

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom Part XXXVI: Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Death (Matthew 27:45-56)

I. Introduction

- A. Matthew's Gospel was written to explain to Jewish readers how Jesus was their Messiah even if He did not establish His Messianic Kingdom in His first advent, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1337.
- B. A part of that explanation is Matthew's record of the death of Christ in Matthew 27:45-56, and we view that enormous event for insight and edification (as follows):

II. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Death, Matthew 27:45-56.

- A. Though Christ's death atoned for sin (Rom. 3:23-28) as history's most important event, from the earthly view, a dying Messiah was no messiah as initially testified by the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24:19-21a.
- B. Matthew's Gospel was written to testify that Jesus was the Messiah though He died on the cross, and it offers evidences from even the earthly view on Christ's Messianic identity regardless of His death, Matt. 27:45-56:
 - 1. First, there was supernatural darkness over the landscape of Jerusalem from noon to 3 p.m., Matt. 27:45:
 - a. The "sixth . . . unto the ninth hour" refers from noon to 3 p.m. (Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Matt. 27:45).
 - b. This could not have been caused by a lunar eclipse when the moon blocks the sun's light, for Jesus died at Passover (Matt. 26:17; 27:15), the middle of the month, Nisan 15, at full moon when the earth was between the sun and the moon, Exodus 12:1-11; Harold W. Hoehner, Chron. Aspects of the Life of Christ, 1979, p. 89, 139; H. H. Goldstine, New and Full Moons: 1001 B. C. to A. D. 1651, 1973, p. 87.
 - c. Besides, the darkness lasted 3 hours, far longer than any lunar eclipse that could produce darkness.
 - d. This darkness was thus supernaturally caused, conveying the time when the sins of the world were put on Christ and the Father had turned His back on the Son. Confirming this, at about the 3 p. m. period, Jesus cried with a loud voice, citing Psalm 22:1 to ask why the Father had forsaken Him, Matthew 27:46.
 - 2. Second, though events just before His death might signal otherwise to unbelieving onlookers, events that occurred right after His death signaled Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God, Matthew 27:47-56:
 - a. Some present claimed Jesus cried out for Elijah to come and save Him from the cross, so they took a sponge, put it on a reed and gave it to Him to drink to prolong His life while others urged them to wait to see if Elijah would come and save Him, but Jesus only cried out loudly again and died, Matthew 27:47-50.
 - b. An unbelieving onlooker might think Jesus was not the Messiah since Elijah had not come to save Him from the cross, but the vail of the temple's Holiest of Holies rent in two from top to bottom, what only God did (Matt. 27:51a) to show the new, living way was now open into His presence, Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Matt. 27:51. This vail was 60 feet long by 30 feet wide and was as thick as a man's palm (A. Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, 1972, ii, p. 611), so the rending was supernaturally caused.
 - c. Also, the earth quaked and the rocks split (Matt. 27:51b) as occurred on Mount Sinai in Exodus 19:18c.
 - d. In addition, many graves were opened and many saints who had died arose and went into the city and appeared to many, typical of the believer's resurrection due to the cross, Matt. 27:52-53; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.
 - e. Even the centurion who officiated at the crucifixion and who saw Jesus die not by going into a coma as crucifixion victims normally did, but witnessed Him cry out loudly just before death, a soldier who saw the earthquake and the other things that occurred, feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God," Matthew 27:54. This is a remarkable testimony for a man who had officiated at many other crucifixions and who had no personal interest or motivation in Jesus' welfare or fame as a pagan, Gentile centurion.
 - f. Also, many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee witnessed these events, Matthew 27:55-56.

Lesson: *At His death, events occurred showing Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God: (1) just before He died, there was supernatural darkness over the land for three hours, and (2) right after He died, (a) the massive vail in the temple was rent in two from top to bottom, (b) the earth quaked and the rocks split, (c) many dead believers arose from the dead and entered Jerusalem and appeared to many, (d) the impartial pagan centurion who oversaw Jesus' death said in great fear that He was the Son of God and (e) many credible witnesses saw these things occur.*

Application: *(1) May we believe on Christ as the Son of God for eternal life, John 20:31. (2) As believers, may we realize that Jesus died NOT because He was LESS than the Messiah and Son of God, but BECAUSE He AS the Messiah and Son of God was SENT by the Father to DIE for our SINS and provide SALVATION for US!*