

The Last Three Hours

📖 Matthew 27:45-56

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Last time we looked at the first three hours of Christ's crucifixion in Matt 27:31-44. Tonight we will look at the last three hours. As for the first three hours, in 27:31 Jesus had just been scourged. The reference to Him being led away to be crucified occurred about 9am Friday morning. Initially He carried the upper beam of the cross out of the Praetorium, but His condition left Him unable to carry it very far. Therefore, in 27:32, a man of Cyrene, a passerby named Simon, was pressed into service to bear the cross. Mark tells us this man had two sons, Rufus and Alexander, who apparently became Christians. Paul, in Romans, seems to have known Rufus as well as his mother. Joining these passages, we think that Simon was influenced greatly by carrying Jesus' cross, came to faith and passed this faith on to his family. In 27:33, they arrived at the place called Golgotha, which is the Aramaic term meaning "Place of a Skull." This is probably not a topographical reference to the shape of the earth but a name for a common place of crucifixion. It may have been at the location where *The Church of the Holy Sepulcher* was built in the 4th century. There is early tradition that this was the place and it meets the textual requirements of being near the city, a quarry, a cistern, a garden and along a major road. But we still do not know for sure. What we do know for sure is that in verse 34 when they arrived they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall, and this fulfilled the prophecy of Ps 69:21. After tasting it He was unwilling to drink it, but preferred to have all His senses while doing His work on the cross. At that time, they stripped Him, pierced His wrists with 5-7" tapered iron spikes into the horizontal beam, and hoisted Him up upon the vertical beam. Then they placed His left foot over His right and pierced both with a single 5-7" iron spike into the vertical beam. Technically, at that time He was crucified. It was probably round 10-11am. In 27:35, the Roman soldiers assigned to Him divided up His garments among themselves and cast lots for His tunic. This fulfilled the prophecy of Ps 22:18. In 27:36 note is made that the soldiers sat down and continually kept watch over Him to ensure that no one stole His body and to make sure that He died. In 27:37 Pilate had the charge the Jews made against Him written in three languages and placed above Him, which read, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." As people passed in and out of the city they read this statement. This came to the attention of the Jewish leaders who asked Pilate to write, "HE SAID I AM KING OF THE JEWS." But Pilate said, "What I have written I have written." In 27:38 two true criminals were crucified alongside of Him. This fulfilled the prophecy of Isa 53:12, that He would be numbered with the transgressors. In 27:39 the mocking and wagging of the head fulfilled prophecy of Ps

22:7. In 27:41-42 the mocking of the religious leaders fulfilled prophecy of Ps 22:8. And during the first three hours, in 27:44, the two criminals crucified alongside of Him were hurling insults at Him. That concludes the first three hours. Tonight we will look at the last three hours so that the total time from His departure from the Praetorium until His death was about six hours.

Matt 27:45 **Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour.** The reference to the **sixth hour** is according to the Jewish reckoning of time which began at 6am. Therefore, **the sixth hour** was 12 noon. The sun was directly overhead so we would expect it to be very bright, but we are told that **darkness fell upon all the land.** The sun was strangely blocked out **until the ninth hour**, which is 3pm. So for three hours a strange darkness covered **the land.** **Darkness** signifies judgment. The **land** which became dark was **the** promised **land** of Israel. The rest of the earth remained light. The scene recalls the ninth plague of the Exodus, when a thick darkness fell upon all the land of Egypt while it remained light in Goshen. Perhaps the significance of the darkness upon all the land of Israel is that Israel was coming under judgment for rejecting their King. But probably the significance extends beyond judgment upon Israel to Jesus who was being judged as He took upon Himself the sins of the whole world. Barbieri said, "In this period of darkness Jesus became the Sin-offering for the world (John 1:29; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18) and as such was forsaken by the Father."¹ It was these three hours that He agonized over in the Garden of Gethsemane, saying "Father, if possible, let this cup pass from Me, yet not My will, but Thy will be done." He had not looked forward to this time but He was fully willing to go through it in obedience to the Father. It was during this time then, that He died a spiritual death, separation from the Father. The separation was judicial in nature. The Father had to turn away from Him while the penalty for our sin fell was being borne by Him. For three hours the Lamb of God was taking away the sin of the world, giving Himself a ransom for the many. He who knew no sin was made to be sin on our behalf, a curse for us and by its completion the redemption price was paid in full. One author said, "Jesus had to pay the price alone and tasted death—spiritual death—for every man. Spiritual death is broken communion. Jesus had a taste of such a broken communion, the first and the last He ever experienced—in those desolate hours when darkness lay upon the earth and upon His soul."² Therefore, the **darkness** that covered the land of Israel signifies two things. Constable said, "This was a judgment on Israel and its people, but it was also a judgment on Jesus."³

Before we go to the ninth hour in the next verse I want to add what the parallel in Luke 23:39 records regarding the two criminals. We can't tell exactly what time this exchange happened. But last week we saw that during the morning they were both hurling abuse at Him. Something changed during those dark hours on the cross. Luke 23:39 says, "One of the criminals who were hanged *there* was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!"⁴⁰ But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"⁴¹ "And we indeed *are suffering* justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."⁴² And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"⁴³ And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." This exchange is significant for several reasons. First, to show that salvation is by faith alone apart from

any inevitable works that people like to attach to saving faith. People who say that works are necessary usually try to explain this as an exception to the rule. There are no exceptions to the rule when it comes to salvation. Second, His statement “remember me when You come in Your kingdom” is sufficient for salvation as he realized that salvation is the way into the Messianic kingdom to come. Third, the kingdom was not already present or coming at that time because Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” Paradise is not the kingdom. Paradise is heaven. That day the criminal was in heaven. In the future he will be in the kingdom. Jesus’ spirit went to heaven that day too, it did not go to Hell, as the Apostles’ Creed incorrectly states. Constable summed up this issue about where Jesus’ spirit was for the three days when he said, “His spirit went to paradise, namely into the Father’s presence where the spirits of the righteous dead abide until their reunion with their bodies at their resurrection. When Jesus arose, the Father reunited His spirit with His then immortal body. The Apostles’ Creed says that when Jesus died He descended into hell. This idea evidently originated because Jesus said that He would spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth when He died (Matt. 12:40). The ancients viewed Sheol (the Old Testament term) and Hades (the New Testament term) as in the heart of the earth or at least as under the surface of the earth. The formulators of the Apostles’ Creed apparently confused the temporary destiny of Jesus’ spirit (i.e., His immaterial part) with the temporary destiny of His body (i.e., His material part). There is no clear biblical statement that Jesus’ spirit went to hell after His death. On the contrary Jesus here affirmed that His spirit would go to paradise (i.e., God’s presence) when He died.”⁴

Returning to Matthew, the judgment upon sin borne by Christ in His spiritual death from the sixth hour came to about the ninth hour. We say “about” because they used the sundial to tell time so these times are approximations. In 27:46, **About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”** Observe that **Jesus cried out with a loud voice**, not a weak voice. This indicates that at about 3pm He was still strong. Despite the beatings and the abuse and the crucifixion itself, He was not near the grips of physical death. The reason is because He was a strong individual and crucifixion was a grueling way of death that could linger for days. The victim was nailed in a hanging position where inhalation was passive but exhalation was active. This is the opposite of normal breathing. Therefore, in order to exhale the victim had to use his legs to push up. This was excruciating. The muscles would become fatigued, begin to cramp and eventually give out causing death by asphyxiation. If, for some reason, the body needed to be removed from the cross before death, a soldier might break the legs below the knees so the victim could not push up to exhale. In such cases death by asphyxiation occurred within minutes. But at this point Jesus was still strong. He could push up and exhale as indicated by His saying this **with a loud voice**, but it would have been excruciating as the nerves in His feet were damaged by the iron spikes.

What He said is reported by Matthew to have been spoken in Hebrew and Aramaic. **Eli** is Hebrew for **My God** and **Lama Sabachthani** is Aramaic for **why have You forsaken Me?** Matthew chose to translate these words into Greek so the message would be clear to his audience. Jews spoke Greek. While Matthew did not note that this as the fulfillment of OT prophecy, it is the fulfillment of Ps 22:1. Ps 22 is a Psalm of David. In it David felt

hemmed in by his enemies, abandoned by God and near death. Since David was *a* Messiah his life looked forward to the life of *the* Messiah. Thus, in the same way that David felt hemmed in by his enemies, abandoned by God and near death, so Jesus during the three hours on the cross felt hemmed in by His enemies, abandoned by God and near death. He therefore fulfills Ps 22:1 which ultimately looked forward to Him.

In 27:74 **And some of those who were standing there, when they heard it, began saying, “This man is calling for Elijah.”** They didn’t quite understand what He had said. We may not understand why because **Eli, Eli** does not sound very much like **Elijah** in English, but in the Greek *ηλι, ηλι* does sound very much like *Ηλιαν*. They thought He was **calling for Elijah** to save Him. Their misunderstanding rested on their belief that Elijah, who had been caught up to God in a whirlwind, was able to come and rescue the righteous from distress. Since Jesus was in distress they thought He was calling on Elijah to come and rescue Him. Of course, Jesus did not believe in this Jewish myth.⁵ But these Jews standing there were so thoroughly entrenched in Jewish myth that when He quoted Ps 22 they thought He was referring to this Jewish myth. Matthew’s mention of it is a rebuke upon that generation of Israel for not knowing the Scriptures. If they had known the Scriptures, they would have immediately understood that He was quoting the Messianic Psalm 22 and that just as David as *a* Messiah felt abandoned by God so Jesus as *the* Messiah felt abandoned by God. But this they did not see...

His condition at this time is described in Ps 22:15 through the mouth of David who said, “My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of death.” In other words, Jesus’ mouth and lips lacked moisture. Therefore, in the parallel of John 19:28 we read that “Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, “I am thirsty.” To satisfy His thirst Matt 27:48 says, **Immediately one of them ran, and taking a sponge, he filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink.** The **sour wine** was a cheap wine drunk by slaves and soldiers. The word means “vinegar wine.” It was cheap wine strengthened with vinegar. It relieved thirst more effectively than water. This vinegar wine was nearby and probably belonged to the Roman soldiers. This person dipped **a sponge** into their vinegar wine and lifted it up **on a reed** to His lips. The **reed** was a hyssop branch not longer than about 20 inches, thus indicating that Jesus was not very high off the ground, and therefore most likely crucified on a tau cross, rather than the popular Latin cross

Now the parallel in Luke 23 indicates that the reason this person brought him the sponge of vinegar wine was to lengthen His sufferings so that as verse 49 says they could wait and “**...see whether Elijah will come to save Him.**” In other words, now that He had longer to live they had more time to wait for Elijah to come and save Him. Of course, this is just mocking. They don’t think that Elijah will come and rescue Him anymore than they think He is the Messiah. But by giving Him the drink He fulfilled Ps 69:21, in the face of their mocking, one more prophecy on His march to victory.

In 27:50, having been briefly rejuvenated by the vinegar wine, Jesus made His last cry, **again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.** Matthew does not mention what He cried out, but the parallel in John 19:30 says that

He said, "It is finished!" And at that time "He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. The Greek word for "It is finished!" is *τετελεσται*. This word basically means "to complete an activity or process, *bring to an end, finish, complete.*" It is debated what had been completed. Some hold that it refers to His sufferings; His sufferings had come to an end. Others hold that it refers to His time on earth in the incarnation. Still others hold that it refers to fulfillment of messianic prophecy. All of these views are convincing since they are all true, and I have emphasized the third view, that it refers to the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. But upon more careful study it probably has a broader and therefore greater significance than any one of these alone. The root of *τετελεσται* is *τελεω*. One of the meanings of this word was in the area of economics and referred to paying what is due. Pentecost said, "The term signified the completion of a transaction by the full payment of a price or the discharge of a debt by a completed payment. All sin incurs a debt which the sinner owes to God. The debt must be discharged before that sinner can be accepted by God. Every animal sacrificed on the Day of Atonement throughout the Old Testament constituted a recognition of debt (Heb. 10:1-4). Because of the shed blood that was applied to the cover of the ark, God in His grace postponed collection of the indebtedness for another twelve months, He did this in anticipation of the coming of the Lamb of God who would put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. When Christ died, He gathered to Himself the accumulated debt of a sinful race and offered to God a payment for past sins...Christ's death paid for the total sin of the human race. Having made that payment, Christ could say, "It is finished" (John 19:30), or "The debt has been paid in full."⁶ So the significance of this final utterance is probably multi-faceted, involving the end of His sufferings, the end of His time on earth, and the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, but most importantly the final payment for the sin debt of the whole world. Summed up in His word and work is the doctrine of unlimited atonement. Unlimited atonement means that Christ died for the sins of each and every human without distinction but application is made only when a person believes. This differs from universalism which says that the atonement is applied automatically to all people apart from faith. It also differs from Calvinism which says that Christ died for the sins of each and every elect human and is automatically applied to them apart from faith. Our doctrine maintains that Christ paid the penalty for the sins of each and every human and yet it is only applied to those who believe. This seems to be the consistent testimony of Scripture. The sin debt was paid in full for every human. The only thing that remains is for a person to believe in Him. When they do God saves that person by applying the cross work to them.

Now when He said "It is finished!" Jesus **yielded up His spirit**. This means that He dismissed His own spirit. In other words, He didn't physically die of His wounds. He died because He released His own spirit. Toussaint said, "Matthew emphasizes the fact that the death of Jesus was a voluntary laying down of His life." This is in keeping with John 10:18 where Jesus said of His life, "No one has taken it from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again." Now some have noted that when the soldiers came later to break the legs so that they would die quickly by asphyxiation, they noticed that Jesus was already dead. To confirm this a soldier took an infantry spear and pierced underneath His ribs and into His heart producing a flow of blood and water. The water had filled the pericardium around the heart, and the blood came

from within the heart. They argue that Jesus died because of congestive heart failure. However, considering that Jesus did not die of natural causes, but gave up His own spirit, we know that the water that filled His pericardium and blood that filled His heart was not the cause of physical death. The bottom line is that Jesus sovereignly gave up His life. He died a completely unique death and this did not go unnoticed to the eye witnesses of the cross.

Now having died a spiritual death for three hours, judicially separated from the Father as He took upon Himself the sins of the world, and now having died a physical death, yielding up His spirit, Matthew reports three things that happened at that moment as divine portents that the sin debt of the world had been paid in full; the veil was torn, an earthquake took place, and pagans understood the significance. The first of these is found in Matthew 27:51, **the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom**. There are two significant things here. First, this was no normal veil and second, this was no normal tearing. First, there were two veils. The outer veil that led from the inner court into the Holy Place and the inner veil that led from the Holy Place into the Most Holy Place. Some argue that this was the outer veil because the tearing of the veil was such public knowledge. They assume that people other than the priests observed it, such as the centurion. However, there is no reason that the news would not have spread from the priests to the people. Further, the divine commentary in Hebrews 9 is that it was the inner veil. Finally, early Christians report that this tearing of the veil is one of the major reasons many of the priests became Christians themselves in apostolic times. Constable said, "The tearing happened at 3:00 p.m., the time of the evening incense offering. A priest would normally have been standing before the veil offering incense when it tore (cf. Luke 1:8–10)." In Acts 6:7 Luke reports, "The word of God kept spreading; and the number of disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith." The note that "a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith" is, in part, an attestation to the impact of the torn inner veil upon those most closely associated with the Temple. They obviously understood the significance.

Second, this was no normal tearing of a veil. The veil was ~four inches thick, a palm breadth, sixty feet tall and thirty feet wide. It was made of 72 squares joined together. You can imagine how heavy it must have been. It was so heavy it has been said that it took 300 priests to manipulate it. Such a veil would not tear easily. Furthermore, the veil was torn from **top to bottom**. If it was torn from bottom to top we might attribute the tearing to something on earth. But because it is from **top to bottom** we must attribute it to something in heaven. The priests obviously saw significance in the direction of the tearing.

Putting all these facts together we are to understand that something took place in heaven that had a physical manifestation on earth. What had happened in heaven? Remember that when God instituted the building of the Temple under Moses that He showed Moses the true temple in heaven and told him to make a copy of the temple on earth. In other words, the temple in heaven is the real temple, the temple on earth was just a picture and teaching device. During the OT the priests could all go into the Holy Place to carry out daily duties with the

seven branched lampstand, the altar of incense and the table of showbread, but only the high priest could go into the Most Holy Place and the ark of the covenant, and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. To pass into this room the high priest would have to pass through the inner veil that was ~4 inches thick, sixty feet tall and thirty feet wide. He would take with him some of the blood of the lamb and he would apply it to the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant. This would atone for the sins of all Israel. What happened when Christ yielded up His spirit was He went to heaven, He entered into the temple in heaven and passed through the inner veil into the Most Holy Place with His own blood and applied it to the mercy seat on the real ark of the covenant. This atoned for the sins of the whole world. Some people don't think He took His literal blood but that is heresy. That view arose in a liberal article in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. In that article on the Greek word *αιμα*, "blood," the author, who does not believe the Bible, argued for this view and it passed into evangelical circles. But the author of Hebrews argues that it was His real blood and that without the shedding of blood there is no atonement for sins (Heb 9:11-12; 23; et. Al.). When He did this in heaven, as a manifestation before the world that the sins of the world had been atoned for, the inner veil of the earthly temple was torn from **top to bottom**. The significance is that the sins of the world have been paid for and the way of access to God is now open for any and everyone. Furthermore, this means that the old Mosaic covenant, which was an earthly covenant, has been done away with and a new covenant has been initiated, which is being administered by Christ in heaven (Heb 10:9). So that those in dispensational circles who think that there is no new covenant now are basically denying the death of Christ and our redemption and our ability to draw near to God. Thank God they are wrong and the Scriptures are right. Also, the tearing of the veil was a foreshadowing of the destruction of the Temple which occurred in AD70. The sacrificial system at the temple was no longer acceptable before God. The only sacrifice which is acceptable before God is the sacrifice of Christ. Finally, there is no need for any earthly priest. Christ is our High Priest. We can go directly to Him, contrary to Roman Catholicism's insistence on going through an earthly priest. All of that is tied up in the first divine portent of the veil being torn from top to bottom when Christ yielded up His spirit.

The second thing that happened at 3pm, when he yielded up His spirit and when the veil was torn was an earthquake. Matthew 27:51, **and the earth shook and the rocks were split**. It is well-known that after the Flood a rift valley formed from Syria to Africa, extending over 3,500 miles. Along this rift valley there is seismic activity. Minor earthquakes have riddled the area for centuries. It would not be surprising if they had an earthquake. But for an earthquake to happen in conjunction immediately after the death of Christ and the tearing of the veil from top to bottom is an inconceivable coincidence. Not only were **the rocks split**, but verse 52 says, **the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised**. Now scholars are divided on whether these **saints** were raised in the sense of resuscitation, like Lazarus, or resurrected, like Jesus. There are several facts that point to this being a true resurrection. First, careful note is made in verse 53 that this happened **after His resurrection**. Matthew made this note because we all know that the first to be raised from the dead is Christ. If these people were just resuscitated there would be no need to make that note because

other people were resuscitated before Christ was resurrected. Second, the Greek word used in verse 52 of the fallen saints is from the verb *εγειρω* and the Greek word used in verse 53 of Christ is the noun *εγερσις*. These two words share the same root. If the author wanted to indicate that these saints underwent something different than Christ he could have made some indication of that by using different words. But he didn't. He used the same word. Finally, there is no theological problem with others having been raised after Christ's resurrection. In fact, this too was a divine indication of a future resurrection of all who believe. Note is carefully made that these were **saints**. While few agree, Walvoord did, saying, "As a careful reading of this account reveals, the raising of the bodies of the saints, although mentioned here, actually occurred after the resurrection of Jesus. This event is nowhere explained in the Scriptures but seems to be a fulfillment of the feast of the first fruits of harvest mentioned in Leviticus 23:10-14. On that occasion, as a token of the coming harvest, the people would bring a handful of grain to the priest. The resurrection of these saints, occurring after Jesus Himself was raised, is a token of the coming harvest when all the saints will be raised."⁸ These tombs must have been in the nearby countryside because after they were raised **they entered the holy city of Jerusalem and appeared to many**. They were saints who had died recently and still have loved ones in the city. Their resurrection served as a sign to those who remained that Jesus was the Messiah and the way into the kingdom. What happened to them afterwards the Scriptures do not state. Undoubtedly they were taken to heaven, perhaps on the day of Christ's ascension, but we really do not know. In any case, this was no insignificant event. Verse 52 tells us **many bodies of the saints...were raised**. So it was a significant number. It was also perhaps another manifestation of the sign of Jonah.

The third thing that happened at 3pm, when he yielded up His spirit and when the veil was torn and when the earthquake took place is Matt 27:54. **Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"** A centurion was a soldier in charge of 100 soldiers. At crucifixion's a centurion would be placed in charge over a victim with four other soldiers. All of them had seen the darkness for three hours, had heard what He had said from the cross, had seen how He gave up His own spirit and had seen the earthquake that followed. They would not have seen the veil torn for it was in the inner Temple. But what they did see caused them to **become very frightened** and to pronounce, **"Truly this was the Son of God!"** They probably spoke more truly than they possibly knew, but they did realize truly these things were divine signs, testifying to the true identity of the One who died on the cross for their sins and it astonished them. By contrast in vv 55-56 Jewish women who had **followed Jesus from Galilee while ministering to Him**, were **only looking on from a distance. Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee**. In a sense, they had fled from Him while these Roman soldiers stood in awe of Him.

For the last time Matthew reminds us of this sub-theme in his gospel. Jews who should have been impressed with Christ turned away while Gentiles turned to Him; the wise men came seeking Him at His birth while the

scribes and Pharisees would not walk five miles down the road to see Him themselves, the centurion who Jesus said had greater faith than anyone in Israel; the Syrophoenecian woman, whom Christ rejected, responded that even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the Master's table, and He received her, and here another centurion, dumbfounded by Christ and in awe of His person while the Jewish women who ministered to Him only looked on from a distance. What does this portend except that the gospel is to soon go out to all the nations of the earth so that more Gentiles look upon Him with astonishment and recognize Him for who He truly is, **the Son of God!**

In summary, in 27:45, at 12 noon that Friday, a darkness came over the whole land of Israel. This darkness signified judgment on Israel for rejecting their King as well as judgment on Jesus for the sins of the world. Jesus was dying a spiritual death for our sins which brought about judicial separation between the Father and the Son that ended the moment He yielded up His Spirit. In 27:46 at about 3pm Jesus cried out in Hebrew and Aramaic, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? Which means, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" This was a fulfillment of Ps 22:1. In 27:47 some of those Jews who were standing there misunderstood Him to be referring to a Jewish myth that Elijah would come and rescue the righteous in time of distress. In 27:48 one of them ran and took a sponge and dipped it in the vinegar wine of the Roman soldiers and lifted it to Him on a stick, from which He drank. This fulfilled Ps 69:21. The rest of them stood around mocking saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him." Little did they know that He would save them if only they would believe. In 27:50 Jesus cried out with a loud voice. The parallel in John 19:30 says He cried out *τετελεσται*, it is finished, perhaps referring to His sufferings, His incarnation on earth, or His fulfillment of prophecy, but more likely the payment of the sin debt was finished. He yielded up His spirit and immediately the judicial separation between Him and the Father was over. Immediately at 3pm three things happened; the veil was torn, signifying the way of access to God is opened, an earthquake that opened tombs and out of which came many resurrected saints of Jerusalem after Christ's resurrection, signifying a future resurrection of believers, and Gentile astonishment, a portent of the floodgates of salvation being opened to Gentiles.

Now the work saints of the past looked forward to and were justified retroactively on is accomplished, so that those saints in the future look back and are justified on the same basis, the finished work of Christ! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

¹ Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., "Matthew," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 89.

² Shepard, quoted by J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 486.

³ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 27:45.

⁴ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Lk 23:43.

⁵ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 27:47.

⁶ J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 487.

⁷ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 27:51.

⁸ John F. Walvoord, *Thy Kingdom Come*, 235-6.