

Six Hours That Changed the World

Steve Durham—April 6, 2024

You know, the spring Holy Days are upon us again. We focus on the Passover and the crucifixion of Christ, His life and His death and resurrection. It is the central event in history.

It is central to the Plan of God for mankind. Yet, the world around us just kept Easter. They celebrated it, but they didn't know what they were doing. They thought they were keeping a day that pictured the true resurrection and the purpose of Christ. But they kept it with eggs and rabbits and the worship of pagan goddess Ishtar. Sort of sounds like Easter. They recognize Christ's death. But through doing that, the Easter celebration, they miss the significance of His death and resurrection for all of mankind.

Actually, are worshiping a counterfeit Jesus in doing that, and they're blinded. They don't understand.

In John 3:16 that we see on billboards and end-zones of football games, it says:

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life."

Amazing what this time period pictures the Holy Days of God, the Plan of God and the Passover, which is central. They don't even believe in Christ being the Messiah. They didn't then. They don't now.

Things like Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ* and the series *The Chosen*, they bring the story to life, but there are errors in it. There are so many errors and the Truth is not in it. It doesn't allow them to understand.

We have a book called *The Day That Jesus the Christ Died*. {truthofGod.org}. It's a very good book. You need to get that and read through it.

Today I want to focus on the Truth about Jesus' crucifixion and these six hours that took place on that day. Three major events happened along with witnesses that were there. That's what I want to talk about today. So, we can learn some lessons that are in here by the witnesses and the events that happened.

- What did it mean?
- What impact?
- What amazing Truth and knowledge do we gain from that?

Through these six hours, there was much happening.

Events:

1. **the light of day turning to complete darkness**
2. **an earthquake** that opened the graves
3. the **temple veil was rent in two**

These are three important, very important events that show that Jesus was and is the Messiah. Of course, along with the other 28 prophecies that were fulfilled in that day; we won't have time to go through those.

So let's take a look at the six hours that changed the world.

The Witnesses

There were quite a few people from everywhere gathered to watch. Some had compassion on Jesus and sorrow and grief.

There were those who knew Him and saw His miracles and believed on Him. They were hopeful; they didn't want to see this happen.

His family was there; His friends and followers were there.

Then, of course, as any event, there are those onlookers who just want to see the event and see what might happen.

There were the taunters and the mockers in the religious community. They wanted to see Jesus dead. They were happy to see Him on the cross.

Luke 23:27: "And following Him was a great multitude of people with *many* women, who also were bewailing and lamenting Him. But Jesus turned to them *and* said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children' (vs 27-28).

He was referring to 70_{A.D.} and the destruction of the temple that was coming under Titus. A terrible time.

Then there were those who knew Him.

Verse 49: "But all **those who knew Him** stood off at a distance observing these things, **the women also** who had accompanied Him from Galilee."

It's interesting. They were standing at a distance watching these things. They were afraid of the religious leaders. They were afraid of getting in trouble.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus; John 19:38: "Now, after these things, Joseph (the one

from Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but having concealed it for fear of the Jews) asked Pilate that he might take Jesus' body away; and Pilate gave *him* permission. Then he came and took away the body of Jesus."

Verse 39: "And **Nicodemus**, who had come to Jesus by night at *the* first, also came, bearing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds."

Then there were those that were just doing their job, the **Roman soldiers**. They were responsible for carrying out the crucifixion. They were very good at it. They played a role in it.

But there was one account that mentions that this crucifixion had a great impact on him.

The Roman centurion—it doesn't tell us, but it could have been Cornelius—maybe so, maybe not.

Matthew 27:54: "Then the centurion and those with him who had been keeping guard over Jesus, after seeing the earthquake and the things that took place, were **filled with fear**... [these are soldiers] ...and said 'Truly this was the Son of God!'"

This had to be a miraculous, dynamic event that took place, the whole six hours. Then there *were* **religious leaders** who wanted to see him dead. **The chief priests, the Jewish leaders, and they came to mock Him!**

They called Him a fake, and He wasn't the Messiah. **Maybe Annas and Caiaphas** maybe were there, I don't know, it doesn't say.

It says that the people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at Him. They said that 'He saved others, let Him save Himself if He is God's Messiah, the Chosen One'" (Matt. 27:40-42 [transcriber's correction])

Then there were the **onlookers**. Some were just looking on and wanting to see the action, didn't care much about the outcome. They just thought He was another criminal being crucified.

Of course, there were **the friends, the disciples, and some of his family!**

Talks about **His mother** being there. It says,

John 19:25: "And **Jesus' mother** stood by the cross, and **His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene.**"

So, it names at least four, and John also was there. John writes in the third person, 'the disciple who Jesus loved.'

John 19:26: "When Jesus saw *His* mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He

said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son.' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother.' And from that time, the disciple took her into his own *home*" (vs 26-27). *John talking about himself.*

See, so even while Jesus was suffering on the cross, He made sure to fulfill the duty to care for His mother. He chose John.

This is interesting because He chose John true to His teaching to look after her instead of her biological sons, His half brothers. Because they had not yet believed on Him

John 7:5: "For neither did His brothers believe in Him."

So Jesus picked John, His spiritual brother. It shows us that that spiritual relationship over the biological or the physical are so much more important.

Not that we don't love those who are in our families and such, but we love more the spiritual:

- we have a commonality
- we have a Holy Spirit
- we are a spiritual family

These are lessons that we can learn from this:

Matthew 12:46: "But while He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, *His* mother and His brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You'" (vs 46-47).

Verse 48: "But He answered *and* said to him, 'Who is My mother? And who are My brothers?' And stretching out His hand to His disciples, He said, 'Behold, My mother and My brothers. For whoever shall do the will of My Father, Who is in heaven, that one is My brother and sister and mother'" (vs 48-50).

Showing that spiritual relationship so much more over the physical. The will of the Father being done unites us. The Holy Spirit unites us.

Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (vs 26-27).

Again, showing that spiritual relationship with that family. So, this was a great honor and a responsibility for John.

I think some sources say that Mary lived another 11 years. Can't verify that.

Next, the Scripture tells us that Christ was to be numbered with the transgressors. Those two criminals we heard about. He was crucified between those two criminals, and this was no accident. Christ was crucified between two thieves. Why?

Here He was, God in the flesh (John 1:14). John 1:1 tells us that He existed before with the Father.

He'd done no wrong; He'd done no sin! But it was determined that he would die between two criminals. Why was all that part of the plan set forth from the foundation?

When God the Father and Jesus Christ made a covenant together, that Christ would die for our sins and the Father would resurrect and bring him back for the sins of the world and be resurrected again. God is in charge!

Isaiah 46:10: "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things, which were not *yet* done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.'"

Another place says that God does whatever He wants, He's in control. He sets these events up. It's good for us to look into them so we can learn and see more of the Truth and the understanding of Passover and crucifixion and the resurrection and the Plan of God. The power and the amazing significance of the Passover, which is central to the Plan of God.

When Pilate set that up where the two criminals would be crucified along with Christ, he had no control over that. He thought he did, but he didn't.

John 19:11: "Jesus answered, 'You would not have any authority against Me if it were not given to you from above....'"

He couldn't do anything unless it came from the Father. Christ knew that.

Isa. 53 and Psa. 22 are two areas that we need to read before the Passover.

Isaiah 53:12: "Therefore, I will divide to Him *a portion* with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He has poured out His soul to death; and He was counted among the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for transgressors."

Jesus bore the sin of many and made intercession for transgressors. That's what the purpose of Him coming and living a sinless life and dying and going through what He did as our sacrifice for sin.

Why numbered with the transgressors, though? *That's ironic that the Holy One of God*

would be numbered with the unholy! He hadn't done anything wrong. He had not sinned. So, why did God order that His Son would be crucified or determined between these two criminals?

The answer is that crucified with those two thieves fully demonstrates the depth of shame into which He had to descend. It highlighted the shame of sin and what our Passover and Savior went through for each and every one of us in carrying the sins of everyone, and the sin of the world.

Hebrews 12:2: "Having *our minds* fixed on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith; Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him endured *the* cross, *although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the Throne of God."

He died so we can live for all His sin and come short of the glory of God. We're under the death penalty without that. What was that place? *The place of shame!*

- it was a place of sin
- it was where the transgressors were

They were criminals; they were thieves. Place the criminals condemned to death, the death penalty.

Romans 6:21: "Therefore, what fruit did you have then in the *things* of which you are now ashamed? For the end result of those things *is* death. But now *that* you have been delivered from sin and have become servants of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end result *is* eternal life. For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs 21-23)

We see that the crucifixion scene was full of witnesses, a diverse group of people. But back to these three, three events that happened during that six hour period.

There was a uniquely dramatic events that occurred that God the Father had control over for our benefit and for our future. It showed without a shadow of doubt that Jesus was and is the Messiah.

Understood in the light of the Old Testament, Jesus' own words from the cross help us to understand the meaning of His death.

- What did Jesus say before we get into that?
- What did Jesus say of Himself first?

The God of the Old Testament, the Creator of all things brought light into the world to separate the darkness from the light.

Genesis 1:1: "In *the* beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face

of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light.’ And there was light. And God saw the light that *it* was good; and God divided between the light and the darkness. And God called the light day, and He called the darkness night. And the evening and the morning were day one” (vs 1-5).

We all know that section, but it’s very interesting in light of what I’m getting ready to talk to you. It’s very interesting in the light of Passover.

Jesus said of Himself; John 8:12: “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the Light of the world; the one who follows Me shall never walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.’”

He said He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. What did He say about us who have His Holy Spirit and have Christ in us?

Matthew 5:14: “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do they light a lamp and put it under a bushel basket, but on the lampstand; and it shines for all who *are* in the house. In the same way also, you are to let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works... [Why?] ...and may glorify your Father Who *is* in heaven” (vs 14-16).

Event #1—Darkness at Midday

Jesus Christ’s crucifixion began around 9 o’clock (A.M.) or the third hour.

Mark 15:25: “Now, it was *the* third hour when they crucified Him.”

For the next three hours, Jesus’ enemies mocked Him. It’s interesting we read this because it’s found in all the Gospels, but what they had to say about Him:

Matthew 27:29: “And those who were passing by railed at Him, shaking their heads, and saying, ‘Aha, You Who would destroy the temple and rebuild *it* in three days, save Yourself and come down from the cross.’ And in like manner the chief priests also were mocking with one another *and* with the scribes, saying, ‘He saved others, *but* He does not have the power to save Himself. The Christ, the King of Israel! Let Him come down now from the cross so that we may see and believe.’....” (vs 29-32).

Remember what Satan said in Matt. 4:4 and Luke 4:4? If He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now. If He will have Him. Or He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ You could just hear how they said that. And the two robbers who were crucified with him also reproached him with the same words. And then at noon something remarkable happened.

In Matt. 27:45 tells us that for three hours from noon to three—from the 6th hour until the 9th

hour—there was darkness over all the land. This was midday darkness! Wasn’t a solar eclipse; that only lasts about four minutes. Astronomers say that there was no solar eclipse from 30 to 33_{A.D.} So, it was not a solar eclipse.

Matthew said it fell upon all the land and even the area of Palestine all the way to Rome, to the Mediterranean area. This is secular evidence. Picture this: Tertullian talks about it. He was a second century historian. He called it *a cosmic or a world event!* Probably seen in Rome, Athens, all around. At the moment of Christ’s death, ‘the light departed from the sun and the land was darkened at noonday.

Then Phlegon writing in 137 reported that darkness was on the earth as it was before Christ re-created the world (Gen. 1:5) after Satan’s rebellion.

Isa. 14 talks about that. So, both Gospel authors and other historical sources agreed that this midday darkness occurred during Jesus’ crucifixion. So, it’s a fact.

What does it mean? *The answer can be found in light of the Old Testament!* You know, Jesus was under God’s judgment. He took on the sin of the world and mankind on His shoulders as our Sacrifice and as the Passover Lamb, the Lamb of God.

The atoning sacrifice for mankind. This darkness in the Old Testament signifies being under God’s judgment, under sin. The death and the burial, which was foreordained and seen in Gen. 15. We’re talking about the maledictory oath. We can’t go through the whole thing. But God walking between the parts as Abraham slept and the complete darkness fell upon him.

Gen. 15:12 talks about the maledictory oath. The bloody killing of the sacrificial animals symbolized the brutal suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which happened in 30_{A.D.} on the Passover Day, Nisan 14, a deep sleep and horror of darkness that Abraham experienced symbolic of Jesus Christ burial in the tomb as Nisan 14 was ending at sunset.

Two thousand years later on that very same day that God ratified His Covenant with Abraham, His dead body was in the tomb. Remember the only sign that He gave was that He would be three days and three nights in the tomb.

He had to carry out his pledge that he would die in order to fulfill the promises that He made. Abraham’s experience was foreshadowing Christ’s death and burial.

Genesis 15:12: “And it came to pass, as the sun was going down, that a deep sleep fell upon

Abram. And, behold, a horror of great darkness fell upon him!”

God Himself confirmed that He would fulfill that covenant through His own death and burial. This event, which took place during the horror of great darkness, also had fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Remember that the only sign He gave again of His Messiahship was the length of time he would be in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:40 by Him lying in darkness of the tomb for three days and three nights. He was confirming that he was the Messiah who would fulfill the promise of the New Covenant.

When you get a chance you should read Psalms 22. We won't go through it. It's very good before the Passover. This was written a thousand years before the crucifixion. Jesus showing His mockers that He is under God's judgment because of sin, ***but did not sin and did not go against God's will!***

His crucifixion proves that He is the Messiah and that He is being crucified because He's obeying God's will. He did everything that God said. God's will was His will. But why would it be God's will to execute His own son the Messiah?

Event #2—The Earthquakes

Event #3—Temple Veil Torn in Two

We go to the torn curtain or veil in Matt. 27:51. It says that immediately after Jesus died the curtain of the temple was torn into from top to bottom. Suddenly the veil of the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom and the earth shook and the rocks were split so that the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had died were resurrected to physical life.

Just as Lazarus was after his resurrection. They came out of the tombs and then they entered into the Holy City and appeared to many.

In *The Faithful Version*. There's a note there. It says Jesus as a firstborn from among the dead was the first one resurrected to eternal life. This occurred toward the end of the weekly Sabbath. Then the next morning Jesus fulfilled the Wave Sheaf Offering when He ascended to heaven to be accepted by God the Father as the perfect sacrifice for sin for the sin of the world.

This had to happen before any of the other dead saints could have been raised back to physical life and appear to many.

So, it was after his resurrection that this happened. This temple veil was amazing miracle in it. Some of the facts about it was 60 feet long. It was 30 feet high and four inches thick composed of 72 squares sewn together. This is monstrous.

It took 300 men to lift it. For it to be torn suddenly from top to bottom rather than gradually from the bottom up would indeed be a miracle.

So the temple veil did was run into and there are several first century sources referencing a great catastrophe before the impending destruction of the temple.

The temple veil or curtain denied access to the innermost room of the temple, the Holy of Holies, where God's presence was. This curtain symbolized the separation that exists between God and us because of our sins.

Isaiah 59:2: “But your iniquities have come between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.”

God is Holy and we're sinful, we're disqualified from going into His presence and communing with Him.

Worshippers then could only come in with God indirectly to a ritualistic system devised by God. Once each year, the high priest would come in to the Holy of Holies with the blood of an unblemished animal whose death symbolically paid for their sins for that year.

The animals had to be killed every time and that year and again and again. So, the entire temple system was only a prophetic picture explaining our relationship with God and providing a picture of God's answer to sin, foreshadowing that through Christ.

So now we're in a position to understand the meaning of the torn curtain at the temple, why Jesus was being judged by God, the darkness.

Since it was torn at the moment of Jesus death, it meant that Jesus was the sacrifice that His death paid for humanity's sins. That everyone could now have personal access to God through Jesus Christ, through faith in Jesus Christ.

The old way of relating to God was over. We now could worship in Spirit and Truth before the father in person going before Him.

John's Gospel records that the content of Jesus' shout just before He died, 'It is finished,' (John 19). And he bowed His head and yielded up the spirit. 'It is finished' means paid in full or it has been fulfilled. That part of the Plan of God had been fulfilled. Now He moved on.

Jesus knew that the death penalty had been paid in full for our sins and fulfilled the Old Testament sacrificial system. God confirmed Jesus' shout by tearing the temple veil.

Hebrews 10:16: “‘This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,’ says *the* Lord, ‘I will give My Laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds; : and their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again’” (vs 16-17).

Verse 18: “Now, where remission of these *is*, *it is* no longer *necessary to offer* sacrifices for sin. Therefore, brethren, having confidence to enter into the *true* 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 great High Priest over the house of God” (vs 18-21).

So, now we can come boldly before God the Father.

Hebrews 4:14: “Having, therefore, a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *One Who* was tempted in all things according to the likeness of *our own temptations*; yet, *He was* without sin. Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (vs 14-16). *The whole purpose of it!*

This high’s death has forever removed that barrier that separated us from God. It makes eternal life possible to believe in Christ through acceptance that we’ve sinned and we’ve repented of those sins, and that we are forgiven by the blood of Christ and justified to God the Father having the righteousness of Christ imputed to us.

We are seen as sinless before God the Father. That’s amazing! Christ’s death has freed us forever from having to relate to God through high priests, physical priests and rituals. It’s through Jesus Christ. His death means that you never have to be afraid to come to God because of your sins and missing of the mark.

Don’t ever think that you’ve sinned too greatly. You can always go to the Father, always through Christ go to Him. You have an Advocate and an Intercessor and a Mediator to go before Him and explain.

Matthew 27:50_[transcriber’s correction]: “And after crying out again with a loud voice, Jesus yielded up *His* spirit. Then suddenly the veil of the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook, and the rocks were split, so that the tombs were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had died, were resurrected after His resurrection; *and* they came out of the tombs. *Then* they entered into the Holy City, and appeared to many” (vs 50-53).

This was not a resurrection to spirit, but to a physical body like Lazarus, as people who had been delivered from death.

Christ tells us that He is the resurrection to life (John 11:25). He is Jesus Christ, and he made that possible. So, what does this mean? Only the Messiah had authority to call people forth from the grave. Jesus announced that as the Messiah He would one day do just this.

John 5:26_[transcriber’s correction]: “For even as the Father has life in Himself, so also has He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and has also given Him authority to execute judgment because He *is the* Son of man. Do not wonder at this, for *the* hour is coming in which all who are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth: those who have practiced good unto a resurrection of life, and those who have practiced evil unto a resurrection of judgment” (vs 26-29).

This is amazing, amazing Truth, a mystery. It’s powerfully demonstrated that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, and that his death has broken the power of death over sinful mankind, and that He would definitely resurrect those in Christ to spiritual life. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. It is our sins that bring us under the penalty of sin and death.

Since Jesus’ death had paid for our sins and delivered us from death’s power over us, all who trust in Him and believe in Him, He has begotten us again to a living hope, and we will be resurrected to eternal life. Proof, Christ is the Messiah. These events prove that.

We can have confidence that we’ll see our loved ones again, and that we also will be resurrected to life. Jesus’ one sacrifice fulfilled all of this. These three events give hope and undeniable evidence and proof to the Messiahship of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ who offered Himself as a supreme sacrifice of God, the Father for the sins of mankind. Through this one perfect sacrifice, Jesus purchased redemption from sin for all time.

Hebrews 10:10_[transcriber’s correction]: “By Whose will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

As we solve these witnesses to Christ’s crucifixion and read about the events surrounding the crucifixion that we just read about, we are not like those who expected Jesus to prove He was the Messiah and the world coming down from the cross, and they were disappointed, or maybe they were happy.

Those that loved Him and had their hopes in Him were disappointed, because they didn’t understand. But we who believe in him and on him are not disappointed. It’s humbling. We are thankful

to God Christ that he endured the shame and became our sacrifice for sin, was resurrected, and now sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest, our Intercessor, and our Advocate.

We can be forgiven of our sins and enter into eternal life if we repent and believe in Him. God's Word gives us the record of Christ's death and miraculous events that give proof to his Messiahship for all mankind.

So, in closing, I want to read one more Scripture. Remember this during the Passover as we approach it, and as we see those we love die, and as we face death. Let's think about this.

1-Peter 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead."

We can have hope in this knowledge and belief, especially as we enter into the spring Holy Days this year!

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 3:16
- 2) Luke 23:27-28, 49
- 3) John 19:38-39
- 4) Matthew 27:54
- 5) John 19:25-27
- 6) John 7:5
- 7) Matthew 12:46-50
- 8) Luke 14:26-27
- 9) Isaiah 46:10
- 10) John 19:11
- 11) Isaiah 53:12
- 12) Hebrews 12:2
- 13) Romans 6:21-23
- 14) Genesis 1:1-5
- 15) John 8:12
- 16) Matthew 5:14-16
- 17) Mark 15:25
- 18) Matthew 27:29-32, 50-53
- 19) Genesis 15:12
- 20) Isaiah 59:2
- 21) John 5:26-29
- 22) Hebrews 10:10
- 23) Hebrews 16:21
- 24) Matthew 27:50-53
- 25) John 5:26:29
- 26) Hebrews 10:10
- 27) 1 Peter 1:3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 27:40-42
- John 1:14, 1
- Psalm 22

- Matthew 27:45
- Matthew 4:4
- Luke 4:4
- Isaiah 14
- Matthew 12:40
- John 11:25

Also referenced: Book:

The Day that Jesus the Christ Died by Fred R. Coulter

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