

# The Rending of the Veil

Matthew 27.

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## Part Fourth. LATER MINISTRY.

The thought more particularly before my mind is that which we find from verses 50 to 54. There are three things to be noticed here as immediately following the death of our Lord as of a remarkable character. The first thing is rending the veil; second, the graves opening; and third, the centurion's confession of Him, not as the Son of Abraham, but as Son of God.

I should like to look at the truth connected with rending the veil as being connected with the religion of the flesh; not only Judaism, but all of man's religion on the earth. Man had proposed a place where he could meet God. God had to hide Himself behind a curtain. In connection with man as a sinner, his thought was that he had something to do, and this thought was nourished by a system of sacrifices which God gave him to offer. When Christ was there the curtain was hanging across really. The way into the holiest was not yet made manifest.

That was one thing under the former dispensation; but there were two other things. The real character of God and of man was not yet revealed. When the Lord was there He was the perfect expression of God, but not the expression of God dealing with the sinner. But we get that in these two things — the cry, and the power to lay down life, and to take it up again. The moment that was done the veil was rent, a thing unheard of before, and the Jews were troubled beyond measure. Had the veil ever been rent from top to bottom, and the holy place been laid open to common eyes? No. And this was a thing that so troubled the Jews. But then *there* came out a full revelation of the character of God, and the character of man as a sinner. Christ died upon the cross, and drank the cup of wrath. There was such a revelation of His character as God had never revealed before. He had never presented Himself as One who had found an all-sufficient sacrifice. There was the blessed One on the cross, and here might be found the expression of God's unutterable hatred against sin. The moment He has received the judgment due to our sins it comes out. God is no longer hidden, but is revealed to us just as He is in perfect light — a God of inexorable holiness, having judged the sin, and able to deal with the sinner. And, on the other hand, we have the passing away of everything belonging to the system of religion built on earth.

Where is God to be found now? In heaven. The Holy Ghost is come down; but He guides us to heaven. Do we find anything to show that man has anything to do? No. We see the throne of God, and the One who died sitting there, "the Just for the unjust," the perfect revelation of God's love. No cloud, no veil, no question about any part of His claims upon us not being answered; all is disclosed, and there is nothing to show that the creature has anything to do before getting the perfect value of this sacrifice. If our hearts have ever in faith turned to Calvary, and looked at Him, crying out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" we find that God has done the only thing that could bring us inside the veil. His having borne our sins in His own body on the tree tells what the sin is that brought Him there, and what God's thought of it is. We never could turn round, and see Him utterly forsaken, without feeling that God has expressed there what we never should have thought of or understood.

In Hebrews 10, if we take the rending of the veil as presented there, we find two things — the veil that shut in the light of God, and its being rent to let man into the light; and next, all belonging to man's religion done away with. Christ is gone up to heaven, and all that man has got to do is to come in by the way Christ has opened — by the rending of His flesh, by His dying "the Just for the unjust." It is that which gives the believer perfect peace. I have not got to do *anything*. Will God come off His own high around? No. I have to do with Him in heaven as the One housed up there with His own Lamb. That Lamb being there, shows Him out as a God who has done for sinners what no human heart could ever have conceived. He is there perfect in His peace, and we have got to do with Him in His own peace in connection with His own Son, and that gives my soul *perfect rest*. Have you got that perfect rest? Can you say, "I have the same thought that God has about His Son"? His thoughts, of course, are much larger, but they are the same, because they are in connection with the work His Son did when He cried out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," and with His being gone up to the right hand of God. Can you say, "I understand what God's glory is"? I never could have known it if He had not revealed it; and this is what He has revealed — that the throne of the eternal Father has become the throne where the Nazarene is sitting, the One who died "the Just for the unjust." I can turn to that Christ, and say, "Nothing can disturb me. That glorified Christ in God's presence is the very ground of my peace."

How did Christ get to this throne? Through death. If He had not died, He might have been there alone, but never in any connection whatever with poor sinners. He did *die*, and there the glory of God shines forth. Directly Christ died, it came out that human religion will not do; the veil of the temple is rent from top to bottom, and then in connection with the same death all the religion of human nature is stripped off entirely. This temple even will not do.

Next, see the triumphant power of Him who died over him who had the power of death. Some tremble at the thought of death; for not only is death the wages of sin, but a prison-house where the wages are to be paid. But it is not so with a simple-hearted Christian. He says, "If you talk to me about death, I will talk to you about *Christ's* death." It was the counsels of God, that through His death He should nullify and bring to nothing that which had power to make me tremble. Did Paul tremble when he was balancing in his mind whether he should stay, or go to be present with the Lord? The power of death over him was destroyed because Christ had died. The rending of the veil was a most remarkable seal put on the death of Christ. God said by it, "The only way of approach into the holiest is the death of my Son." The veil is rent; all expression of hindrance split from top to bottom.

When Christ gave up the ghost the earth quaked. There was nothing to be surprised at that creation's Lord dying on the cross should cause the foundations of the earth to shake. But the *graves* were opened; death is swallowed up in victory. "O grave, where is thy victory?" The power of Satan is expressed in death and the grave; but now the prison-house is opened. The grave has lost its power of retaining the prisoner; and not only that, but many saints arose, and appeared unto many. But they did not arise until He, that Master of death, had again taken His life. There was the complete manifestation of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only over Satan, but also in bearing the judgment of God about sin. When the Lord Jesus was in the world His power over death was displayed. He could raise Lazarus and others. It was the power of Christ as Prince of life. If I say, "I believe in the resurrection from the dead," there is power given me to believe in some *One* who is the Resurrection and the Life. This doctrine points to a glory in Christ quite beyond all other glory. I know that I shall rise because He rose. There is the expression of my fellowship with Christ. Why did the bodies of these saints come forth? Because God would not separate His people from Him in resurrection. His own people should first be raised up in blessing. He would not have it hidden that He was raised from the dead. "Ah,

Satan, you can do nothing! You cannot keep the prisoners. The prison door bursts open, and they escape." Satan can do nothing on the other side. God has identified me with Christ. Because He rose I shall rise. We may look at these as first-fruits — fruit in a peculiar sense, as the expression of God's delight in Him. Looking at these bodies of the saints, we may look at their rising as a stamp put by God on the resurrection of His Son. He would not let Him come up from the grave alone.

The third thing is the remarkable confession of the centurion. We get the faith of several Gentiles shining out with peculiar beauty to refresh the Lord's heart. One said, "Speak the word only" — a faith so simple, a faith that went right home to a certain glory of Christ's; and it draws forth from Him, not only answering power put forth, but an expression of wonder. He did not find many Jews with such faith. So here the faith of the centurion lays hold of Christ, — and his confession comes forth, "Truly this is the Son of God."

There is no knowing God save as He is revealed in Christ. Christ is in heaven. We have not got to look where to find Him. There must be a great stripping of self before we get enjoyment; but a person cannot now say, "What have I got to do before I come to Christ?" When he has come, there will be a great deal to get rid of not in accord with Christ in heaven. But that has nothing to do with what he has in the death of Christ. Do you recognize Christ as the accepted sacrifice? Do you take the death of Christ as the measure of what God sees the sin in your heart to be? If you did there would be a ceasing from self, and victory over everything. "If God be for us, who can be against us"? If I have got Christ in heaven, to what point of blessing is He hindered from moving me? I am in connection with Himself as the Man of sorrows, with Himself who went down to the grave, with Himself risen alive for evermore at the right hand of God. There we find in Christ so presented our place before God. God has put a stamp on the death of His Son; He died, He is risen and ascended, and I know Him as the One who bore my sins on the cross, as the One who revealed the glory of God to me. We know Him, and have confessed in the light that He is the Son of God.