

God's Miraculous Commentary on the Cross

Scripture: Matthew 27:45–53

Code: 2397

INTRODUCTION

Most people are aware of the death of Jesus Christ, but they have little understanding of its significance. Each year at Easter, many people hear about the crucifixion and resurrection. What does the death and resurrection of Christ mean? History tells us that thirty-thousand Jews were crucified by the Romans around the time of Jesus Christ. Why do we remember only one of them? Even the two thieves who died on either side of Christ remain nameless. Surely others died because they were uncompromising in something they stood for. Certainly others were examples of love, character, honesty, and integrity. So why does history celebrate only the death of Jesus Christ? In what way is it significant? The answer is in the Word of God.

A. The Meaning of the Cross in the Old Testament

Genesis 3:15 promised the coming of One called the "seed of the woman." Everyone knows it's the man, not the woman, who has seed. The title then refers to a virgin birth. Verse 15 says the One born of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, even though He would be bruised in the heel. While Christ was being bruised on the cross, He was fatally bruising the one who was bruising Him--the devil.

We learn more about the meaning of the cross through the lives of Abraham and Isaac. God called Abraham to offer his son on the altar as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:2). As he was ready to kill his son, Abraham discovered that God provided an alternative--a ram caught in the thicket (22:12-13). Here we learn about the provision of a substitute for one who ought to die.

The Mosaic law, and all the ceremonies and sacrifices accompanying it, delineate the need for a blood sacrifice to atone for sin. Other passages in the Old Testament fill in other details about the cross (e.g., Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, Zechariah 12).

B. The Meaning of the Cross in the New Testament

The apostle Paul tells us that God made Christ a curse for us when He was put on the cross (Gal. 3:13). The apostle Peter says He who was just suffered the sins of the unjust (1 Pet. 3:18). The apostle John describes Jesus as a lamb slain (Rev. 5:9). The writer of Hebrews tells us Christ was offered once for the sins of the world (Heb. 10:10).

If we want to know the meaning of the cross, we have only to look from beginning to end in holy Scripture. However, I believe one monumental description of the meaning of the cross is often overlooked: the one given in Matthew 27:45-53.

Six miracles attended the death of Jesus Christ. They are God's commentary on the meaning of the cross.

I. SUPERNATURAL DARKNESS (v. 45)

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour."

Luke 2:9-11 tell us that when Christ was born, a great light appeared in the sky. The prophet Isaiah said the Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6). Of Himself Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness" (John 8:12). He also said, "While ye have light, believe in the light" (John 12:36). Associated with the birth, life, and ministry of Christ is light. But associated with His death is darkness.

A. The Time of the Darkness

From the sixth hour (twelve noon) to the ninth hour (three in the afternoon), the sun became dark. That is the time of day when the sun is at its zenith. Mark 15:25 tells us Jesus was crucified at the third hour (nine in the morning). Jesus had been on the cross for three hours by the time it became dark. He remained there another three hours before He died at the ninth hour (three in the afternoon.) During those hours He endured the mocking and jeering of the passers-by, the Jewish leaders, and the thieves.

Jesus Breaks His Silence

Jesus broke His silence only three times during the first three hours He hung on the cross.

1. To offer forgiveness

The first time He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). He said that on behalf of the Roman soldiers who crucified Him.

2. To save a thief

Later, He broke the silence again by saying this to the repentant thief hanging beside Him, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

3. To care for His mother

He broke silence a third time when He saw the apostle John and His mother, Mary, standing at the foot of the cross. Knowing they would be lost without Him, He committed them to each other (John 19:26-27).

Apart from those three occasions, the three hours from nine to noon were unbroken by any word from Christ.

B. The Extent of the Darkness

As the second three hours began, the land became dark instantaneously. The Greek word translated "land" is ge. It could also be translated as "earth." We don't know if the darkness engulfed the land of Israel only, Jerusalem and its environs, or the half of the earth normally engulfed in sunlight. God could do any of those things.

1. The examples

a) Exodus 10:22-23--God made it dark in the land of Egypt only. He can create localized darkness if He desires. b) Joshua 10:12-14--Here the Lord made the sun stand still--it stayed in one spot in the sky. That means the earth had to stop revolving for a period of time while God did His work. What an impact that must have made on the world! c) 2 Kings 20:9-11--The shadow on a sundial went backwards as a sign to King Hezekiah that he would recover from his illness. God again performed a miracle with the earth's revolution.

There are some indications from extrabiblical literature to suggest that the half of the earth in daylight went black. Third century church father Origen referred to a statement by the Roman historian Phlegon, who mentioned that unusual darkness (Against Celsus II.33). Tertullian, when referring to the darkness to his pagan audience, said, "you yourselves have the account of the world-portent still in your archives" (Apology XXI).

2. The explanation

Some have suggested that maybe a cloud passed in front of the sun or that maybe it was a sirocco (an east wind that accumulates dust to such a degree that the sky appears black). It couldn't have been either of those because Luke 23:45 clearly says, "The sun was darkened." Luke used the Greek word ekleipo, from which we get the word eclipse. It literally means, "to fail utterly." The sun failed--God turned it off supernaturally. Now if in so doing God allowed the normal sequence of events to take place, the world would have gone out of existence. Somehow God turned out the sun and sustained the world.

The darkness was not technically an eclipse. The sun and the moon at opposite ends of the earth at the time of year when the Passover is celebrated. An eclipse can occur only when they're in the

same location in the sky. Since this was not a scientific eclipse, we can take *ekleipo* in its broad meaning: "the sun failed." The land became as dark as midnight in the middle of the day.

B. The Meaning of the Darkness

1. The traditional views

The rabbis taught that the sun's failing indicates God's judgment on the world for committing a great crime. Certainly the world committed a great crime in crucifying Jesus Christ. Others suggest the sun went dark because nature dropped a veil over the sufferings of Christ. Some believe the darkness was a sympathetic act on God's part to cover the nakedness and dishonor of His Son. Others think the darkness was a divine protest.

2. The biblical view

What is the true meaning of the darkness? What was God saying? Not one biblical writer comments on the darkness at the cross of Christ. They didn't need to because the Old Testament clearly states what it means. Darkness was a symbol of divine judgment.

a) Isaiah 5:26-30--Isaiah predicted the coming judgment of Israel, when its life would be choked out and its people taken into captivity. He described it as a time of darkness and sorrow. b) Isaiah 13:10-11--Here Isaiah looks ahead to God's final judgment on the world. He says, "The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine. And I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity." God associates darkness with judgment. c) Matthew 24:29-30--"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." Man will be horrified at the unrelenting darkness God will bring to the world.

Throughout Scripture you will find judgment associated with darkness (e.g., Joel 2:30-31; Amos 5:18, 20; Zeph. 1:14-18). If God's salvation is seen as light, His judgment is seen as darkness. Both the Old Testament and New Testament writers refer to it. When rebellious angels were cast out of heaven, they were bound in chains of darkness (2 Pet. 2:4).

The darkness at the crucifixion of Christ represents God's divine judgment. The cross became the place for the pouring out of His wrath. Jesus Christ was not just one man among thirty-thousand people who were crucified. He was not some well-meaning martyr. He was the recipient of divine judgment. There is only one thing that God judges, and that's sin. The darkness at the cross is the Father's commentary on His judgment of sin. So we see that the crucifixion of Christ was much bigger than one man dying for something He believed in.

II. SOVEREIGN DEPARTURE (vv. 46-49)

A. The Cry of Christ (v. 46)

"About the ninth hour [three in the afternoon] Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli [Hebrew], lama sabachthani [Aramaic] that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

The people knew Jesus was quoting Psalm 22:1. The Jews knew it well because they had no doubt chanted it, recited it, and memorized it. Even those Jews who spoke predominantly Aramaic and knew little Hebrew knew Eli, Eli referred to God because El was the name for God.

This is a miracle in reverse--a supernatural event beyond human understanding--for God is separated from God. God the Father turns His back on God the Son. Tradition says Martin Luther went into seclusion to try to understand this mystery, but came out more confused than when he began. I can relate. After experiencing the fury of God, Jesus cries out as He is separated from God.

1. The explanation of the separation

Why was Jesus separated from God?

a) The testimony of the Father Habakkuk 1:13 says this about God: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." God turned His back on Jesus because He can't look on

sin. What does that tell us about the cross? That Jesus actually became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). If this was the death of a loving martyr, of an innocent person who had a good cause, God would have looked on Him with favor. But when He turned His back on Jesus, He was confirming that Christ was bearing our sin.b) The testimony of Scripture Isaiah 53:5 says, "He was wounded for our transgressions." Romans 4:25 says He was "delivered for our offenses." First Corinthians 15:3 says, "Christ died for our sins." First Peter 2:24 says Christ "bore our sins in his own body on the tree." First Peter 3:18 says, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." First John 4:10 says God "sent his Son to be the propitiation [atonement] for our sins." Galatians 3:13 says Christ was "made a curse for us." And 2 Corinthians 5:21 says God "made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us." Christ didn't just bear sin; He became sin. He bore all the sins of all people of all ages. Thus Hebrews 2:9 says He "tasted death for every man." That's why He came to earth. In Matthew 20:28 says, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." God forsook Christ because He cannot look on sin.

2. The essence of the separation

What kind of separation did Jesus experience? He wasn't separated from His divine nature--He didn't cease to be God or He would have ceased to exist. He was not separated from the Trinity in essence or substance, but He was separated in terms of intimate fellowship and communion. When a child sins against his father, he does not cease to be his father's child. However He does cease to know the intimacy of loving communion with him on account of the sin. In the same way God had to turn His back on Christ.

a) At the incarnation When Christ first came into the world, He experienced a certain separation from God. Philippians 2:6-7 says Jesus "did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond servant" (NASB). When Christ became incarnate, He let go of some of His equality with God. Jesus asked His Father to restore the glory He had with Him before the world began (John 17:5).b) At the cross On the cross Jesus experienced an even more profound separation--the separation of utter sinfulness. When God turned His back on Jesus Christ, He was turning from sin and not from Christ. God will always turn His back on sin.(1) Christ's hatred of sin Jesus bore the weight of all the sin of all the ages, yet He Himself was never a sinner. In the midst of being engulfed in all that sin, He never had a desire for it. He hated it.(2) Christ's longing for God Jesus expressed His longing in these words: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" What did Jesus long for? God. Therein lies the evidence of His pure spirit--a purity He maintained. Soon after that He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Then He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). Jesus said that knowing full well God would accept Him. Even though He bore sin, He never became a sinner. That is why the writer of Hebrews said He is "yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He was made sin, but He did not sin--that is a great paradox of the Christian faith. The second miracle that occurred on the cross was the Father's turning His back on the Son. What does that teach us? That Christ became sin as He bore the sins of man.

B. The Mockery of the Crowd (vv. 47-49)

1. Taunting rejection (v. 47)

"Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elijah." They knew He didn't say Elias, Elias, but Eli, Eli. They knew He was saying, "My God, my God." They were mocking Him again. The prophet Malachi said that before Messiah came to set up His Kingdom Elijah would come (Mal. 4:5). They were saying, "This poor, misguided Messiah still thinks He's going to have His Kingdom. Maybe He's calling for Elijah to announce Him as Messiah and proclaim His Kingdom!" Their mockery was cruel, cynical, and sarcastic.

2. Temporary relief (v. 48)

"Straightway one of them [probably a Roman soldier] ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink."

John 19:28 tells us Jesus said, "I thirst," which led to what happened in Matthew 27:48. Great thirst

certainly was part of the torture of crucifixion. John 19:29 says the sponge was put on a hyssop reed, which measured about eighteen inches. That indicates the cross stood low to the ground. The sponge was lifted up to Jesus' lips so He might moisten them to help quench His thirst. The King James Version says Jesus was given vinegar. The Greek word is oxos, which was a cheap, sour wine containing a high percentage of water and a low percentage of alcohol. It was a common drink laborers and soldiers used to quench their thirst.

When His torturers gave Christ the wine, was that an act of mercy? It may have been, but it only served to prolong His agony.

3. Thoughtless reckoning (v. 49)

"The rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."

The crowd saw the thirst of Christ as just one more thing to mock. They carried out their malicious mockery as far as they could, until He finally died.

The people missed God's purpose in the crucifixion of Christ. It's hard to imagine, but they mocked Christ during the darkness that covered the land. You would think they would have considered that darkness more carefully. They should have remembered Isaiah's words about darkness and judgment. They should have remembered that other prophets associated darkness with judgment. They could have realized that Joel's prediction was coming to pass (Joel 2:31). When they heard Jesus cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," they might have understood He was bearing their sin. But that meant they had to understand that God required a perfect sacrifice for their sin. They didn't realize it was Christ. So they ignored the darkness and mocked Jesus.

III. SACRIFICIAL DEATH (v. 50)

"Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the spirit."

A. A Verbal Demonstration of Christ's Strength

Jesus had broken His silence five times previous. The first three occurred in the first three hours. Then in the hours of darkness He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" and "I thirst." Now just before He yielded up His life, He cried with a loud voice. It's important that His cries in the last three hours of His life were with a loud voice because they demonstrate that He still possessed physical strength. He had not reached utter exhaustion. That made it clear He had the resources to stay alive. John 19:30 says He cried, "It is finished." Then He cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

B. The Voluntary Nature of Christ's Death

After crying out, Jesus "gave up the spirit" (Luke 23:46). Other places in Scripture that refer to someone's giving up the spirit use a Greek word that speaks of one breathing his last. However, Matthew and John didn't use that word in describing the death of Jesus. They used two words that refer to someone who is handing over his life of his own accord. Jesus sent His spirit away as an act of His will. Here lies the third miracle of the cross: Jesus' life was not taken from Him; He voluntarily gave it up.

1. Its demonstration

Christ's voluntary death is demonstrated in its speed. Victims normally lingered for days on the cross, but Christ died after six hours. According to Mark 15:44-45, Pilate was astonished when he heard Jesus was dead. He even sent someone to check on it because it was so unusual for anyone to die that soon.

2. Its power

Jesus had the power not only to take His life out of the grave, but also give it up whenever He wanted. No man has the power to do that anymore than he has the power to raise himself. You could shoot yourself, but that means you give yourself up to the bullet. You could take poison, but that means you give yourself up to the poison. You could throw yourself off a bridge, but that means you give yourself up to the fall. Jesus has power over death and life. No one took His life from Him; He

freely gave it.

John 10:11 says, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Verse 15 says, "I lay down my life for the sheep." Verses 17-18 say, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." The cross reveals that only God, who controls both death and life, could voluntarily sacrifice Himself.

IV. SYMBOLIC DEVASTATION (v. 51a)

"Behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom"

A. Limited Access to the Temple

1. The symbol of God's presence with man

The word temple does not refer to the whole temple; it is translated from the Greek word naos, which here refers to the inner sanctuary--the Holy of Holies. That was the dwelling place of His symbolic presence. A great curtain covered the Holy of Holies. No one could enter it except the high priest once a year on the Day of Atonement. On that day he sprinkled blood on the altar for the sins of the people.

2. The symbol of God's separation from man

That only the priest could enter the Holy of Holies symbolized that no man had true access to the presence of God. None of the sacrifices actually atoned for sin; they were symbols. No lamb, goat, ram, turtle dove, or pigeon was ever sufficient to atone for sin because no one could keep the law of God. No man's righteousness was adequate to allow him access to God. That fact was continually before the people because God's dwelling place was veiled from them--they couldn't enter the Holy of Holies. God cannot receive sinners into His presence until their sin is dealt with. The curtain kept men from God in the sense of true intimacy. It symbolized man's separation from God.

B. Unlimited Access to God

When Christ died, the veil was ripped from top to bottom. At that very moment, the temple would have been filled with pilgrims and priests performing sacrifices. Suddenly, to the horror of everyone, the Holy of Holies was exposed.

1. The beginning of internal worship

In the death of Jesus Christ, God was saying that there is now total access to His holy presence. Why? Because Christ paid the penalty for sin. God throws His arms wide open to sinners. As a result, the writer of Hebrews could say, "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). We now can rush into the presence of God. The separation no longer exists because the death of Jesus Christ removed it. The barrier is no more.

2. The end of external sacrifices

When God ripped the curtain to the Holy of Holies, He pronounced the end of the Judaistic system. It was the end of the sacrifices and the priesthood. Within a few years, the Gentiles desecrated and trampled the Temple into oblivion. That destruction began when God ripped the veil.

When Christ died, access to God became a reality. The Old Covenant was over and the separation no longer existed. God initiated a New Covenant through the blood of Christ. He made His holy presence available to all who would come in the name of Christ to have their sins forgiven. Notice that the curtain was ripped from the top to the bottom. That shows us men didn't do it: it was a supernatural act of God. (A man could only attempt to rip it from the bottom to the top.) God opened His presence to everyone who comes in the name of Jesus Christ.

V. SUDDEN DESTRUCTION (v. 51b)

"The earth did quake, and the rocks were split."

At the death of Jesus Christ, the Father brought about a devastating earthquake in Jerusalem that

split open rocks and created fissures in the ground.

A. A Sign of God's Appearance

In the Old Testament, earthquakes frequently preceded God's appearance (Ex. 19:18; 1 Kings 19:11, 2 Samuel 22:8, Psalm 18:7, 77:18, Isaiah 29:6, Jeremiah 10:10; Nahum 1:2, 5).

B. A Sign of God's Judgment

Someday the world and the heavens are going to shake to the point of destruction. Revelation 6:12-13 tells us that the stars are going to fall, the constellations are going to come apart, and the light of the sun and the moon are going to go out.

1. A work of regeneration

There will be a great shaking of the earth in the final judgment. Why? Because God is going to redo this cursed earth. In the original creation there were no earthquakes. God created a perfect environment for Adam and his race. Man was to enjoy the presence of God in the perfection He intended for paradise. But when Adam sinned, not only he and his wife were cursed, but the earth was cursed as well. To this day the earth is rocking and reeling under the curse. Romans 8:22 says all creation groans, waiting for its return to what Milton entitled his famous epic: Paradise Regained. The Bible promises there will be the day of a new heaven and new earth. Someday the earth will be what it is supposed to be. Someday the usurper, Satan, will be deposed from his rule of the earth. Christ will become the new monarch. The earth will no longer be cursed; it will be a glorious new earth.

Hebrews 12:26-28 says, "Yet once more I [the Lord] shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved." God is going to shake the old earth out of existence and make a brand new one--a new earth and new heaven in which Christ will reign supreme as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

2. A work of redemption

What does the future of the earth have to do with what happened at the cross? When God shook the earth at the death of Christ, I think He was giving the world a taste of what will happen in the future when the King returns. When Jesus died on the cross, He so perfectly accomplished the Father's will that He earned the right to be King of the earth. He earned the right to take the title deed to the earth out of the hand of God (Rev. 5:7). One day He will unroll that deed and begin the process of taking over the earth (Rev. 6--19). When Christ finished the work of redemption, the Father said, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Philippians 2:10 says, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." The shaking of the earth at the death of Christ was God's way of guaranteeing the promise of a renewed world and universe. Christ has earned it, and it will happen one day.

VI. SUBSEQUENT DELIVERANCE (vv. 52-53)

A. The Resurrection of the Saints (vv. 52-53a)

"The graves were opened; and many bodies [Gk. somata] of the saints that slept were raised, and came out of the graves."

This was a real resurrection of bodies, not just spirits. Not all bodies were raised, only select Old Testament saints. When Jesus died, their spirits came from the dwelling place of righteous spirits. They were joined with their glorified bodies, which came out of those graves.

B. The Testimony of the Saints (v. 53b)

"After his [Christ's] resurrection, [they] went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

You can imagine the kind of testimony they had about Christ's resurrection. Why didn't they go into the city to testify until after Christ rose? Because 1 Corinthians 15:20 says, "Now Christ is risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." So they didn't begin to speak until after Christ

rose from the dead.

I don't believe they spoke to anyone except those who already believed. There's no biblical evidence of Christ ever appearing after His resurrection to anyone other than believers. I'm sure the believers were thrilled to meet them. The risen saints would have testified that Christ was alive, guaranteeing the reality of resurrection for all believers. They became living proof of that guarantee.

The cross is the greatest hope for resurrection because Christ paid your sin. You are free from death and free to live. In His kingdom we will have glorified bodies like His.

CONCLUSION

What do we see at the cross? The wrath of God is depicted in supernatural darkness. The holiness of God is seen when He turned from Christ, who had become sin. The grace and mercy of God is depicted in Christ's voluntary act of self-sacrifice to redeem unworthy men. The curtain in the Temple is ripped from top to bottom as God opens the way of access to Himself. The shaking of the earth reminds us that the promised new earth and heaven will come. Jesus will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and we'll be there to reign with Him. And the resurrection of the saints at the death of Christ guarantees the resurrection of all who believe in Him. That is God's supernatural testimony of the meaning of His Son's death.

Focusing on the Facts

1. What does the Old Testament teach about the meaning of the cross?
2. What does the New Testament teach about the meaning of the cross?
3. What is associated with the birth, life, and ministry of Jesus Christ? What is associated with His death?
4. How many times did Jesus break His silence during the first three hours of His crucifixion? What did He say?
5. What are some examples of occasions when God created a supernatural darkness?
6. What caused the darkness at the crucifixion (Luke 23:45)?
7. What does darkness typically symbolize in the Old Testament? Give some examples.
8. What did the darkness at the crucifixion mean?
9. Why did Jesus cry out to God in Matthew 27:46? What did that confirm about the purpose of the cross?
10. What did Christ do in addition to bearing man's sin (2 Cor. 5:21)?
11. Describe the essence of Christ's separation from God.
12. In the midst of bearing the world's sin, what did Christ long for?
13. What did the crowd do to Jesus in spite of the darkness in the land (Matt. 27:47, 49)?
14. Why is it significant that Jesus cried loudly before He yielded up His spirit?
15. How do we know that Christ's death was voluntary? Explain.
16. Why was Jesus able to die of His own will?
17. What happened to the veil shielding the Holy of Holies when Christ died (Matt. 27:51)? What did that signify?
18. Why will the earth shake in the final judgment of God?
19. What does the shaking of the earth in the future have to do with the earthquake that occurred at the crucifixion of Christ?
20. Whom did God raise from the dead when Christ died? What did they do after the resurrection of Christ (Matt. 27:52-53)?

Pondering the Principles

1. Look up the seven statements Christ made while dying on the cross for you: Luke 23:34, Luke

23:43, John 19:26-27, Matthew 27:46, John 19:28, John 19:30, and Luke 23:46. What does each statement reveal about the His character? What do you learn about His commitment? Based on Christ's example, what should your attitude be in the midst of the severest of trials?

2. According to Habakkuk 1:13, God is too pure to look at sin. Christ suffered and died on the cross to remove your sin that God might be able to look at you. At the moment of salvation, every sin you commit is paid for by Christ's death on the cross. However, what must you do to maintain fellowship with Him (1 John 1:9)? Search your heart. Be faithful to remember what Christ endured for your sake every time you contemplate sin.

3. Hebrews 4:16 says all believers should come before God's throne of grace. That means we have access to God, something people in the Old Testament never enjoyed. According to Hebrews 4:16, why should you approach God's throne? In what manner should you approach it? Perhaps you have not been taking advantage of the access you have to God. Examine yourself to see if there are any areas in your life that you fail to depend on God for. Bring them before Him now.

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