

4 **Awesome Miracles That Happened When Jesus Died**

For centuries Christians have called the day that Jesus died on the cross “Good Friday,” because on that day, the Lamb of God was sacrificed to pay for our sins. It was unquestionably a good day for those who believe in Christ. It was the day our Savior laid His life down for us, enduring the cruelty of a Roman crucifixion and taking the burden of our sins on His body so we could escape eternal judgment.

But when we commemorate the events of Jesus’ death, we tend to fast-forward to Sunday because we love happy endings. We celebrate the resurrection, as we should, but sometimes our big gatherings, Easter brunches and egg hunts distract us from grasping the full impact of what happened on the cross.

This year, before I move on to Resurrection Sunday, I plan to hit the pause button, so I can spend more time pondering the events of that dark Friday.

We tend to romanticize the Easter story, painting it with pastel pinks, blues and yellows.

But the true story of Christ’s death and resurrection was not sweet or serene. It was dark and fearsome, a palette of dried blood, rusty nails and a black sky. It was marked by strange atmospheric patterns, eerie noises and geological upheaval.

When Jesus died, the earth experienced the most dramatic power outage in history. God shook the foundations of the planet to show us that His Son had purchased salvation and forever triumphed over death and darkness.

Good Friday is the perfect time to remember the strange miracles surrounding that moment. Four astonishing things happened when Jesus died:

The shroud of darkness. Luke says darkness fell “over the whole land” (Luke 23:44b, NASB1995). Some theologians have assumed that a solar eclipse occurred, but such events don’t last three hours. Bible scholar J. Hampton Keathley III noted that the Greek words used in the phrase “darkness fell” imply that this was a sudden event rather than a gradual one.

This darkness was not the kind of weather phenomenon caused by storm clouds, dust or volcanic ash. “It was just like someone had turned out the lights,” Keathley says. The church historian Tertullian recorded that secular writers mentioned a strange period of darkness that occurred on that day. How far-reaching was the darkness? It’s possible that the sun’s light was blocked all across the globe. Just as God brought a thick darkness on Egypt during the time of Moses, God judged sin and proved Satan to be the ultimate loser.

The rending of the temple’s veil. Matthew tells us “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Matt. 27:51a). At the moment Jesus announced, “It is finished,” from the cross, suddenly the thick curtain that separated men from God was ripped down the middle by an invisible power. Bible commentator Matthew Henry wrote of that holy moment: “Now, at the death of Christ, all was laid open, the mysteries were unveiled. ... The rending of [the veil] signified that Christ by His death opened a new way to God.”

The earthquake. The timing of this event was not a coincidence. Right after Jesus died, “The earth shook and the rocks were split” (Matt. 27:51b). Henry points out that this was not just a local geological event—it was felt in adjacent countries. There were no seismic instruments back then. But we know from the biblical record that the epicenter of this quake was a bloody, hallowed plot of ground known as Golgotha.

The voice of Jesus literally split the rocks. “The earthquake,” Henry wrote, “signified the mighty shock, nay, the fatal blow now given to the devil’s kingdom. So vigorous

was the assault Christ now made upon the infernal powers, that the earth trembled.”

The power of sin was broken. The greatest earthshaking miracle happened when Jesus spilled His blood at Calvary. He was our substitute. He died in our place. Isaiah said: “But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him” (Isa. 53:6b). Jesus did not deserve to die. Yet in the most mind-boggling transaction in history, God transferred all the guilt and shame of the world’s sin to the innocent Passover Lamb.

Take time to marvel at what happened on that wondrous cross on Good Friday. Sin has been judged; Satan has been defeated; your sin has been paid for; and the way to God’s presence has been opened for you. {eo}

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