

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE CROSS?

Matthew 27:45-60

Introduction: Every Christian is very familiar with the Easter story, how Jesus was taken prisoner, beaten, judged, condemned, forced to carry a cross as far as He could, then was nailed to that cross, then placed between two thieves and while there, many came by and mocked and ridiculed Him and the soldiers who had crucified Him gambled for his clothes. What some may not be aware of is that Jesus didn't die just once on that cross, He died twice and while on the cross, three miracles took place.

I. JESUS DIED TWO DEATHS WHILE ON THE CROSS

1. (v46) - "**...My God, my God...**" Twice Jesus said those words, once to God, the Father and once to the Holy Spirit for both had left Jesus. He was alone! Never had this happened before, the trinity separated as this.
 - Adam died twice, remember? Spiritually when he disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden tree and then again physically at the end of his earthly life.
2. Picture a giant pile of every human's sins, which Jesus defeated, destroyed and paid for, all our sins.
 - We cannot do a single thing about our sins, however we can accept what Jesus did for us.
 - **Romans 5:8** - "**..Christ died for us...**" It was not His physical death, but His SPIRITUAL death. Everybody dies physically, but only Jesus could die spiritually for nobody is born with their "spirit" since Adam and Eve sinned.
3. When Jesus cried out "**tetelestai**" He was still alive physically, still had His blood, so WHAT WAS FINISHED? What had Jesus done before He died physically?
 - When Jesus had cried out "**..Eloi, Eloi, lamasabathanai...**" He had died SPIRITUALLY. He had become the very thing that God, the Father detested - SIN. "**...the soul that sinneth shall surely die...!**" By becoming the very thing God hated, God and the Holy Spirit had to withdraw from Jesus. ALONE! Jesus died His FIRST DEATH.
4. It is not Jesus' physical blood that takes away our sins, that saves for there is no magic in His bodily blood that saves.
 - The Old Testament sacrifices of animals, taking their blood into the Holy of Holies was just a shadow, a picture of what Jesus was to do.
 - "There is a Fountain Filled With Blood" speaks of Jesus' blood, His work, His sacrifice, His death, His conquering Satan, sin and the grave.
5. Jesus spoke again, "**...I thirst...**" Imagine the creator of all things being thirsty? Jesus needed to wet His lips for He had something else to say.
 - "**...TETELESTAI...!**" - IT IS FINISHED! Jesus had finished what He had come for and yet He was still alive! He had paid for every sin of the human race, Jesus had died SPIRITUALLY! Now His body would go to the grave and His soul to the place of the dead (hades) where He would "preach" to those there.
 - Jesus had died spiritually and physically.

II. THREE MIRACLES HAPPENED UPON JESUS' PHYSICAL DEATH ON THE CROSS

1. (v51) - "*... the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.*"
 - The blue, purple and scarlet with embroidered cherubim decorating the panels, having 72 twisted cords made of 24 separate cords of blue, purple and scarlet, 32 feet wide and 60 feet high, so heavy and thick that oxen could not pull it apart, was ripped from top to bottom.
 - It took 100 priests to raise the veil in place and it had hung for centuries in the tabernacle/temple separating the Holy of Holies from the eyes of all except the High Priest who entered once a year to offer sacrifice.
 - All this secrecy and wonder ended suddenly as God split the veil that had been a barrier between God and men, making it now a doorway. Every person could now have access directly to God.
 - The Jewish age had come to an end, no more sacrifices, no need for High Priests, whosoever could now walk right up to God.

2. "*...and the earth quaked and the rocks were split...*"- 16 Roman soldiers, hard, experienced men were converted by what they saw and heard, convinced that Jesus was the Son of God for they had seen a thief on a cross next to Jesus saved, they had heard Jesus forgive everyone, and they had felt the ground shake and seen the rocks split apart and said, "*...this is not the usual thing.*"

3. (vv52-54)- Graves of saints were opened and they appeared to many. Imagine meeting somebody you had helped bury and hear them tell about Jesus.
 - The soldiers were convinced, and converted saying, "*...truly this was the Son of God...*"

4. While on the Cross, before ever being taken down, Simon of Cyrene was converted, a Centurion and 16 soldiers were converted, a hardened thief while on the cross next to Jesus was converted, and Joseph of Aramathea was converted.
 - Even while nailed to the Cross, Jesus saved.
 - vv 55-60

CONCLUSION:

1. Let every Christian be aware that Jesus died TWO deaths! Willingly, deliberately, so that every person could have his/her sins removed and then be restored to God as God wants.
2. Only in Jesus is there the promise of everlasting life.
3. Only Jesus has satisfied God's demand for all sin to be paid for.
4. There is no other way to the Father except through Jesus Christ.
5. Jesus is the "way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Him."