

Chapter 88

The signs at Christ's death

Matthew 27 v 51

Mark 15 v 36

Luke 23 v 45

In our thoughts we will just go to the temple in Jerusalem. It is three o'clock in the afternoon. The Jews call it "the ninth hour", meaning by that, the ninth hour after sunrise. Everything is prepared for the evening offering. The Passover lamb is slain. The priest catches the blood in a bowl. Then he lays the slain beast on the altar of burnt offering and soon afterwards the smoke of the sacrifice rises on high. Everything is quite normal. It had happened like this every day for many centuries.

He then takes the bowl with blood and steps into the Holy Place. Just in front of the veil stands the golden incense altar. Thither he directs his steps. He is going to burn incense upon that altar. He will dip his finger in the blood which he carries with him, and he will strike that blood upon the four horns of the altar. Everything is quite normal. This takes place daily.

But then! ... Oh, the priest jumps suddenly with fright. With staring, terror-struck eyes he looks at the thick veil in front of him. That heavy curtain rends open from the top to the bottom. No, not through age, not because it is worn out, for it is thick and strong, but it is just as though some giant hand tears that curtain in two and thrusts it aside.

The priest observes what happens with anxious, staring eyes. His hands tremble, his

knees are knocking. What is that? ... How does that come about? ... How could such a thing possibly happen? ... He does not know. For him it is a mystery.

But just at that very moment, there outside of Jerusalem, on the hill of Calvary, the Son of God, the Saviour, dies.

God's hand rends that heavy curtain in two. Henceforth no more offerings need be made. The priestly office is finished - for good.

All the lambs which were slain pointed to the Lord Jesus, who was to come. Now, however, He has come. He has now shed His blood. That is why from this time forth the service of sacrifice has no more meaning, no further object. God Himself gives the priests a sign that sacrifices are no longer needed.

And ... did the priests understand that? ... No indeed! After all, they did not believe in the Lord Jesus. They thought surely that this Nazarite was a deceiver? ... They repaired that rent and carried on with their sacrificing, as though nothing had happened. They did not understand the sign which God gave them. They did not want to understand it.

Foolish priests! Every offering which was brought after that, was in vain and without signification.

# THE BIBLE HISTORY TOLD TO OUR CHILDREN

## - NEW TESTAMENT -

### Matthew 27 v 52 and 51

Not only in the temple in Jerusalem however, but also without Jerusalem there were signs accompanying the death of Christ.

While the Jewish elders and the people are still standing near the cross, the earth shakes and quakes all of a sudden. The people look at each other in fright. They may well have held on to each other to save themselves from falling. An earthquake makes the ground quiver. Rocks break open in wide cracks.

Oh, how terrified those mockers must have been.

Something else takes place however. Read it in God's Word.

"The graves were opened."

As you know already, in the land of Canaan the dead were buried in sepulchres which had been hewn out of the rocks. These sepulchres were closed by a heavy stone, so that wild beasts should not devour the dead bodies. Outside of Jerusalem were many such graves.

Well then, the graves were opened and those who were buried therein were raised to life. They arose from the dead. No, not all the dead who rested in their graves about Jerusalem arose, for it says in the Bible: "Many bodies of the SAINTS which slept arose."

Around the city lay the bodies of God's people together with those of unconverted people. And now the bodies of many saints were raised.

The Lord Jesus had experienced death for them, and now they rise from the dead and are made alive.

Who were they? ... Well, children, I

cannot answer that question. I do not know because the Bible does not tell us.

And while the Lord Jesus remained in the tomb, they also remained in their tombs. Do you want to know whether that is true? ... Then turn to Matthew 27 v.53. There we read "and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

No, they did not come out of their graves directly. They remained there until after the resurrection of Christ.

After Christ's resurrection they came out of their graves, and went into the holy city - that is, Jerusalem, and appeared unto many, which means they visited people.

Perhaps they sought their friends and acquaintances with whom they had lived on earth. How wonderful was it not?

This is also a sign of the Saviour's victory. Jesus had conquered death for His people. That is made clear by these things.

I cannot tell you more about this resurrection of the saints, for God's Word tells us no more.

But shortly, at the Day of Judgment, all God's children shall rise again, and then they shall for ever glorify God with soul and body. Certainly, the unconverted shall also then arise, but they shall be cast with soul and body into eternal damnation. What a difference, isn't it, between God's people and the wicked. That difference is terribly great.

And where shall your place be, boys and girls?

That is a solemn question, but consider it very carefully, for it must be one or the other. There is no third way.

# THE BIBLE HISTORY TOLD TO OUR CHILDREN

## - NEW TESTAMENT -

### Matthew 27 v 54

### Mark 15 v 39

### Luke 23 v 47

The Roman centurion jumped up with his soldiers in panic when the earth was shaken. Of course they did not know that the saints had arisen.

Yet the three hour's darkness and this earthquake made a deep impression on this heathen centurion. It was something extraordinary, something very unusual, in truth, this man they had crucified was no ordinary human.

The eyes of the centurion's soul are opened and he cries with, feeling: "Truly this Man was the Son of God." Thus writes Mark; but Luke writes that he said: "Certainly this was a righteous Man."

Well, how was it then? ... Who is right? ... Difficult, is it not? ... No indeed, it is not at all difficult. What God's Word tells us is true. The Roman centurion said both words. He cried out that Jesus was the "Son of God" and that He was "righteous". Mark tells us one part, and Luke tells us the rest. Oh, from this heathen's mouth the Jews must hear once more that they have rejected the Christ who is Righteous.

I wrote "this heathen", but he was no longer a heathen. God had opened his eyes. God had given him a new heart. For the heathens too, the Saviour shed His blood.

### Luke 25 v 48

The great multitude slowly wends its way

back to the city. Why should they wait any longer? ... Certainly, the two murderers are still alive, but they do not care about them. The One whom they have really come to see, is dead. Jesus of Nazareth lives no longer. It is all over.

But the derisive mouths are stopped. There is no more laughing and chattering. The signs and wonders have made some impression even upon them.

That morning they had cried defiantly: "His blood be upon us and upon our children", but now they are far from having peace of mind.

The voice of conscience within tells them that something really fearful has taken place. That voice blames them. They have done something terrible.

Look, there they go back home, but as they walk they smite their breasts. That is a sign of mourning.

Oh, with most of them, perhaps even with all of them, it was not upright repentance for the cruel injustice which has been done. They fear the punishment for they felt that such things would not remain unpunished. Evidently a solemn misgiving of approaching calamities made them so fearful.

Whether there were any amongst them who confessed their guilt in truth, we do not know. God only knows that.

Probably you are very pleased that you did not crucify the Lord Jesus, are you not? ... But ... if you refuse to listen to the call of God, which comes to you Sunday after Sunday by the means of God's servants; if you live on heedlessly in the paths of sin, then you are rejecting the Lord Jesus too.

Oh, if you die unconverted, then one day

# THE BIBLE HISTORY TOLD TO OUR CHILDREN

## - NEW TESTAMENT -

you too will smite upon your breast, and cry out in despair: "Mountains, fall on us, and hills cover us."

That is what will happen when the Son of God shall appear in the clouds of heaven, to judge the quick and the dead.

Seek the Lord then, now, while you still live. The door of grace is not yet closed for you, boys and girls, it is not too late yet!