

Six Miracles Connected with the Cross

Matthew 27:45–54; Mark 15:33–39;
Luke 23:44–47

“And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised” (Matthew 27:51, 52).

God warned the Jews time and time again about rejecting Jesus. There was no excuse for them not to become believers. Jewish leaders knew that Jesus was divine; but, in their hate and blindness, they chose to kill Him. Even Pilate knew who He was and pronounced Him “not guilty” (John 18:38).

Consider what took place before the crucifixion. During the arrest in the garden, when Jesus said, “I am He,” many in the mob drew back and fell on the ground (John 18:6). This should have stopped the whole sordid affair!

Then there was the healing of a servant’s ear! Peter drew his sword and flicked off Malchus’ ear, but Jesus healed it. This was the last miracle for the Jews before Jesus went to the cross. Jesus could manage anything!

We must not forget the miracle that never happened! Jesus said to Peter, "I could ask for legions of angels to help us, but I won't." Read and reread Matthew 26:50–56; Mark 14:46–50; Luke 22:47–53; and John 18:3–12. Jesus used this occasion to present Himself to God as our atoning sacrifice for sin.

Those who do not want to believe, after a time, cannot believe. Why has the world not been convinced by the miracles that happened in connection with the cross?

1. DARKNESS

"When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour" (Mark 15:33; see Matthew 27:45; Luke 23:44). Jesus was on the cross six hours. The first three belonged to the crowd; the last three belonged to God! The darkness was a preview of hell (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6, 13) and a reminder that the One dying was the Son of God.

This darkness was not an eclipse of the sun. An eclipse lasts only a few minutes and cannot happen during a full moon. Passover came during a full moon. The darkness was eerie, providing prevailing quietness, except for the moans of three dying men and the voices of those who were wondering out loud what was happening. The shame of Calvary smothered the sun. Those present could see only darkness.

2. THE VEIL

At 3:00 p.m., Jesus cried with a loud voice. The priests were on duty at the temple. Before their startled eyes, the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies tore from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51a; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45b). God was removing Himself from His earthly

temple. As of this moment, the law of Moses was gone; the Levitical priesthood was gone. No wonder many priests later obeyed the gospel (Acts 6:7).

3. THE EARTHQUAKE

At the same time when the veil was torn, “the earth shook and the rocks were split” (Matthew 27:51b). This earthquake brought a suspense that was surely terrifying. Even Roman soldiers were awed at the earthquake (Matthew 27:54). Rocks, some of the hardest substances on earth, were split! Everything shook except the cross!

4. THE OPENED GRAVES

Earlier, the Jews had demanded a sign from Jesus. God gave them six miracles connected with the cross. The splitting of the rocks was brute force; the opening of the graves was brilliant design (Matthew 27:52, 53). What an unusual earthquake! Only selected graves were opened! “And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts” (Luke 23:48). God was still teaching, warning, and reaching out to the Jews. This also proves that the events on the Day of Pentecost (the beginning of the church in Acts 2) were no accident. Peter began the first gospel sermon, testifying, “. . . as you yourselves know” (Acts 2:22). Before that occasion, God had given them fifty days to think about the cross. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter gave them the solution to their guilt—Christ.

5. THE GRAVE CLOTHES

After the women told the apostles that Jesus had risen from the dead, Peter and John ran to the tomb to see

for themselves. They found only an empty tomb. John looked in and saw evidence of a resurrected Savior: The linen wrappings and face-cloth from Jesus' body were lying there (Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-9). The last thing the enemies wanted was an empty tomb! Had the disciples been removing His body, they would not have disrobed it. Enemies would not have taken the time to disrobe it. The grave clothes were enough evidence for John. He was the first to believe! (See John 20:8.) We, too, must think logically about this!

6. THE RESURRECTED SAINTS

The graves were opened on Friday (Matthew 27:50-53). The resurrected saints¹ did not walk in Jerusalem until Sunday. To remain ceremonially clean, the Jews could not greet their departed loved ones. What a monumental miracle! What would you have done if you had been there?

These six miracles connected with the cross provide evidence that the One crucified was God's dear Son. They give indisputable proof. Whoever believes the Source, that is, the New Testament writings, has to be convinced by these amazing wonders.

*The cross . . .
there is no other way!*

¹"Saints" are those set apart for holy living (see 1 Corinthians 1:2). In the New Testament, all Christians are called "saints."