

# THE MIGHTY MIRACLES OF CALVARY MATTHEW 27

The greatest crime the world has ever witnessed took place on a cross of wood and with carpenter's tools. It was in the words of John Phillips<sup>1</sup> "on a skull shaped hill, on a sunny day outside of Jerusalem nearly 2,000 years ago. - MANKIND MURDERED THEIR MAKER". There on a hill called Calvary in full view of thousands of witnesses, the day the Creator was crucified.

- His name was Jesus.
- He was a peasant carpenter.
- He had carried on an itinerant relief work across all of Israel.
- Thousands, tens of thousands followed, heard and witnessed the mightiest acts ever seen on the planet in history.
- They were fed.
- They were healed.
- Dead were raised.
- Deaf were made to hear and blind to see.
- Lepers were made new and demonized were delivered.

Now He hangs there seemingly helpless. Shouldn't Christ have done something on the cross if He were really God the Son? Yes, and He did. From the cross of wood where He was crucified with carpenters tools, the Maker of Mankind performed some mighty miracles.

- Caught in prayer the evening before, He was arrested.
- Betrayed by a trusted friend with a kiss He was bound and dragged off to a mock trial with phoney witnesses.
- Beaten and mocked, spat upon and reviled He is rejected by His own and sent off to be crucified.

When Christ hung on that cross of wood for you and for me He performed Five mighty miracles from Calvary the day Mankind murdered their Maker:

- He REACHED UP and touched the Sun
- He REACHED OVER and touched the Temple
- He REACHED DOWN and touched the Rocks
- He REACHED UNDER and touched the Graves
- He REACHED IN and touched the Centurions heart!

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<sup>1</sup> Much of this message is derived from an audio tape of a message preached by John Phillips 2/95 in 1st Baptist Jacksonville.

Matthew 27:45-54 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard [that], said, This [man] calleth for Elias. 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled [it] with vinegar, and put [it] on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. 54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. (KJV)

### FIRST, HE REACHED UP AND TOUCHED THE SUN

Matthew 27:45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. (KJV)

- A. On the 4th day of Creation week the Sun was born from the hand of its Creator. The thermonuclear furnace at its core was lit as He flung it off into space to warm and light the planet upon which He was going to create man in His own image.
- B. For 12,235 days during His earthly life that Sun had shined down upon its Maker. It has seen Him turn water into wine, raise a dead little girl to life, feed thousands on grassy hillsides. It has seen Him heal and restore ruined lives deformed bodies and sightless eyes. But now it looks down to see Man murdering its Maker.
- C. The Sun is 864,000 miles in diameter, it contains 835 QUADRILLION CUBIC MILES of intensely hot gasses; 2 OCTILLION Tons; at its core hydrogen is fused into helium and thermonuclear energy at 25 MILLION DEGREES Fahrenheit. How hot is that? Well, a piece of the Sun<sup>2</sup> the size of a cheerio that was in Oklahoma City -- would kill you here in your seat this morning because of the heat radiating from it! And He just reached up and [snap] snuffed it out like a birthday candle.

Now wasn't that a mighty miracle for Christ from the weakness and pain of the Cross He reaches up and just flicked it off? How did He do that? We don't know. It wasn't an eclipse they only last 7 minutes at most and the moon at passover is no where near eclipsing areas. No other explanation than He touched the Sun, A MIGHTY MIRACLE OF CALVARY!

The darkness was overwhelming and unexpected for those at the cross.

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<sup>2</sup> Our Amazing World of Nature, Readers Digest Books, 1969, pp.261-63.

It was like Abraham experienced great darkness in Genesis 15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. (KJV)

Egyptians felt the darkness in Exodus 10:21-23 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness [which] may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. (KJV)

In the coming seven year judgment there will be a darkness that can be felt Revelation 16:10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, (KJV) This time of the Wrath of God is always described as a time of Darkness:

- ✓ Joel 2:10 The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: (KJV)
- ✓ Nahum 1:5-7 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. 6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. 7 The LORD [is] good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. (KJV)
- ✓ Zephaniah 1:15-18 That day [is] a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. 17 And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. 18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land. (KJV)

But this darkness was part of the plan.

- ✓ In Genesis the First thing Jesus did at Creation was to “Let there be Light” - The Work of Creation was done in the LIGHT. But from the Cross He reached up and snuffed out the Light, because the work of Redemption was so horribly costly it had to be done in the Dark. God let no one see the turning of His back upon the Son! As Christ cried Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth

hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (KJV)

- ✓ The crowds had heard the Sadducees and Pharisees when they called for a sign Matthew 16:1-4 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away. (NIV)
- ✓ He had said to His critics in John 8:12-13 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. (KJV) But how true it was now. The darkness that comes when the Light of the world is gone!

The songwriter said:

*Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
and shut her glories in;  
When Christ the mighty Maker died,  
for man the creatures sin.*

At His birth He put a new star in the sky; at His death He snuffed out of the sky our brightest star. What a mighty miracle, what a sign to mankind that they were murdering their Maker. So He reached up and touched the Sun

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NEXT, HE REACHED OVER AND TOUCHED THE TEMPLE

Matthew 27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; (KJV)

Old Testament Worship centered around the Tabernacle and then the Temple. Divinely designed liturgy was carried on for 1,500 nearly unbroken years in the way Moses was told by God to do it on Mt. Sinai.

The epicenter of that worship was the Holy Place. In the front half of it stood the Altar of Incense, Golden Lampstand and Table of Showbread. The room was divided by a curtain. This curtain was actually a finely woven rug 4 inches thick, 60 feet high and 40 feet wide. Massive and towering and declaring one clear message STAY OUT. No natural light ever penetrated its dark depths. Even the light of the ever burning lampstand never reached behind the veil.

In better times the Shekinah Glory of the Presence of God made the Holiest of Holies behind the veil brighter than noon day. In all of Israel's history probably no more than 50 men had ever gone into the holy of holies. David never went in, Daniel and Jeremiah never went in. Only the High Priest and then only once a year.

Inside that room was a box covered with gold, containing the stone tablets of the Law, a pot of manna and Aarons Rod that budded. Above that Ark of the Covenant stood two golden cherubims with wings sheilding the mercy seat. Their faces gazing downward forever focusing upon the blood.

When that day came for the High Priest to pass behind that veil. He was wearing bells on the hem of his garment to let the other priests know he was still alive as he was inside; garbed carefully in the God directed robes and priestly garments. With trembling hands cradling a basin of blood, veiled by a cloud of smoking incense burning in a pot he carried - the High Priest would enter.

Sprinkling the blood on that mercy seat on behalf of all the people of God and hastening out. Why? The only purpose of the Veil was to keep people out of the Holy Presence of God. God was saying I AM HOLY. YOU ARE NOT. STAY OUT!

On the day Christ died can you imagine the scene those officiating priests must have beheld? They came in to trim the lamps, pour a handful of incense over the fire on the altar and change the bread on the Table. Then perhaps at that very moment Christ touched the Veil.

With an unearthly sound that massive curtain was violently torn from top to bottom. Agast, as for the first time in nearly 1,500 years common people looked upon the ark and the mercy seat and God's throne of grace and mercy. As God said ANYONE WHO WISHES MAY COME IN NOW. YOU ARE WELCOME ANYTIME. Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (KJV) Aren't you glad we live on this side of Calvary. He reached up and touched the Sun, He reached over and touched the Temple . . .

THEN, He reached down and touched the Rocks Matthew 27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; (KJV)

At the Palm Sunday Triumphal entry Jesus said to those criticisizing the shouts of Hosanna Luke 19:40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. (KJV)

Here at Calvary, the Greatest moment in History and now no one would cry out His glory. Only days before thousands and tens of thousands thronged Him cruing HOSANNA, and treated Him as a King. But now no one raised a voice in protest of this crime, except one dying thief. Where were they?

1. Bartemaus, He made you see when you shouted after Him on the road to Jericho, why are you so silent now?

2. Lazarus, He raised you from the dead not more than a week ago. Where are you, can't you say anything?
3. Nicodemus, you came one night seeking and found eternal life, stand up and say something.
4. Deaf and mute sons and daughters of Abraham, He loosed your tongues and opened your ears, can't you raise that voice now and glorify Him?
5. Matthew, you left all your career and wealth to follow Him, where are you?
6. Thomas, you bow at His feet and worship Him a few days from now. Can't you look at Him now and cry out MY LORD AND MY GOD! Where are you now?
7. Disciples, He took you everywhere to witness His deity for three years. He calmed the sea, raised the dead, put shining eyes into dark and empty sockets, cast out demons and loved you to the end. Where are you now? Hiding in back alleys and scared to death. Come and say something . . .
8. Peter, you stand at Pentecost barely six weeks from now and declare Acts 2:22-36 "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (NIV) You are ashamed of last night and your denials, aren't you Peter. Can't you speak up for Him?

So since no one else will speak up God picked -

1. a dying thief to seek Him as Jesus the Savior, and cry out REMEMBER ME.
2. a pagan Roman Governor to place over His head the declaration He was the Messiah, Christ.
3. a calloused soldier at the foot of the Cross to confess Him as Lord, the very Son of God.
4. and He reached down and touched the rocks, and they convulsed - CRYING OUT THEIR WORSHIP OF THEIR MAKER.

So He reached up and touched the Sun, He reached over and touched the Temple, He reached down and touched the Rocks . . .

THEN, He reached under and touched the Graves. Matthew 27:52-53 And the graves were opened; 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. (KJV)

- ✓ Note in your Bibles the word MANY. Many saints dead only hours or buried centuries ago, in graves around Israel were touched from the Cross by Jesus.
- ✓ After that great earthquake as people began to go out to survey the damage they noticed something strange. All over Israel from Dan to Beersheba, north to south, top to bottom - graves were popped open. Perhaps they could see bodies or just bones turning to dust. But Jesus had touched the graves.
- ✓ And then on Sunday morning they started to come out of the graves in resurrection bodies and march toward Jerusalem. Can you imagine the uncanny meetings that took place? Out in a field near the cave of Machpelah a farmer was working his field on Sunday morning when he met a man walking out of the cave "Hello" said the stranger. "Hello, do I know you?" said the farmer. "I am Father Abraham, formerly of Ur, most recently from the happy side of Hades . . ." And just like that all over Israel MANY graves opened, many saints raised, many saints set their faces toward Jerusalem. Can you imagine as people ran into Elisha, Joseph and Isaac. Spoke with Jacob, David and Samuel? What a commotion it must have been as the firstfruits of the resurrection of Christ gathered in the Holy City. Why do you think the city turned out to hear Peter?
- ✓ When Paul was preaching to Agrippa Acts 26:26-27 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. (KJV) So MANY were raised and many came to be witnesses of the miracle of Calvary. So He He reached up and touched the Sun, He reached over and touched the Temple, He reached down and touched the Rocks, He reached under and touched the Graves and . . .

FINALLY, He reached in and touched the Centurions heart! Matthew 27:54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. (KJV)

A centurion was trained never to fear. As the most trusted of the soldiers of Caesar's Legions, these were the men who looked death in the face unflinchingly. They would lock their mighty shields in battle and march against countless foes and never fear. Have you ever paused to think about this scene? What amazing events these must have been to make a tough, calloused and hardened centurion to FEAR GREATLY.

This soldier had been born somewhere in the Empire. perhaps his father was a legionaire. He listened to the stories as he grew up about the wonders of Ancient Rome. It nobles, temples, virtues and fearless legionaires. As he grew perhaps his father took him to the Holidays and at an arena he saw gladiators fighting to the death and mighty horse and chariot races.

Then he chose to become one of Caesar's finest and the barracks became his home. He was taught to discipline his body, to obey orders and to fight without fear. He learned to kill, to drink and to curse by the gods. He was calloused and hard. A SOLDIER OF ROME. As he distinguished himself in his duties he rose to become a leader of a hundred, a Centurion.

One day on the bulletin board of his barracks and notice was posted dispatching him to the most despised corner of the Empire - Palestine. But not the lovely coastal port of Roman Caesarea, no of all places on earth he was being sent to Jerusalem. A city seething with religious fanaticism and zealots and ready to explode at any moment. A place where Rome was not respected nor obeyed. He served Caesar in Jerusalem.

One morning the Roman Govenor Pilate summoned him to his palace. "Take these three and crucify them and report back when they are dead." Who were they? It didn't matter. 30,000 had already been crucified. It was just a job. One of them thought he was some kind of a King. Well we will show Him what Rome thinks of rival kings.

But now its 3 PM Matthew 27:45-54 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard [that], said, This [man] calleth for Elias. 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled [it] with vinegar, and put [it] on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. 50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. 54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying,

Truly this was the Son of God.

So He He reached up and touched the Sun,  
He reached over and touched the Temple,  
He reached down and touched the Rocks,  
He reached under and touched the Graves

and finally  
He reached in and touched the Centurions heart!

THAT IS THE GREATEST MIRACLE OF ALL BECAUSE THAT IS THE  
ONE HE IS STILL DOING!

I have often wondered what it was like when he went home after this tour of duty.  
People came up to him and said you are different. What happened? I can hear  
him say:

I met a man at a place called Calvary.  
He was dying on a cross of wood.  
That man was GOD.  
And that God changed my life!

Hallelujah what a Savior!

# Man of Sorrows

Have you met Jesus? Has He changed your life?