

THE MIRACULOUS SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

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Scriptures:

John 1

1 Peter 1

Isaiah 53

Matthew 27:50-52

Luke 23:40-46

Colossians 2:13-15



This week we are entering Holy week on the church calendar – the week we remember the death of our Lord Jesus Christ – the perfect Lamb of God. The One who knew no sin, yet was willing to become sin for us so that we might be redeemed when we turn to Him in penitence and faith.

John chapter 1 tells us

"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own (the Jews) but they did not receive Him. But all who did receive Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God."

These words are followed by a verse I etched on my heart many years ago, *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth..." (v.14).*

The sacrifice of Christ was planned long before the world began. I encourage you to pause awhile to read 1 Peter 1 which tells the story and purpose of salvation much more clearly than I ever could.

During the last few years I have come to see so clearly the absolute wonder that we are loved SO completely by our Heavenly Father. That seeing us in our weakness and sin, He was willing to send His own precious Son to suffer the punishment we deserve – sacrificing His own life that we might receive salvation through His sacrificial Blood. I've heard many discussions on who killed Jesus. Was it the Jews? Was it the Roman's? Was it Judas Iscariot? Was it Satan? The truth is it was none of these. Isaiah 53 gives us the answer. Jesus was *"smitten by God..... pierced for our transgressions..... crushed for our iniquities..... and upon Him was laid the chastisement that brought us peace..."*

As I read those words my heart breaks because I see the immensity of God's love for each one of us, even though we don't deserve it. Our Heavenly Father was willing to put His own precious Son, His spotless sacrificial Lamb, through so much unimaginable torture for my sin. As I picture our dear Lord alone in the garden of Gethsemane, sweating blood drops as He faced His mission, begging His Father that this cup might be taken from Him, yet adding, *"yet not my will but Yours"*, I am undone and my feeble words are replaced by deep heartfelt tears of repentance.

There has never been a greater sacrifice than the sacrifice of Jesus yet we race on looking forward to Sunday whilst missing the amazing accomplishment Jesus won on the cross. Scripture tells us so clearly that the real battle against sin and evil was won on the cross. Therefore let us linger awhile and grasp

exactly what happened as our dear Lord died. The moment He cried, *"It is finished"* and breathed His final breath, six amazing miracles took place. In Matthew 27 we read:

1. Jesus chose the moment of His earthly death, by yielding His Spirit to His Father.(v.50)
2. The temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom(v.51).
3. The earth quaked.(v.51)
4. The rocks were split.(v.51)
5. The tombs were opened.(v.52)
6. Many bodies of the saints came out of the tombs alive.(v.52)

In Luke's account we read of two other miracles (Luke 23:40-46)

1. One of the two criminals either side of Jesus suddenly admitted that he deserved to die, but Jesus was perfect in every way. He asked Jesus, *"Remember me when you come into Your Kingdom."* Jesus replied, *"Today you will be with me in Paradise."*
2. Total darkness fell upon the land for the final three hours before Jesus offered up His spirit.

The crucifixion of Jesus was the most undeserved death the world has ever witnessed. The spotless, sinless, precious Lamb of God took my place (and yours) when He willingly sacrificed His own life in order to secure salvation for every repentant sinner. God made man from the dust of the earth. As the first drops of pure sacrificial Blood fell to earth, salvation was secured and Satan was defeated spectacularly! Don't rush away too quickly. Instead, open your eyes to see that Jesus fought and won the battle against evil as He died. See what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians (2:13-15), *"And you, being dead in your trespasses, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."*

Prayer: Precious Lord, As I ponder once more upon all that You were willing to go through at Calvary, bearing the punishment I deserved, I fall on my knees in gratitude for it is here that I behold the beauty of Your holiness beckoning me onward toward Your eternal city. Oh Lord of my righteousness, may I never again wander too quickly from the wonder of all You achieved through your sacrifice on the cross, and may I ever be thankful. Amen

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Yj__8EPmPo