

## TUESDAY 19 April 2022 "Torn Veil" Matt. 27:45-51; Hebrews 10:11-24

Good morning my "Walking with Jesus" friends on this Tuesday after Easter,

Already, is Easter weekend drifting into the past so quickly, even though it's only been two days? *Time moves on so fast, doesn't it, and already you are probably looking ahead to the next event on your calendar, am I right?*

But join me back in Jerusalem, about 2000 years ago, on that Tuesday after Passover/Easter weekend which had been so monumental for Jesus and His close friends, and the religious establishment in Jerusalem. This had been Passover weekend, the biggest, most significant of all the annual Jewish festivals. People had come from all over the region, some traveling many days to get here for the Passover weeklong celebration. People were packing up now, starting their homeward journeys, most of them oblivious to what had happened with Jesus. But for some in Jerusalem, especially the Pharisees and other religious leaders, they had hardly slept for the past three or four nights because of the events surrounding Jesus.

Come, let's go into the Temple where there is an assembled cluster of these leaders, along with the scholars and teachers of the law, as well as many of the priests who work every day in the Temple courtyards. *They are all staring at something remarkable, something unexplainable.* Look there, do you see it? *The thick, heavy curtain that separates the two sections of this holy room inside the Temple... the Holy Place and the Most Holy place is TORN!* Not cut but TORN... and not all the way. It's still connected by a little bit at the bottom, proving it was torn TOP to BOTTOM! So many questions... When and how did it happen? Who did it? WHY? What does it mean? This Temple was first constructed more than 500 years before when the Jewish exiles had returned from Babylon with Nehemiah! That story is told in both the Old Testament books of Nehemiah & Ezra. While King Herod the Great had completed a massive renovation project of this 5 centuries old Temple and the temple mount, about 40 years before, this veil had been untouched for a very long time... until now!

Matthew gives us some of the answers in his description of what took place Friday of Passover/Easter weekend during the horrible crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus had been nailed to that cross about 9am, after a terrible beating and trials before the Jewish Sanhedrin leaders and Pilate, the Roman Governor. While guiltless of any crime, Jesus was crucified on the hill of execution, Golgotha, outside the Jerusalem city walls.

It was the most horrific of all forms of torture and eventual death. About noon an unexplainable darkness came over the city of Jerusalem. Matthew tells us it happened about the time Jesus, in great agony, cried out from the cross: **"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"** (Matt. 27:46)

As Jesus was taking upon Himself the sins of the world, in His atonement death, He was paying the redemption, ransom payment required by God for our sin, as God the Father was pouring out His wrath for sin, upon His Son on the cross. Paul wrote it this way: **"The righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood."** (Romans 3:22-25) Paul further explained what Jesus accomplished for us in His death when he wrote: **"Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now, God has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through His death to present you holy and blameless in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation..."** (Colossians 1:21,22) Do you hear that my friends? *We, sinful, evil people can be presented by Jesus to God the Father as holy, blameless, free from any accusation, as God applies the redemption, atonement death of Jesus to our sin debt!* It's something we could never earn by any amount of effort or payment of any sum of money. Only Jesus can pay our sin debt price and still live!

As Jesus hung on the cross, the separation due to sin, of God the Father and God the Son, was something never before experienced in history. Jesus and His Father had always been holy, sinless, perfect, living in perfect relationship with each other. *But on that cross, Jesus was experiencing the 'perish' separation we humans experience when we live or die in unrepentant sin, (2 Peter 3:9) since our sin separates us from Holy God. God the Father was experiencing the separation which repels Him when human beings, made in His image, choose sin over relationship with Him.*

Perfect, sinless God the Son, Jesus, was covered with our sin as He hung on the cross as our atonement sacrifice. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says: **"God made Him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."** It's the great divine exchange. Jesus took upon Himself our sin, and then the full wrath of God in punishment for our sin, *so that when we repent of our sin, God can place upon us the righteousness, the holiness of Jesus, for our sin has been atoned for in Jesus' sin debt payment.*

When that very powerful spiritual transaction was taking place on the cross, God Himself TORE that Temple veil top to bottom! Matthew writes it this way: **"When Jesus cried out again in a loud voice [from the cross] He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."** (Matt. 27:50,51) So that answers the questions WHEN the veil was torn, and WHO tore it. But WHY was the Temple curtain torn? What did it mean that Easter weekend, and what is its significance for you and me today, 2000 years later?

Do you remember the purpose of the Temple veil my friends? This Temple was a permanent structure made in the very same design as the first Tabernacle, designed by God Himself and constructed by Moses and the Hebrews at Mount Sinai. (Exodus 25-40)

*God called that Tabernacle a 'Tent of Meeting' for God promised He would come down from heaven to be among His people, and He would meet with His people at this "Tent of Meeting".* (Exodus 29:45) The "Tent" was one large room divided into two parts. The outer room was called the "holy place" for what took place in that room every day was HOLY. The priests came into the holy place several times a day to meet with God and pray for the people and listen to God's instructions for the people. Behind the curtain, the smaller room was called the "Most Holy Place" and in that room was only the **Ark of the Covenant**. God's Presence was there above the lid of the Ark, which was called the 'mercy seat' because once per year the High Priest entered behind this curtain to meet with God and plead for God's mercy on the people of Israel. Only the High Priest could enter the "Most Holy Place" and only that one time per year known as the "Day of Atonement" (Leviticus 16)

Now, if God Himself tore the curtain why? Oh, my friends this is hugely important. *God tore the veil because He was opening the "Most Holy Place" and the "mercy seat" of God. No longer would the Presence of God be restricted ONLY to the High Priest and only one day per year. Through the atonement death of Jesus on the cross, the "Most Holy Place" was opened to anyone, at any time, and our access to God Himself was earned by Jesus' full payment of our sin atonement price, His death!*

Listen to Hebrews 10 ***"Day after day the priest stands and performs his religious duties, again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Jesus had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God... Therefore since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great priest [Jesus] over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith... let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. (Heb. 10:11-23) "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*** (Hebrews 4:16)

Oh, my friends, now we understand WHY the Temple curtain was torn by God from top to bottom! *God was fully accepting Jesus' atonement death payment for our sins, and therefore the Throne room of God is open at all times to any person repenting of their sin, and God is ready to forgive.* John wrote: **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** (1 John 1:9)

So, my friends, on this Tuesday after Easter, are you celebrating the TORN Veil? *Torn by God when Jesus paid the full atonement sin price, so anyone, anytime, from anywhere, is welcomed with direct access to God, because Jesus Himself has paid our right of entry into God's Throne Room!* It's incredible, isn't it? So that leaves us with one question. . . how often are you and I responding to Jesus' invitation and entering God's Throne Room?? Why not right now my friends? Please take some time right now to thank God for tearing the veil and opening His Throne room to you! Here's a worship song to help us...

**Today's Scripture is Matthew 27:45-51; Hebrews 10:11-24.**