm 77:18, we find God moving & quaking & shaking the earth. Isa. 29:6; Jer. 10:10, so many different places talk about God coming & shaking the earth. Nahum, that great chapter on the character of God, verses 2 & 5 of chapter 1 describes God as one who makes the earth to shake. Now what is this? Well let me tell you what it is. What is God saying here? You study the prophets & you study the book of Rev. & you will find there is one promise that God has made to this world & that is that someday the world as it now is and the heavens as they now are are going to be shaken. And shaken to the point of destruction. In Revelation as well as in the O. T. prophecy of Isaiah, it tells us that the stars are going to fall, the constellations are going to come apart. The Bible talks about the sun & the moon going out of existence in terms of being lights. It tells about the earth shaking. There will be a great shaking in the final judgment. Why? Because God is going to redo this cursed earth. In the original creation there were no earthquakes. There was nothing to shake. God created a perfect world and a perfect environment in which Adam lived & enjoyed the presence of God in the perfection that God had intended for that paradise to be. And then when Adam sinned, not only was he cursed & his wife cursed but the earth was cursed as well. And the earth to this day is rocking & reeling under the curse. And Rom. 8 says all creation groans, waiting for the release back to, as Milton called it, "Paradise Regained." And the Bible promises some day a new heaven & some day a new earth. Some day there's going to be a time when the earth is the way the earth was supposed to be. Some day there's going to be a time when the usurper, Satan, who has taken over in ruling the earth is going to be deposed, & he will cease being the monarch & Christ will become the monarch. And the earth will no longer be cursed, it will be a glorious new wondrous earth. That earth is beautifully described in the epistle of the Heb. – Heb. 12:26-28: "At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.'"<sup>27</sup> This phrase, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of things that are shaken – that is, things that have been made – in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.<sup>28</sup> Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken . . . " In other words, God's going to shake out of existence the earth that is, "that those things which cannot be shaken may remain, a kingdom which cannot be moved." So God is going to shake this one out of existence & redo a brand new one, a new earth & a new heaven in which Christ will reign supreme as King of Kings & Lord of Lords. You say, well what does all that have to do with what happened at the cross? Just this: When God shook the earth at the death of Christ, I think He was giving the world a taste of what He's going to do in the future when He shakes the earth in the time of the coming of the King Himself. I believe when Jesus died on that cross, He so perfectly accomplished the Father's will, He so earned the right to be the King of the earth . . . I believe He earned the right to do that on the cross. I believe because of His perfect bearing of sin in His own body, because He finished the work of redemption, the Father said, You will be the King of the earth. I will give You the nations for Your footstool. I will give You the earth to rule. All people will bow the knee to You. You will rule the universe, on the earth, under the earth, above the earth, it says in Phil. 2. And I believe shaking the earth at the death of Christ was God's way of guarantying the promise of a renewed world & a renewed universe. Christ had earned that & it would come – it would come.

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### **3. Jesus Died & Rose Again To Abolish Death Forever!**

**Matt. 27:51-53:** And the earth shook, & the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, <sup>53</sup> & coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city & appeared to many.

**a. The earthquake points us to God's victory over death & salvation: Ps. 18:1-9, 46-50:** *To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who addressed the words of this song to the LORD on the day when the LORD rescued him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said:* I love you, O LORD, my strength. <sup>2</sup> The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. <sup>3</sup> I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. <sup>4</sup> The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; <sup>5</sup> the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. <sup>6</sup> In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. <sup>7</sup> Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. <sup>8</sup> Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. <sup>9</sup> He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet . . . <sup>46</sup> The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation – <sup>47</sup> the God who gave me vengeance and subdued peoples under me, <sup>48</sup> who delivered me from my enemies; yes, you exalted me above those who rose against me; you rescued me from the man of violence. <sup>49</sup> For this I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations, and sing to your name. <sup>50</sup> Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever.

**b. The earthquake points us to end of death brought by the law & to the beginning of life brought by the new covenant:** The law brought death. Jesus inaugurated the new covenant which brings life!

**1) The law brought death:** The law is called a ministry of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:9); a ministry of death (2 Cor. 3:7; Rom. 7:10); a ministry of killing (2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 7:9); the law gives the knowledge of sin (Rom.3:20; 7:7); the law brings the curse: **Gal. 3:10:** For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, & do them."

**2) The new covenant brings life: Ezek. 36:26-27:** I will give you a new heart, & a new spirit I will put within you. & I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh & give you a heart of flesh. & I will put my Spirit within you, & cause you to walk in my statutes & be careful to obey my rules. [Jer. 31: God writes His law on our hearts]

**Nick Batzig:** The earthquake at Sinai & the law brought death. The earthquake at the cross & the new covenant bring life!

**John Newton:** Let us love and sing and wonder; Let us praise the Saviors name  
He has hushed the laws loud thunder; He has quenched Mount Sinai's flame  
He has washed us with His blood; He has washed us with His blood  
He has washed us with His blood; He has brought us nigh to God!

**c. These miraculous resurrections from the dead are the fulfillment of prophecy & a foretaste & guarantee of the final resurrection of the dead when Jesus comes back:** Because Jesus died & rose again, we have the sure & certain hope that we shall be raised from the dead!

**Ezek. 37:1-14:** The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come

upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD." <sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." <sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. <sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

**Book of Common Prayer:** UNTO Almighty God we commend the soul of our brother departed, & we commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure & certain hope of the Resurrection unto eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; at whose coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth & the sea shall give up their dead; & the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed, & made like unto His glorious body; according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

- **Jn. 11:25-26:** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection & the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup> & everyone who lives & believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

- **1 Cor. 15:51-58:** Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, & the dead will be raised imperishable, & we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, & this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, & the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, & the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

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Christ Jesus Died, The Earth Did Quake  
The Temple's Curtain Opened Break  
And People From The Dead Awake  
For God, His Son, He Did Forsake  
Christ Bore God's Wrath, The Fiery Lake  
And All Our Sins To Hell He'd Take  
He Crushed That Head, The Evil Snake  
Christ Died And Rose For Us To Make  
A Way To God For His Name's Sake  
Into God's Presence We Partake  
Of Joys That Make Us Shout And Shake  
And One Day Too We'll Rise Awake  
For Death And Sin We'll All Forsake  
To Be With God Our Holy Ache  
For Christ Is All, Make No Mistake  
That's Why The Earth Did Move And Quake!