

THE TORN VEIL
Text: Mark 15:37-38

INTRO: Matthew, Mark & Luke all record the tearing of the veil. Luke also informs us that at the same time, the sun was darkened for 3 hours. It may be significant that both Matthew & Mark inform us that the veil was torn from top to bottom.

1. The veil had its beginning in the tabernacle built by Moses. In that original tabernacle--& later in Solomon's temple, it separated the holy place from the most holy place. Behind the veil was the ark of the covenant, a wooden box overlaid with gold, which contained the 10 commandments, Aaron's rod & a pot of manna miraculously preserved thru the centuries. The lid of the ark was called the mercy seat--the Presence of God dwelled there in a special sense. Behind the veil no man could go except the high priest, he only once a year on the day of atonement, with a sacrifice for himself & for the whole Israelite nation, Heb. 9:7.
2. When the Babylonians conquered Judah they destroyed Solomon's temple. The ark of the covenant was lost or destroyed. The temple of Zerubabel & the one later built by Herod, still contained the two compartments, separated by a veil, but there was no ark in the holy of holies.
3. The Hebrew writer tells us the veil represented the flesh of Jesus, which was torn to open for us an access into God's presence.

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh (Heb. 10:19-20).

4. By His sacrificial death, Jesus tore down every barrier between God & man.

I. HE PROVIDED A SACRIFICE THAT COULD FULLY TAKE AWAY SIN.

A. As soon as Adam & Eve sinned, they became conscious of their nakedness & sought to hide from God, Gen 3:7-8.

B. God used the skins of innocent animals to cover the nakedness of Adam & Eve. Innocent blood was shed to cover the guilty, Gen 3:21. This is in keeping with the wages of sin, Rom 6:23; Gen 2:17; Ezek 18:20; JS 1:14-15.

C. At least from the time of Abel, God chose blood to atone for sin, Heb 9:22.

D. God's people were not allowed to eat blood; it was sacred, Lev 3:17; 7:26. Even the blood of wild animals slain in the wilderness was to be poured out & covered with dust, Lev 17:13-14.

E. Even the heathen savages seemed to know that blood is the only remedy for sins.

F. In the Law of Moses, God revealed an elaborate system of animal sacrifice--& every bloody sacrifice scripturally offered represented the Sacrifice that one day would actually take away sins.

1. Bulls were sacrificed by the millions thru the centuries, yet no steer or ox ever took away one sin or completely cleansed the conscience of the sinner.

2. The scapegoat pictured One who would carry the sins of mankind into the wilderness, away from the presence of God. Yet, all the goats that were killed & all those released in the wilderness never took away one sin or completely cleansed the conscience of one sinner. Lev. 16:10, etc.

3. The pigeon or turtledove was offered in sacrifice, its head wrung off & its blood poured out, picturing the One whose blood would effectively take away sins--but those doves by the millions did not fully atone for one sin or cleanse the conscience of one sinner.
4. As the Israelites prepared to leave Egypt, every family was to kill a Passover lamb & apply its blood around the door of their houses. As God passed thru Egypt, slaying the firstborn of every household in the land, He would spare those families who had properly observed the Passover & applied the blood of the lamb. The Passover was given to the Israelites as a perpetual yearly feast & every Passover lamb slain by every Jewish family for 1500 years pictured the sacrifice of Jesus--the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. It has been estimated that from the time of Moses to the time of Christ, 375 million Passover lambs were slain, but all combined, they couldn't take away one sin or cleanse the conscience of one sinner.
5. Throughout the Mosiacal age the priests offered a morning & evening sacrifice--a lamb every morning & a lamb every night for 1500 years. But those sacrifices never took away one sin nor purged the conscience of one sinner. The best they could do was to represent, foreshadow, foretell the coming of a Sacrifice that could & would take away sins.

READ HEBREWS 10:1-4, 11-12

a man sinned, a goat died, etc.

- G. Christ has fulfilled the need for a sacrifice that can take away sin & cleanse the conscience of the sinner.

READ HEBREWS 9:24-26.

II. CHRIST FILLED THE NEED FOR AN ADEQUATE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD & MEN.

A. Every man who has had a proper awareness of the distinction between Deity & humanity, has felt a need for a mediator.

1. Job saw such a need in his day, Job 16:21.
2. The Israelites pled with Moses to be God's spokesman, EX 20:19.

B. The Levitical priesthood served as a type or shadow to represent the Mediator who someday would come & adequately do what those priests could never do.

READ HEBREWS 7:23-28.

C. Jesus, as our High Priest, bridges the gap between God & man. He is our Advocate, our Intercessor--our representative in heaven.

III. JESUS REMOVED THE BARRIER OF A CHOSEN PEOPLE AND A CHOSEN PLACE.

A. Under Levitical Law, every acceptable sacrifice was to be brought to the door of the tabernacle. Later, when the Israelites possessed the land of Canaan, they were to offer their sacrifices only in the place God chose to record His name in the city of Jerusalem.

Lev 17:3-4; Deut 12:13-14.

B. From the time of Moses to the time of Jesus, the Israelites were God's chosen nation & Jerusalem His chosen city.

C. But Jesus broke down every barrier that would hinder or discourage people of any race or background from becoming faithful worshipers of God. Only an improper attitude & an unwillingness to submit to His will can keep our worship from being acceptable to Him.

The Samaritan woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, & you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:19-24).

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands--that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came & preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Eph. 2:11-19).

NOTE: Just outside the temple itself was the court of the priests containing the altar of burnt offerings. Beyond that was the court of the sons of Israel, then the court of the women. Farther out was the court of the Gentiles beyond which no Gentile could proceed in his approach to the temple. Separating the court of the Gentiles from the rest of the temple complex was a marble wall about 4 & 1/2 feet high. In 1871, an

archaeologist discovered one of the warning notices which had been posted on that wall, warning Gentiles not to proceed further. The sign read: "No man of another nation is to enter within the fence & enclosure round the temple & whoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues." The accusation that caused Paul's imprisonment as recorded in the last 7 chapters of Acts was that he had brot a Gentile beyond the middle wall of partition that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the rest of the temple area. The charge was false, but I suspect Paul looked forward longingly to the day that wall would crumble & fall. Spiritually, it already had.

CONCLUSION: The blood of Jesus stands ready to wash away your sins. The Lord Himself stands ready to be your High Priest, Mediator, Intercessor & Advocate with the heavenly Father. The veil has been torn in 2 & the middle wall of partition broken down to grant you an entrance into the Presence & fellowship of God. What are you waiting for? Acts 22:16

Exton, PA, August 27, 1989
Eastside, Indianapolis, IN, April 24, 1990 (meeting)
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, July 15, 1990
Blue Ridge, VA, October 6, 1990 (meeting)
Leon Valley, Temple, TX, November 18, 1990
La Porte, TX, November 25, 1990
Lancaster Co., PA, May 26, 1993 (meeting)
Imhoff Ave., Port Arthur, TX, August 5, 1993 (meeting)
Westview, Athens, AL, May 19, 1996 (meeting)
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, July 20, 1997
Wonsley Drive, Austin, TX, April 7, 1998 (meeting)
Jonestown, TX, June 9, 2000 (meeting)
Benchley, Bryan, TX, June 15, 2000 (meeting)
Hyde Park, PA, September 20, 2001 (meeting)
Waterville, ME, December 26, 2001 (meeting)
South Loop, Crockett, TX, May 10, 2002 (meeting)
Highway 29, Liberty Hill, TX, May 16, 2002 (meeting)
Milton, VT, June 27, 2002 (meeting)
6th St., Stillwater, OK, October 4, 2002 (meeting)

Rice Rd., Tyler, TX, October 11, 2002 (meeting)
Taylors, SC, March 21, 2003 (meeting)
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, March 23, 2003