**The Death of Our Savior**

**Introduction:**

Jesus had been on the cross for three long, agonizing hours. Those passing by had ridiculed Him. Chief priests, scribes, and elders had mocked Him, soldiers had taken the last few things He owned, and the thieves even reviled Him. Yet He never replied with a harsh word. His love for lost humanity knew no bounds.

**Text:** Matthew 27:45-56

**Body:**

**Exegesis**

Verse 45 “Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.” NKJV The land was lit with sunlight during Jesus’ first three hours on the cross. Then as though the sun was dying with Him, the light was taken away from 12:00 – 3:00 p. m. At His birth, God filled the heavens with angels rejoicing. At His death, God filled the heavens with darkness. Why were there three hours of light followed by three hours of darkness? God only knows. Possibly it was God the Father sending judgment upon a world who did not receive the Light whom He sent. The blindness of man’s spiritual senses would be matched by the physical blindness caused by this midday night. A darkness surpassed only by that which awaits those who do not believe that truly this was the Son of God.

Verse 46 “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lamasabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” NKJV At the end of the ninth hour [3:00 p.m.], a cry of anguish is issued by Christ. This was fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. (Psalm 22:1) “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?” NKJV He is not reproaching God or accusing Him. Jesus was bearing the sins of the world in His own body. (II Corinthians 5:21a) “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us.” NKJV Jesus was doing this in a way that the Father was not. In one sense He was carrying that enormous burden alone. He became a curse for us. (Galatians 3:13) “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’),” NKJV

Verses 47-49 “Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, ‘This Man is calling for Elijah!’ Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, ‘Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save him.’” NKJV Jesus had been on the cross for six hours. The swollen tongue, exhaustion, and loss of blood would have made His speech more difficult to understand. There is a close similarity between the word Eli and the Greek name for Elijah. Read John 19:28. “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’ ” Even His thirst was prophesied – “. . .for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink” Psalm 69:21b Sour wine[vinegar] was placed on some type of spongy material which would hold a liquid and put on the end of a hyssop stalk. Jesus drinks, but it has no anesthetic-like effect the first time. The crowd wanted to see if Elijah would actually come and save Him.

Verse 50 “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.” John records – “ ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” (John 19:30b) NKJV Christ’s part in man’s redemption was complete. His work on earth was done. Luke records (Luke 23:46b) “Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.” The text makes it clear that He voluntarily died.

Verses 51-53 “Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” NKJV “Veil” – The heavy curtain which hung between the Holy Place and Most Holy Place separated them. Into the Most Holy only the High Priest could go once a year to offer blood for himself and for the sins of the people. “Top to bottom” – as God would do it, not as man would. So when Jesus died, the veil was torn signifying that the way into the Holy of Holies [heaven], which had been closed, was now open. (Hebrews 10:19-22) “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” NKJV In addition, an earthquake occurred. The rocks in front of the tombs were broken up, thus opening the graves. Many saints were resurrected after Christ’s resurrection, went into Jerusalem and many people saw them. So little is said about such an amazing event. Just as the bodies of many saints were raised at His death, so the bodies of all will be raised when He comes again. (John 5:28-29) “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” NKJV

Verse 54 “So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’ ” NKJV Jesus’ actions on the cross, His prayer for His enemies, and the events accompanying His death convinced the centurion that, first of all, “this was a righteous man.” (Luke’s account) Faith and repentance are seen here. Second, that “truly this was the Son of God.” It shows his belief in Christ’s origin, His divine character. Like the centurions of Matthew 8 and Acts 10, this Roman’s faith was greater than many who also had better opportunities. Since he knew Jesus to be a righteous man and that He claimed to be the Son of God; then He must be the Son of God.

Verses 55-56 “And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.” NKJV First read Luke 23:48. “And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned.” NKJV Many who had witnessed these events began to experience a change of heart – one which led some to repent and be baptized on the Day of Pentecost. Three women are specifically mentioned as seeing these events; three of four whom had already been mentioned. Jesus’ mother had possible already gone home with John, not being able to endure the sight of the cross any longer.

**Invitation:** What does the image of the cross bring to your mind? - **-** That you have never confessed Christ and been buried with Him in baptism? **-** That He has done so much for you and you have done so little for His body, the church? Why don’t you make things right?

Bobby Stafford April 16, 2017 [Evening]