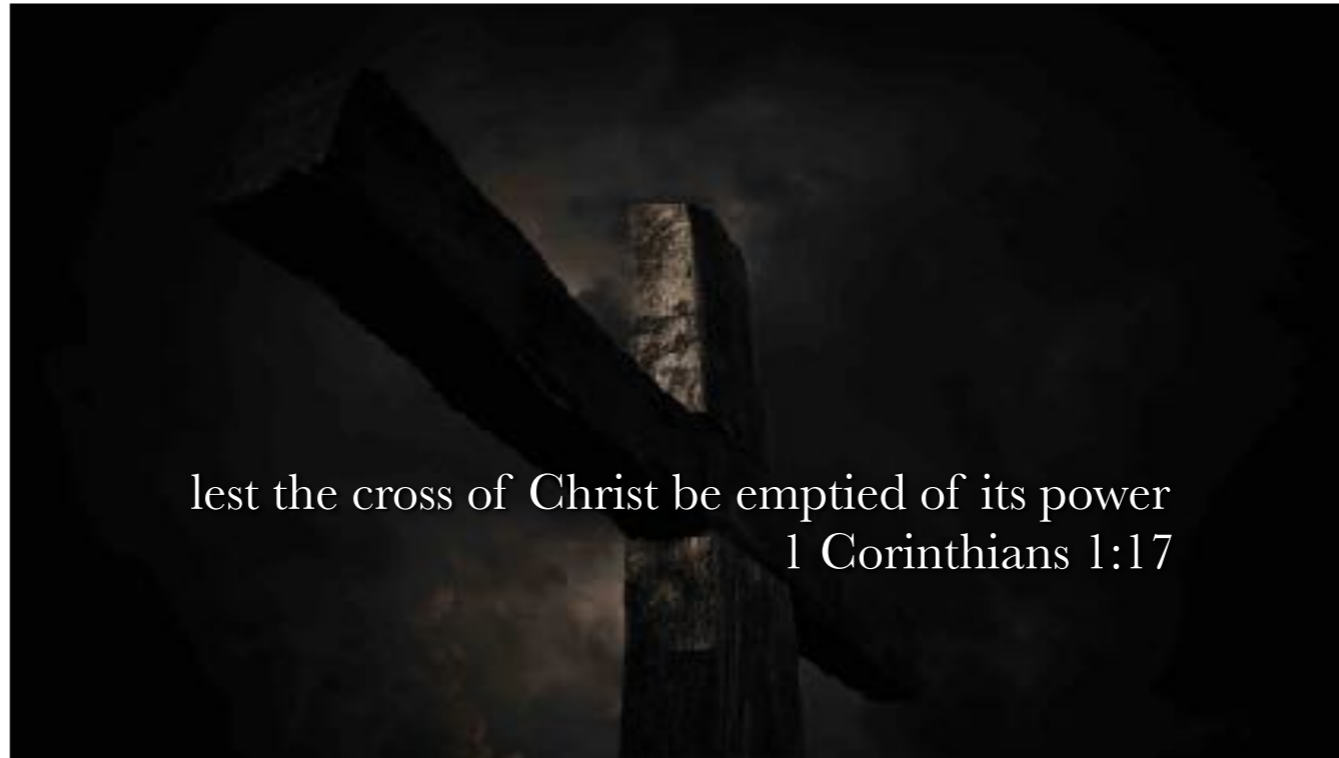


The Power of the Cross

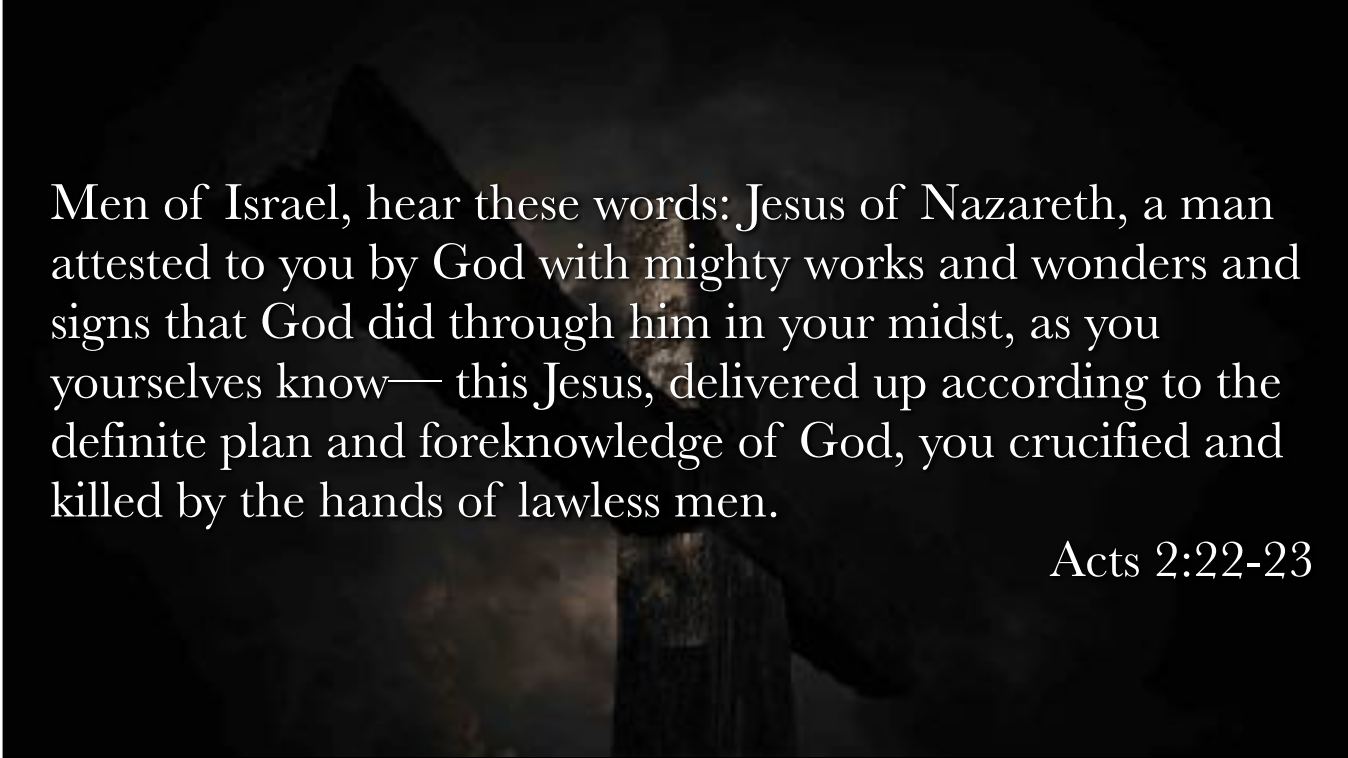
Part 2: Signs in Nature

1 Corinthians 1:17

- 1 Corinthians 1:17



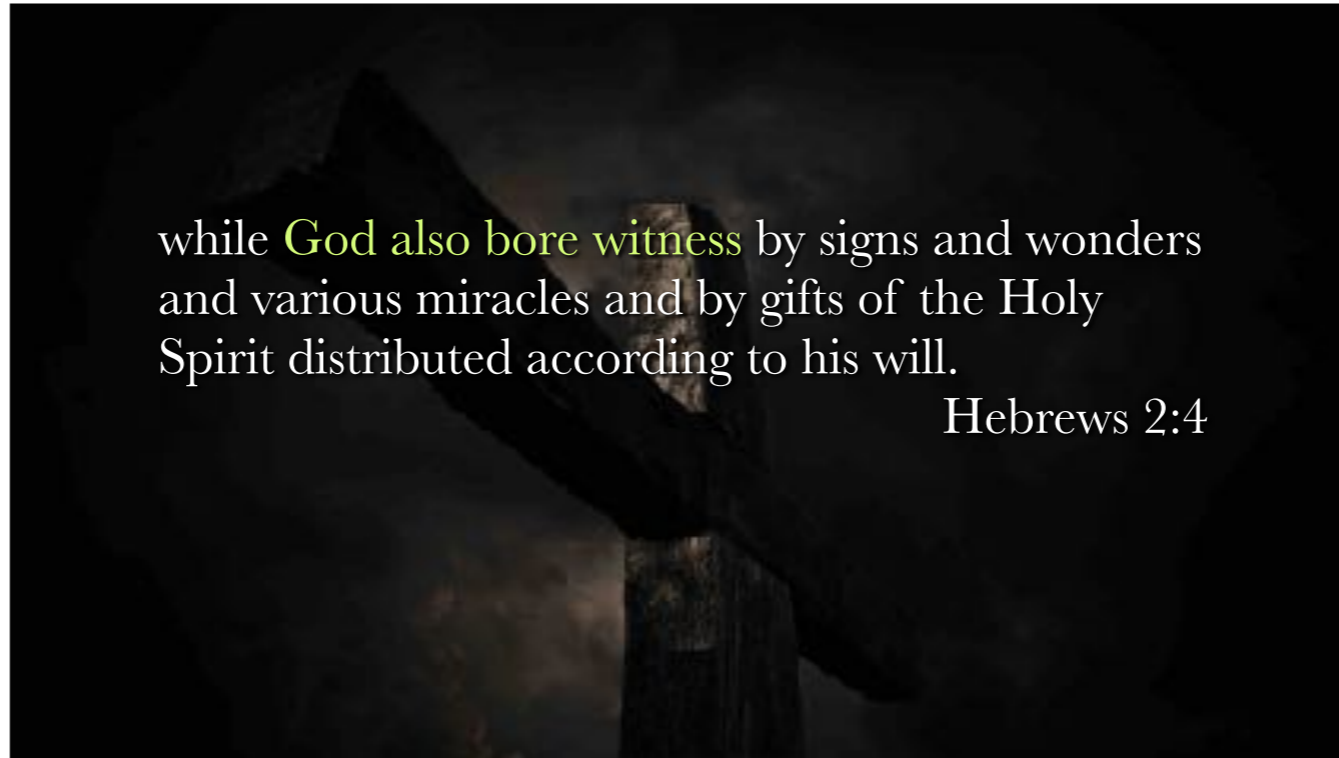
- 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.
- It's interesting that of all people, Paul was aware of the power of the cross
 - He was of an age that it's possible that he witnessed the death of Jesus on the cross
 - Or at least was aware of what had happened.



Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Acts 2:22-23

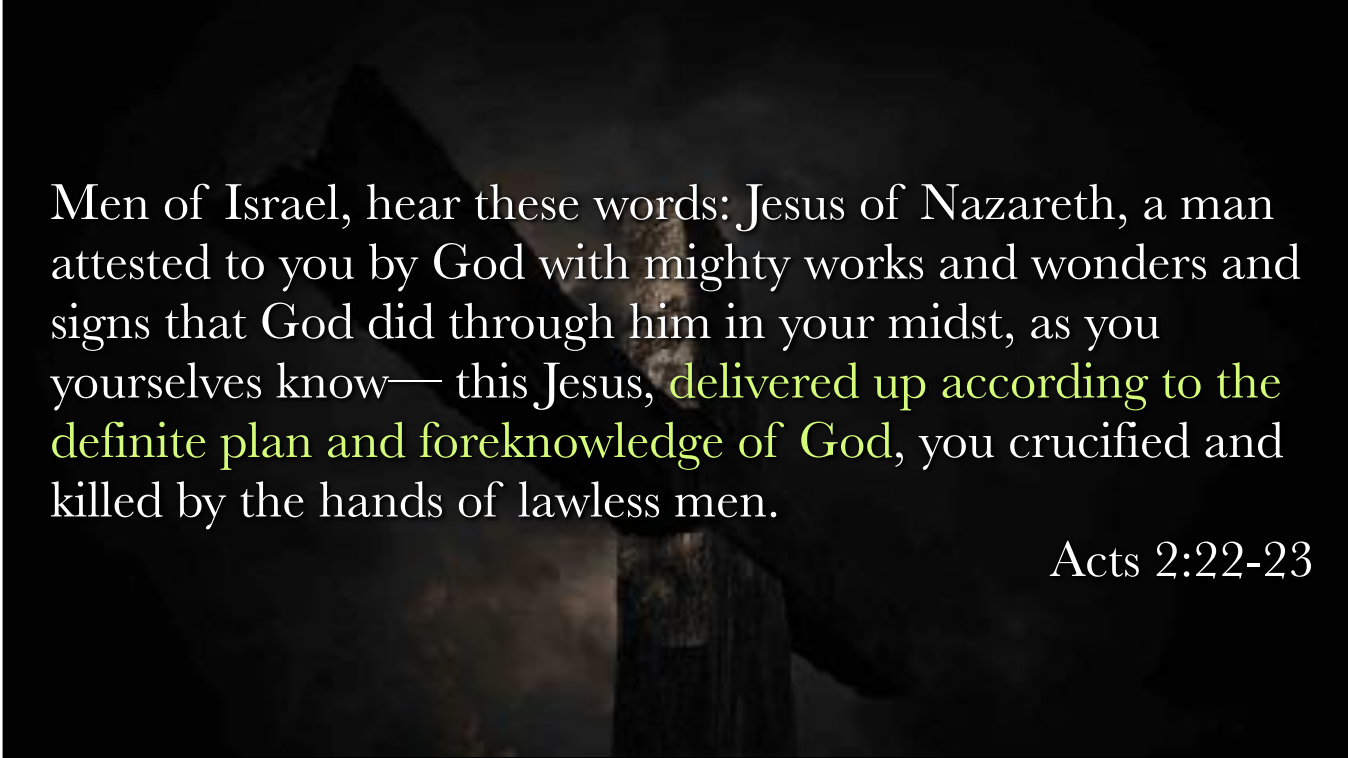
- Acts 2:22-23 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, **as you yourselves know**— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
- Peter emphasizes that not only did God do many miracles
 - But that they were generally well known among the Jews



while **God also bore witness** by signs and wonders
and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy
Spirit distributed according to his will.

Hebrews 2:4

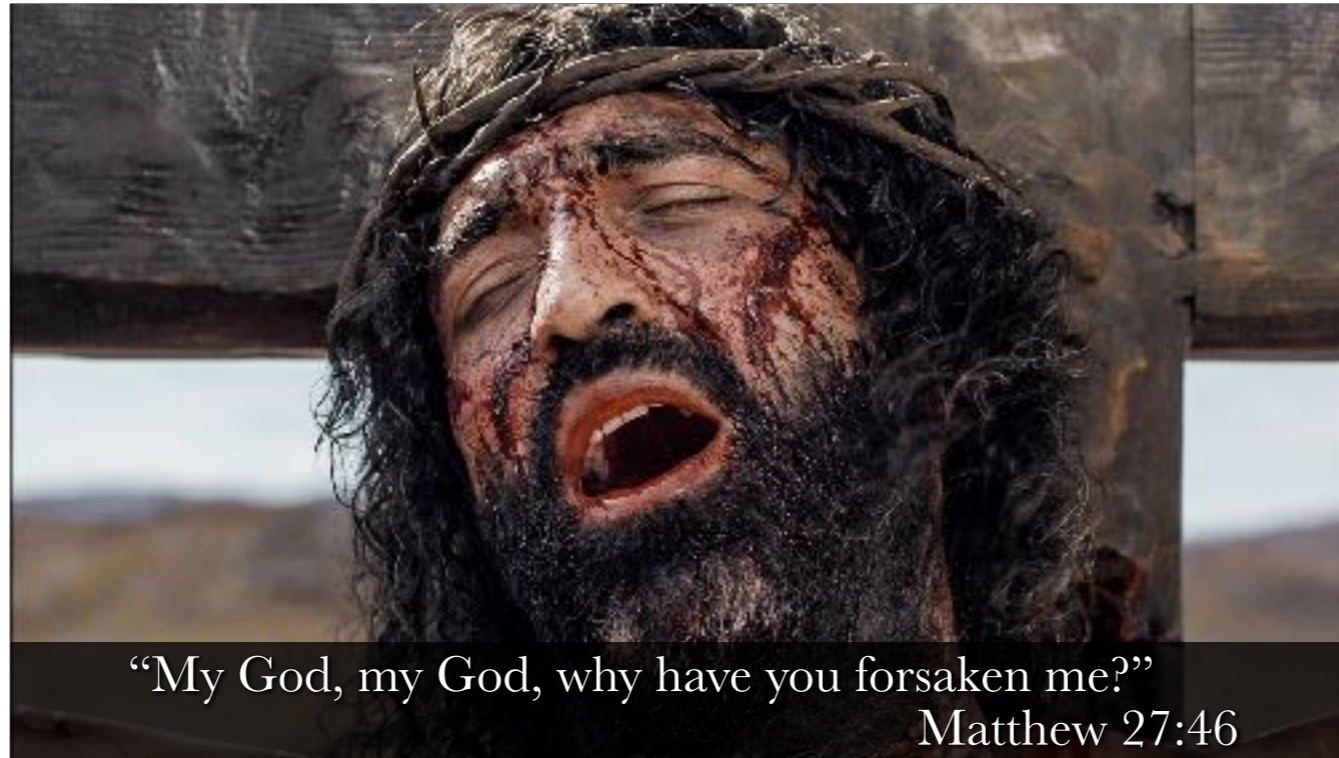
- While Jesus walked this earth God was providing clear proof that he was the Messiah, the savior of Israel and the world
- Hebrews 2:3-4 — how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while **God also bore witness** by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.
- But those demonstrations of power — God giving witness — didn't end when Jesus went to the cross: they intensified — couldn't be ignored



Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, **delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God**, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Acts 2:22-23

- Since the Jews demand signs (1 Corinthians 1:22) this is important
 - Do we think that Jehovah would not provide witness even as Jesus is accomplishing our salvation?
- God powerfully bore witness to what was happening on the cross
 - this was Jehovah's definite plan and foreknowledge of God
 - And Jehovah needed it to be clear what was happening that day



- Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- So many times the question has been asked about why Jesus said this while dying on the cross.
- Some responded to this with mocking and scorn using it as a reason to dismiss him and reject him as the messiah
- But this is also pointing to the prophecy of David 1000 years before the death of Jesus.



all things were created
through him and for him
Colossians 1:16

- There were more obvious signs for us to consider: natural signs
- Matthew 16:1-4
 - And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.
 - 2 He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ 3 And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’



all things were created
through him and for him
Colossians 1:16

- You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.
- 4 An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” So he left them and departed.



all things were created
through him and for him
Colossians 1:16

- Colossians 1:15-16 (ESV)

- 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.



all things were created
through him and for him
Colossians 1:16

- Romans 8:19-21: 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
 - God uses the natural world to teach us and help us
- 4 Things Happened at the time of Jesus' Death
 - Darkness for 3 hours
 - Curtain of the Temple Torn in Two
 - Earthquake
 - Resurrections



all things were created
through him and for him
Colossians 1:16

- Coincidence? It's really hard to see these all happening and claim it's just happenstance.
 - Remember that when Jehovah wanted to show Pharaoh and Egypt and Israel that he is the only true God he used signs in nature to indicate his power
 - Ten — again this would go beyond coincidence
 - Water to Blood, Frogs, Gnats, Flies
 - Plague on Egyptian Livestock
 - Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness
 - Death of the Firstborn

Darkness

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

Matthew 27:45

- Matthew 27:45-46 — Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
- Luke 23:44-45 — It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 while the sun’s light failed.

Darkness

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

Matthew 27:45

- What didn't happen...
 - This is not an eclipse
 - Time is too long by far: maximum solar eclipse ever was 7.5 minutes
 - Moon is on opposite side of the earth, not in position for an eclipse
 - We know because Passover happens at a full moon
 - Some have suggested that the sun was obscured by clouds
 - Possible
 - But three hours is a very long time for that kind of darkness even with storm clouds.
- Luke 23:45 while the sun's light failed

Darkness

Multitudes, multitudes,
in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near
in the valley of decision.
The sun and the moon are darkened,
and the stars withdraw their shining.

Joel 3:14-15

- Darkness in prophecy is associated with God's judgment
 - Joel 3:14-15 (ESV) 14 Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. 15 The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.
 - Isaiah 5:30; Isaiah 13:9-10



Darkness

Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”

John 9:39

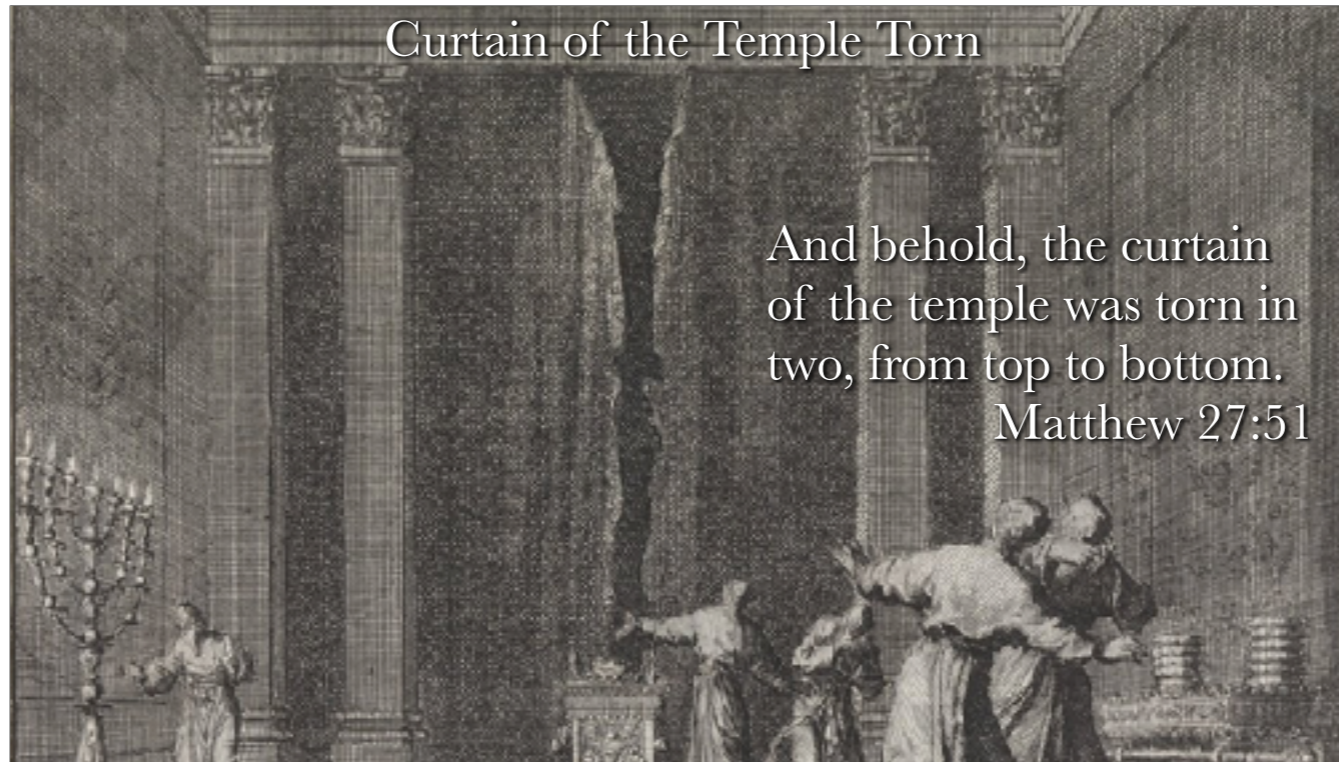
- In this moment, Jehovah has come in judgement
 - John 9:39 Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”

Darkness

Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

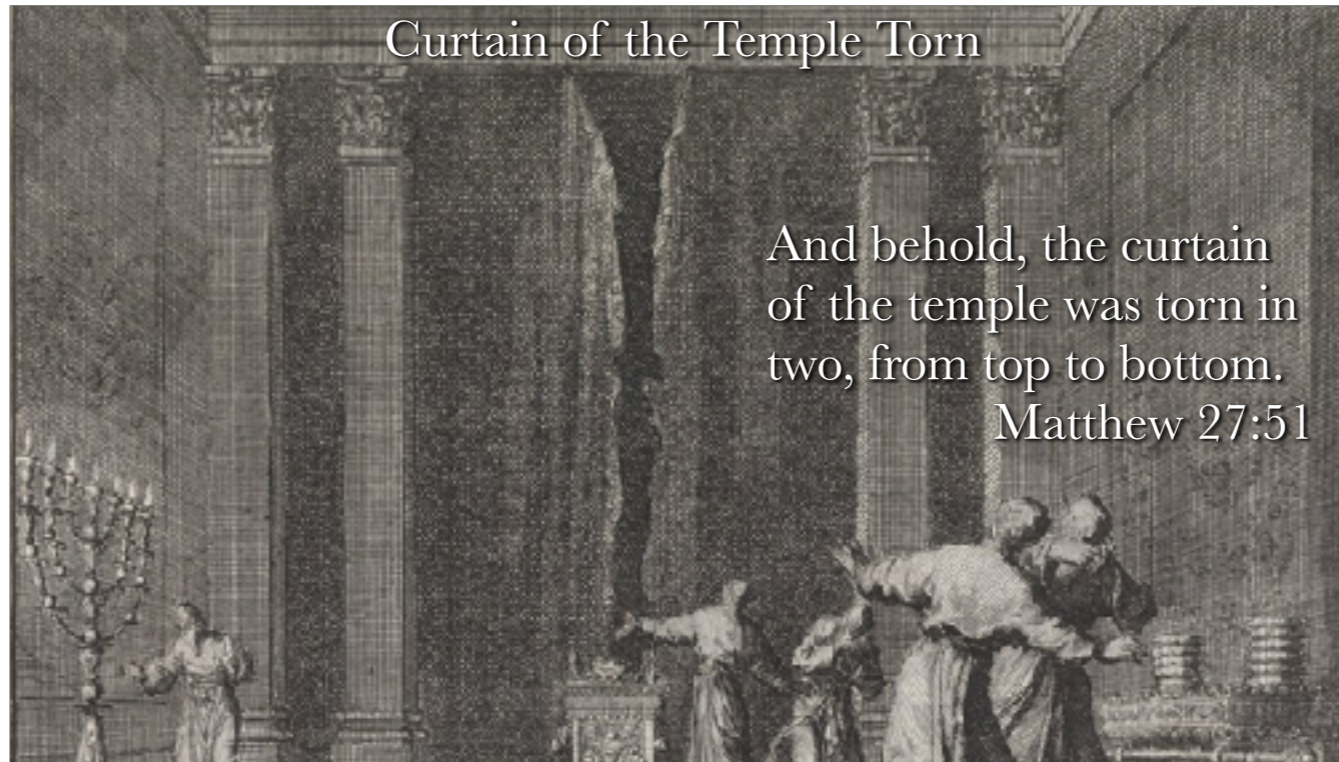
John 12:31-32

- John 12:31-32 Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”



- The Curtain Torn in Two

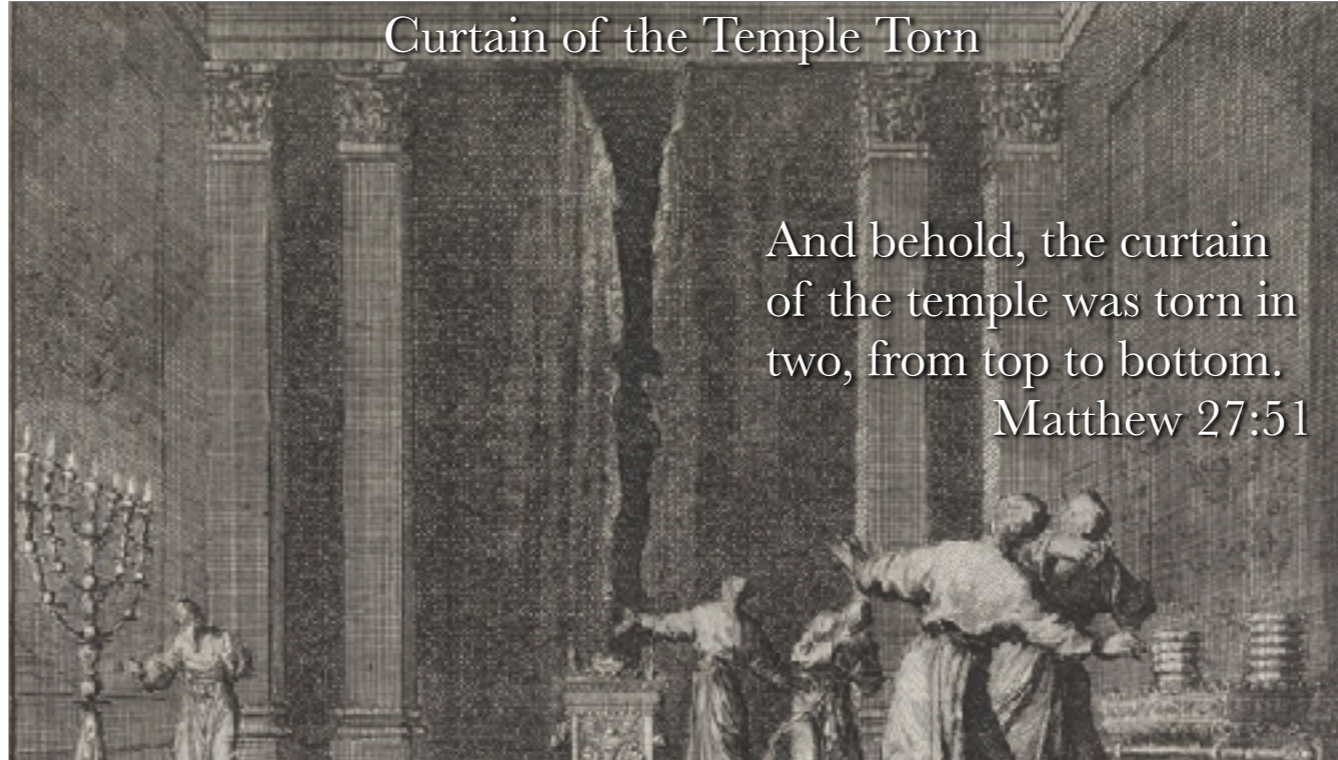
- Matthew 27:51 — And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.
- Mark 15:38 — And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.
- Luke 23:45 — while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.



- Which curtain?

- This is the temple as reconstructed by Herod, so was it the same as commanded for the tabernacle? Or the same as Solomon?
- Exodus 26:31 “And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it.
- Exodus 26:33 And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy.

Curtain of the Temple Torn

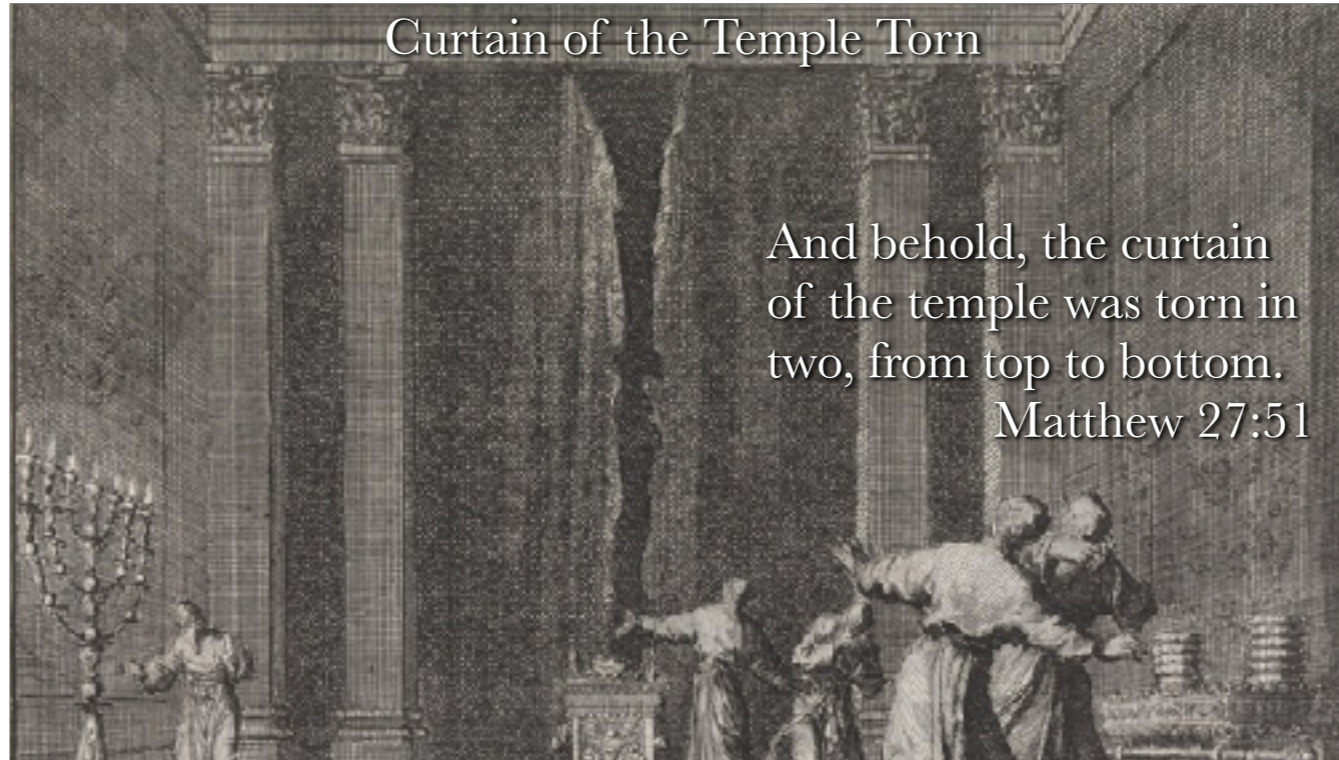


And behold, the curtain
of the temple was torn in
two, from top to bottom.

Matthew 27:51

- Exodus 26:34 You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place.
 - Exodus 25:21-22 (ESV) 21 And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. 22 **There I will meet with you**, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

Curtain of the Temple Torn



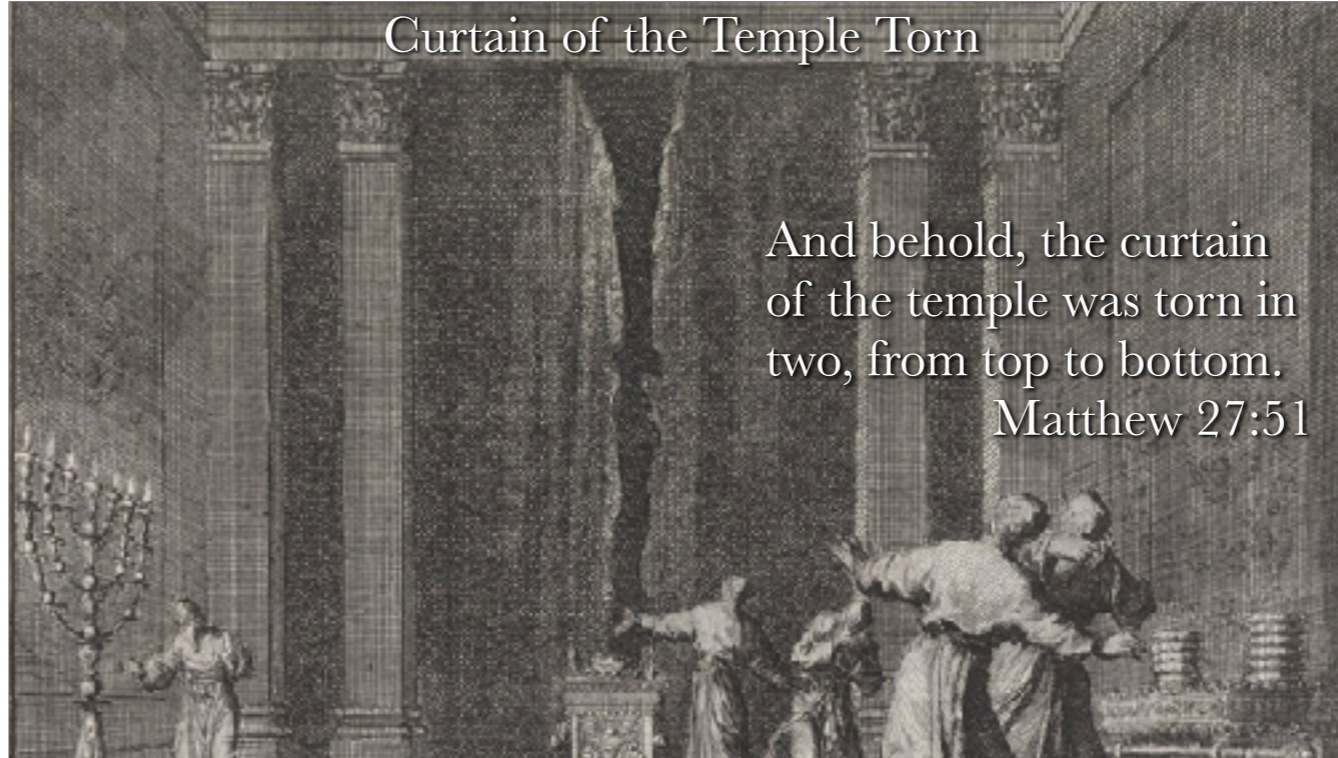
And behold, the curtain
of the temple was torn in
two, from top to bottom.

Matthew 27:51

- Opening the way to God for All

- Hebrews 9:11-14 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

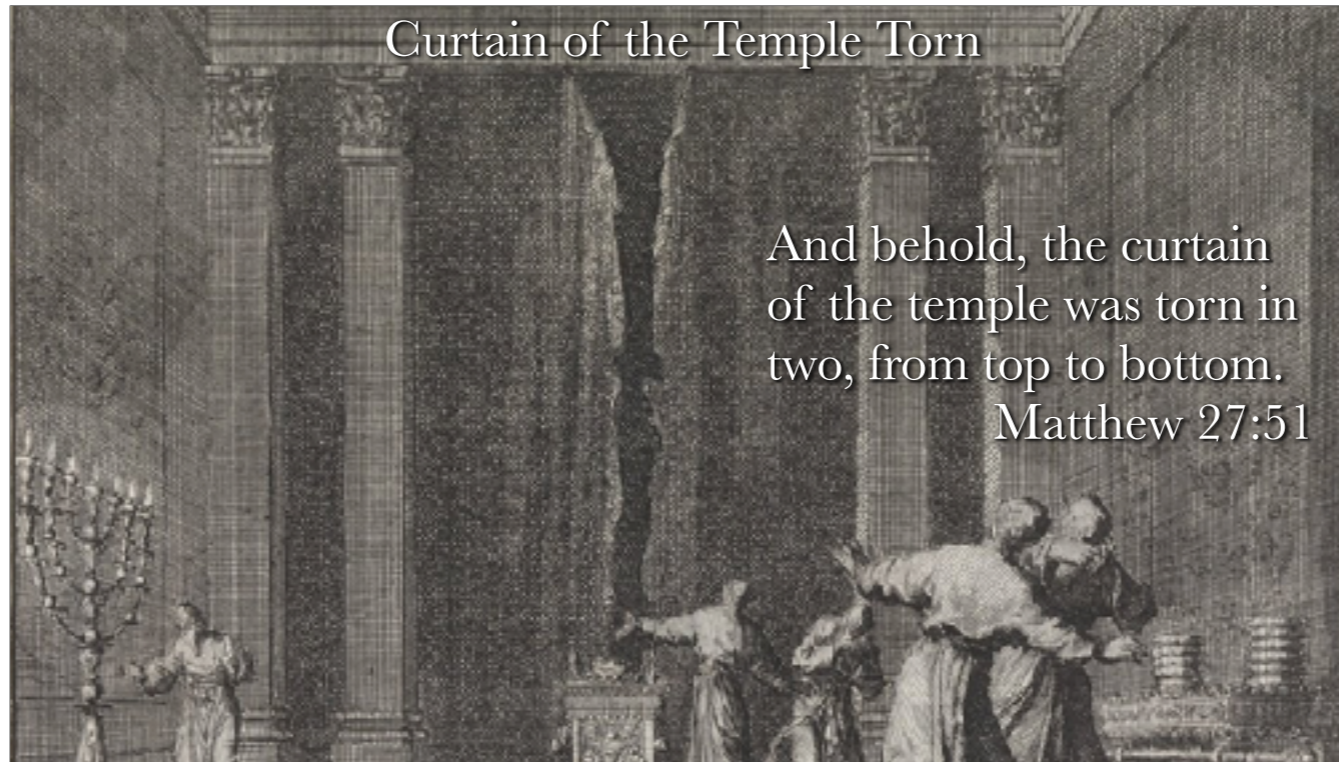
Curtain of the Temple Torn



And behold, the curtain
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Matthew 27:51

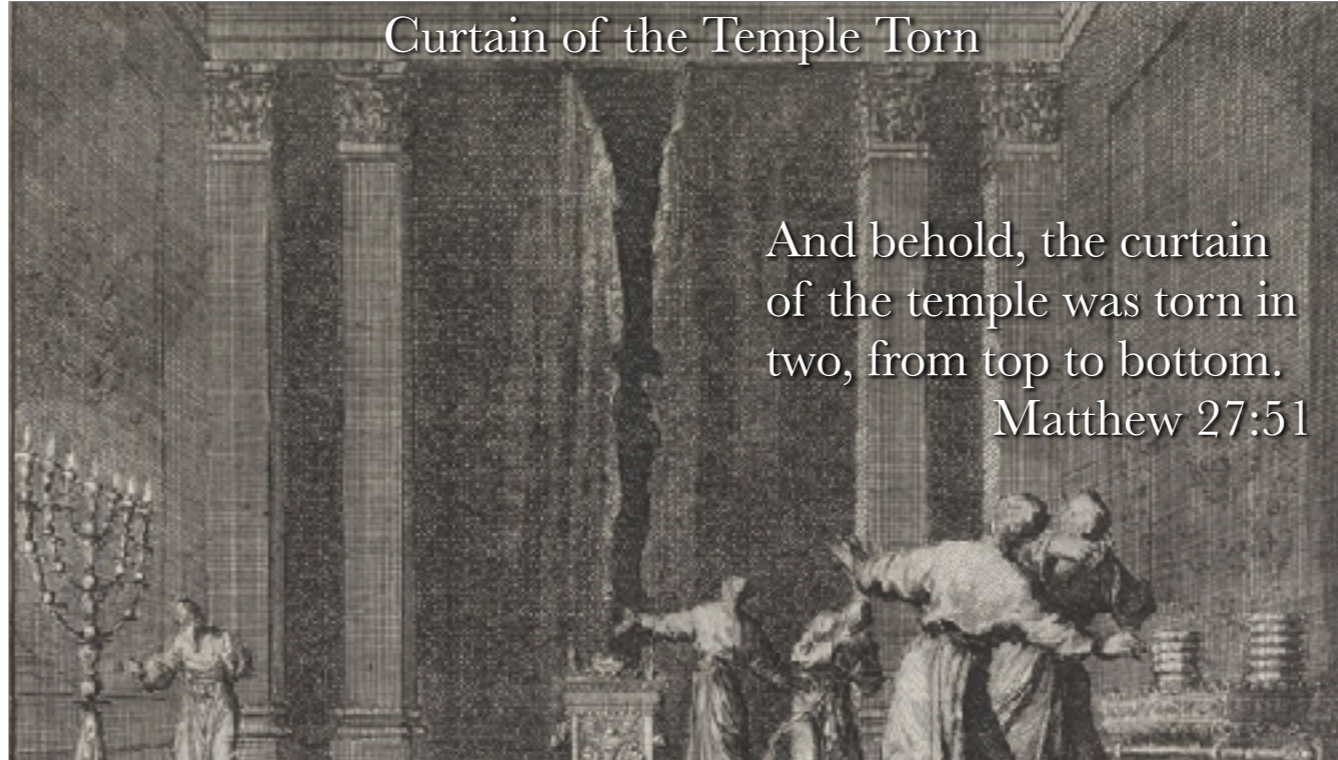
- 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.



- Hebrews 10:19-25

- Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,
- 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,
- 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

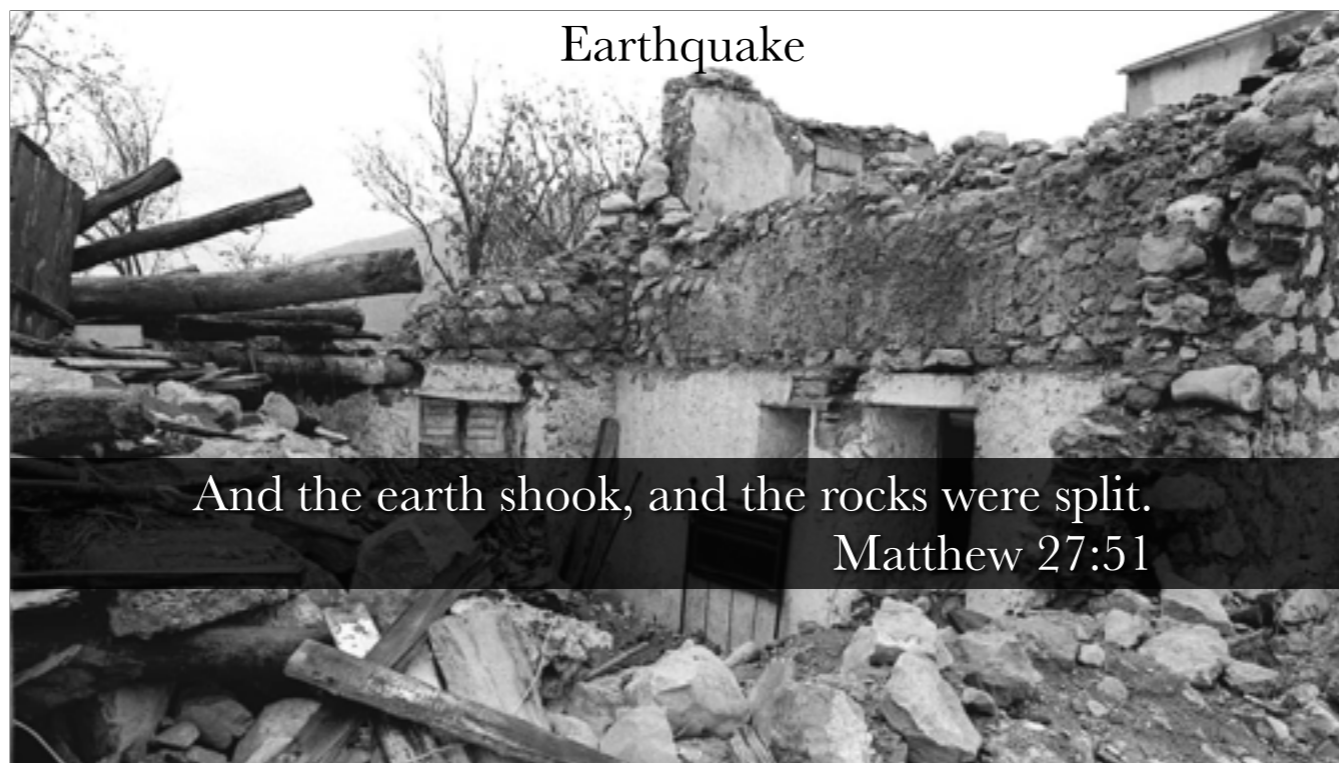
Curtain of the Temple Torn



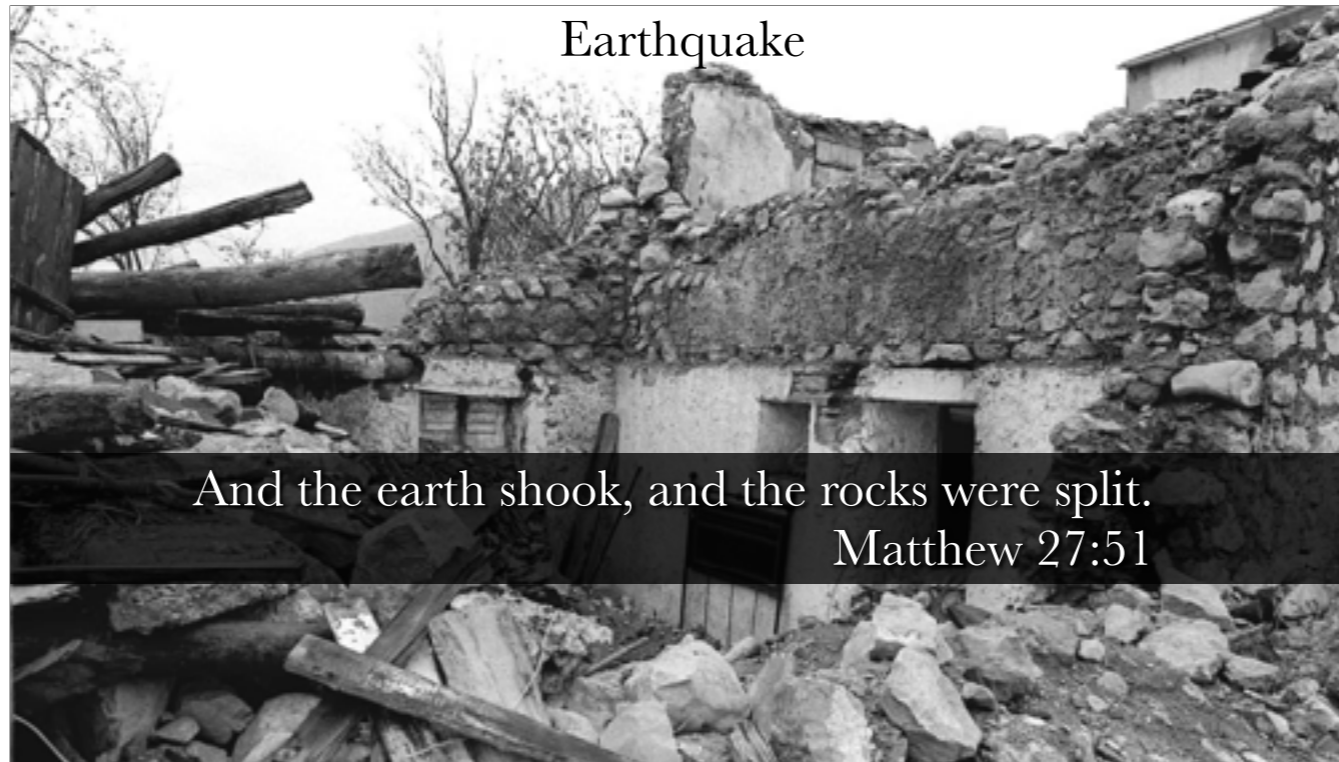
And behold, the curtain
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Matthew 27:51

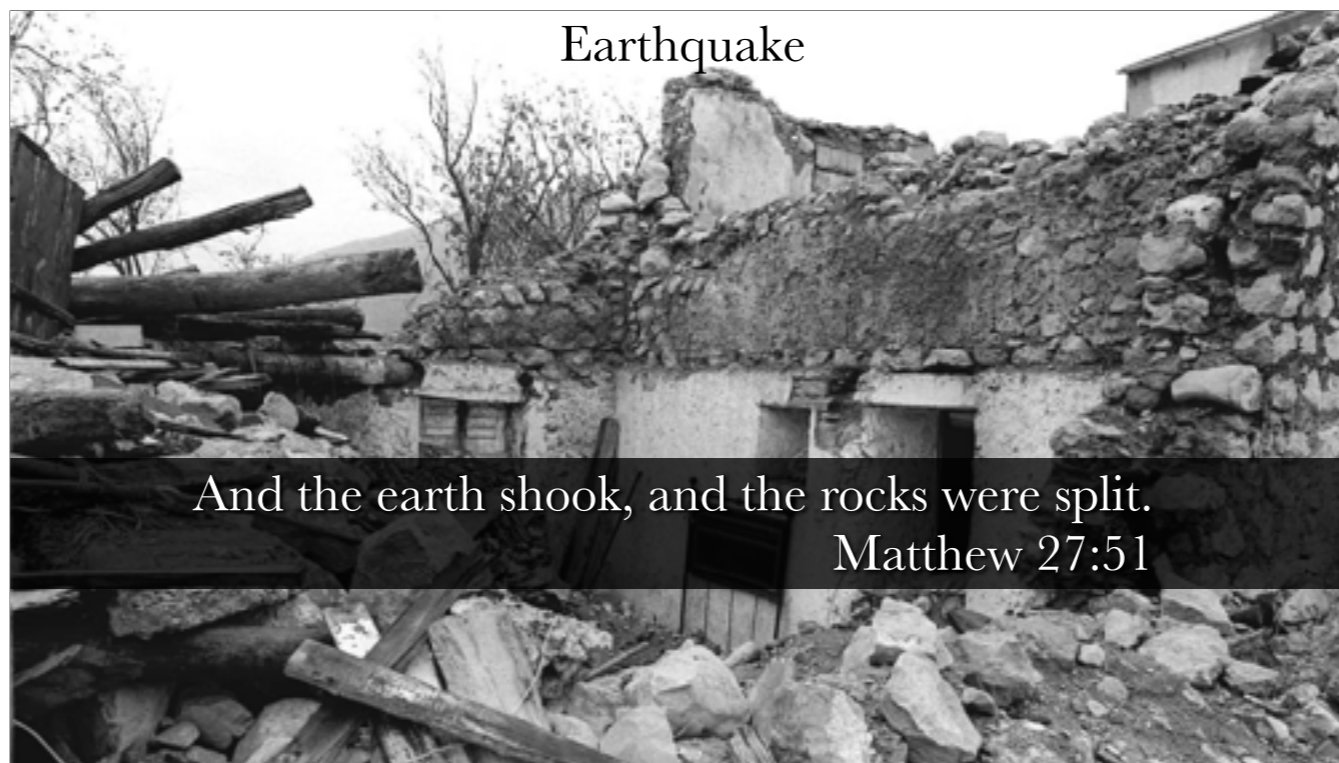
- 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
- 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.
- 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.



- Matthew 27:51 — And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.
- OT
 - Exodus 19:18-20 (ESV) 18 Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. 19 And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. 20 The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.



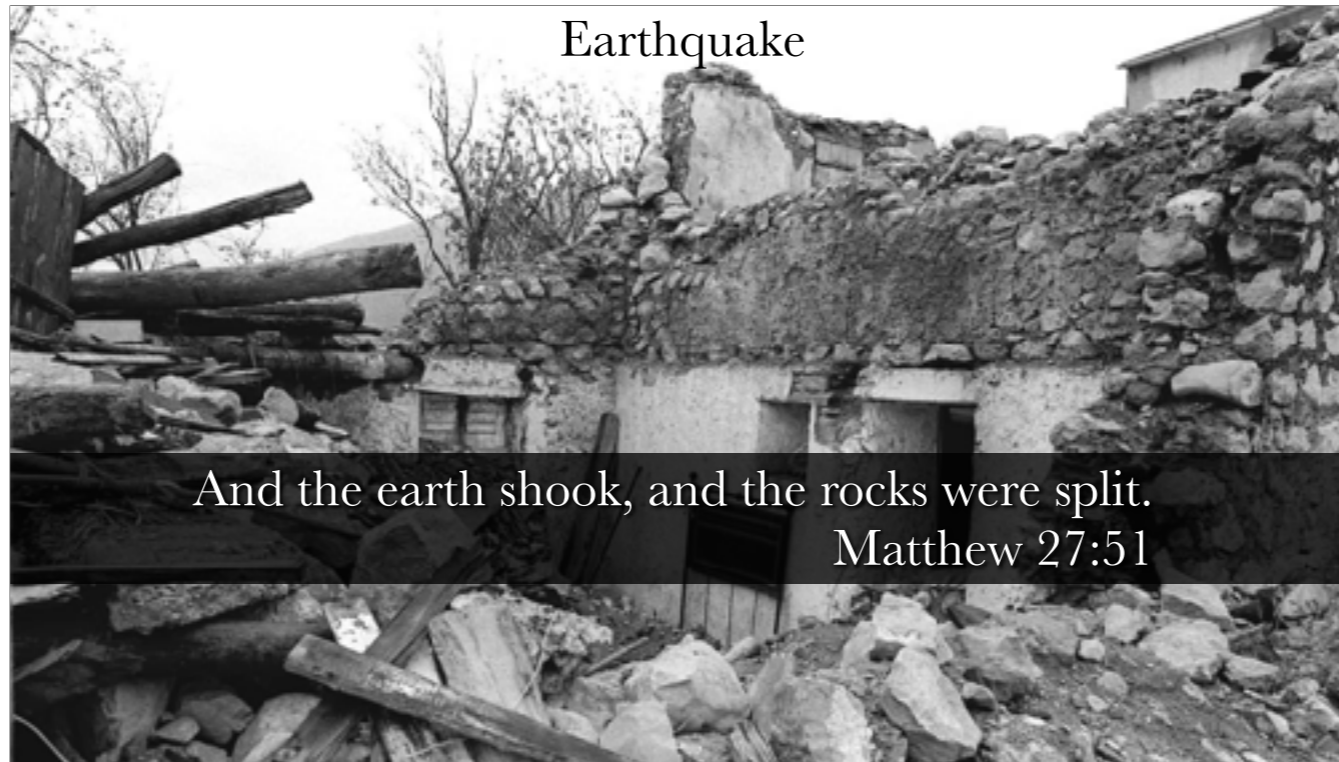
- Psalms 68:8 (ESV) 8 the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel.
- Psalms 114:4 (ESV) 4 The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.
 - Psalms 114:7 (ESV) 7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob,



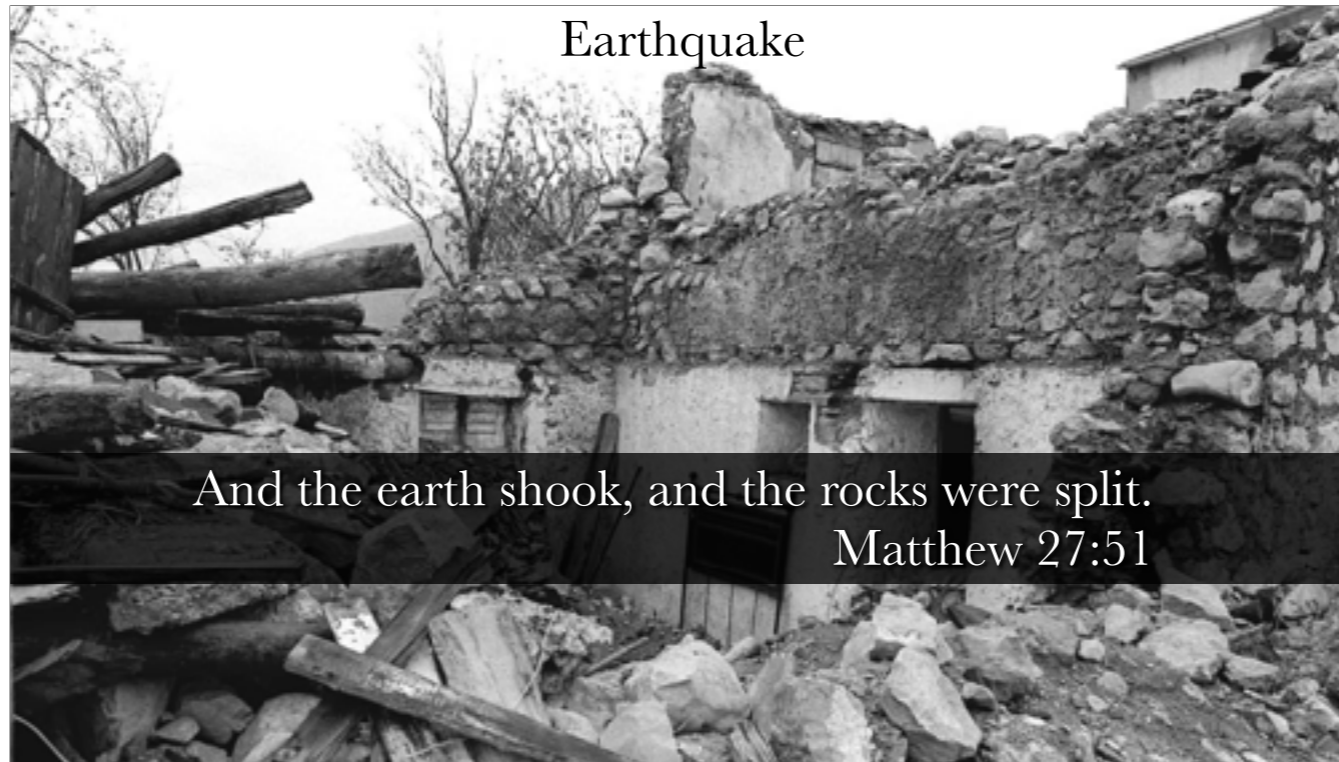
Earthquake

And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.
Matthew 27:51

- It maybe that the earthquake looked back to Mt. Sinai
 - God gave to Israel the law, and they were in his presence to be his people.
 - Exodus 19:4-6 — You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, **you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.** These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”



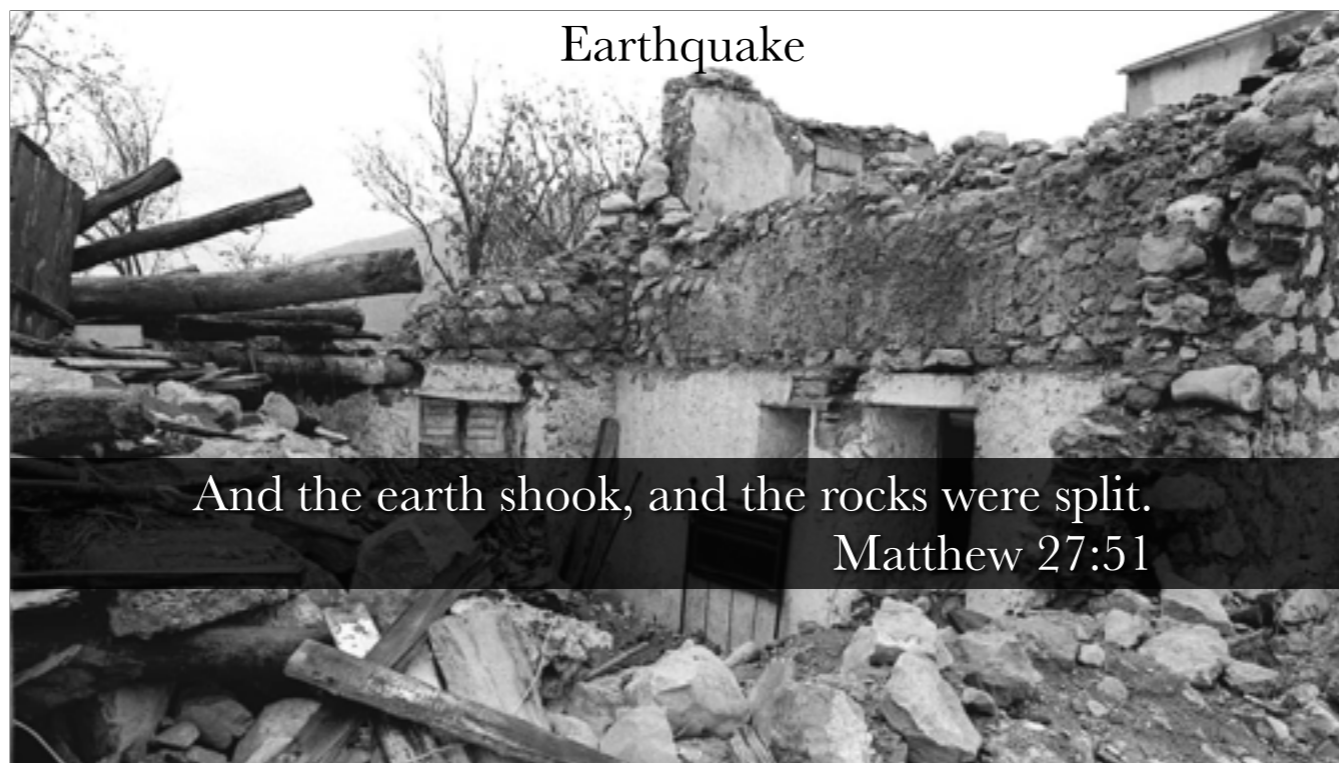
- At that time, the earthquake pointed to the presence of Jehovah at that place and among his people accomplishing his purpose.
- If so, this quake would remind the people of the great things happening at this moment
 - Jesus had cried out the first line of Psalm 22
 - Matthew 27:46 “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”



Earthquake

And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.
Matthew 27:51

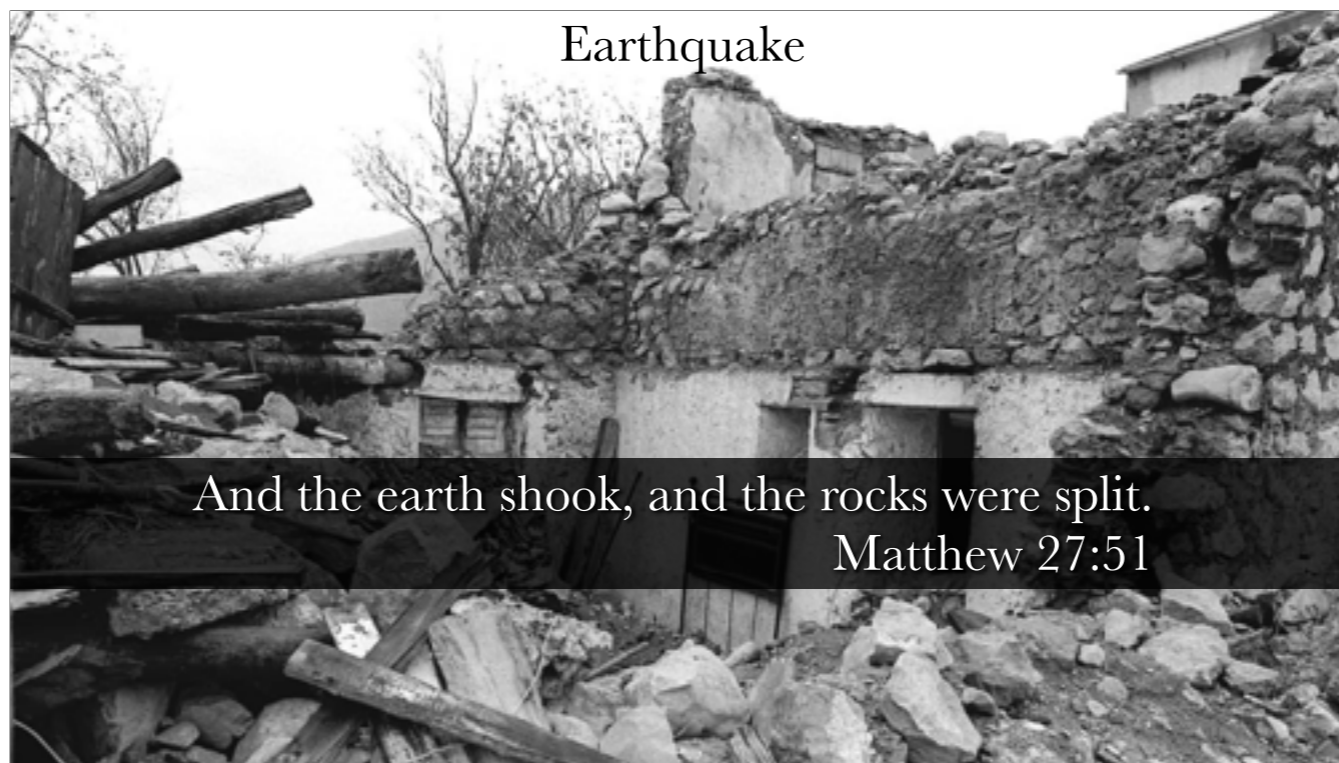
- And here is Jehovah answering ...
 - He is present, just as He was at Sinai
 - Jehovah did not forsake nor abandon Jesus just as he was obediently submitting to the will of God



Earthquake

And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.
Matthew 27:51

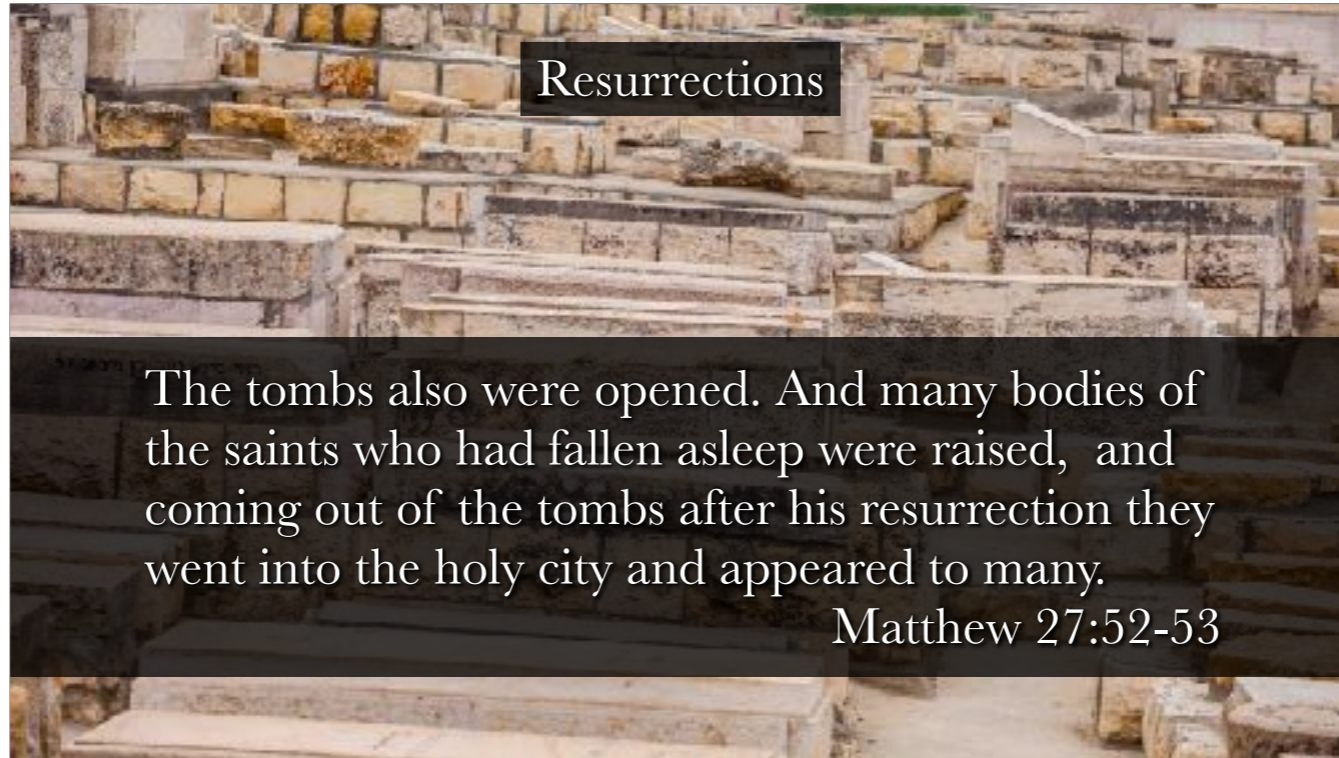
- He is acting according to his plan for our salvation
 - Acts 2:23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
 - Acts 2:36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”



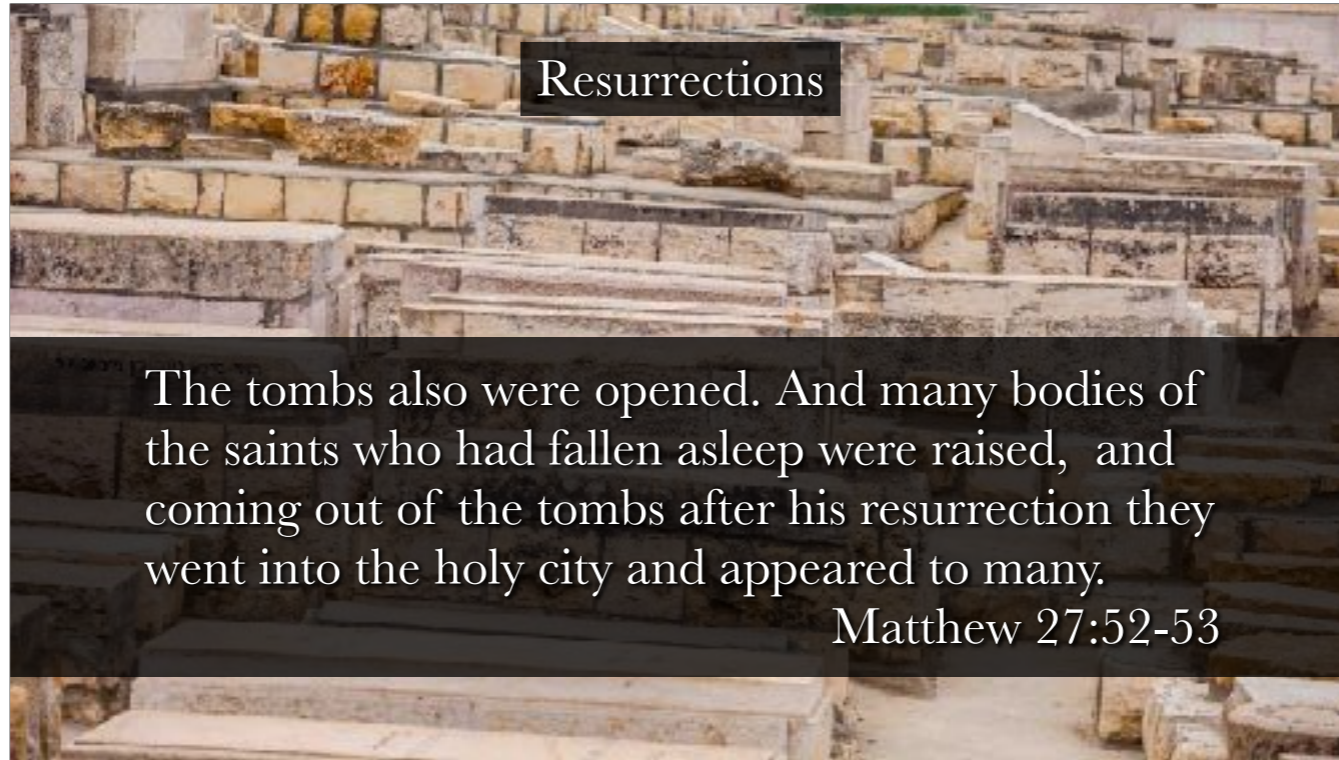
Earthquake

And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.
Matthew 27:51

- Acts 2:38-39 — And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

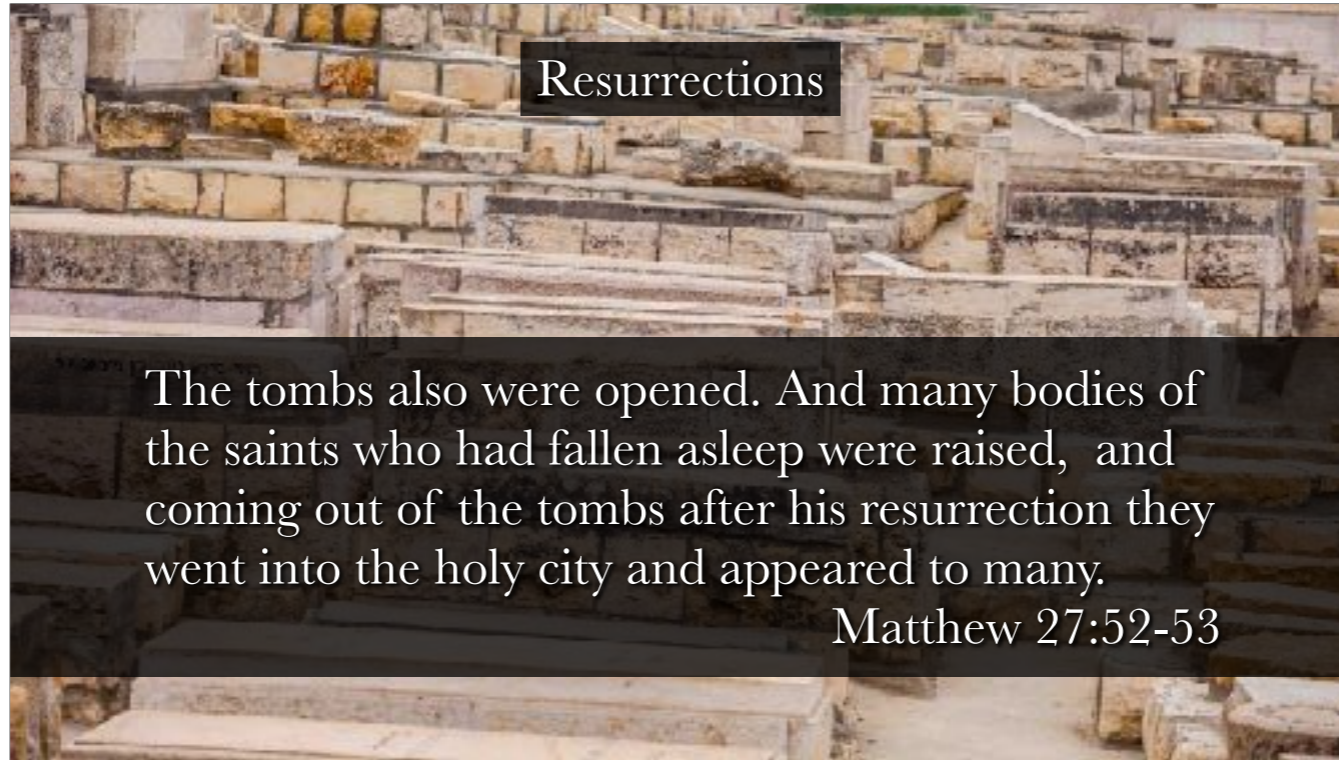


- Matthew 27:52-53 — The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.
 - (I have so many questions and so few answers ... this is not easy to understand.)



- Author of Life

- Acts 3:14-15 — But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.



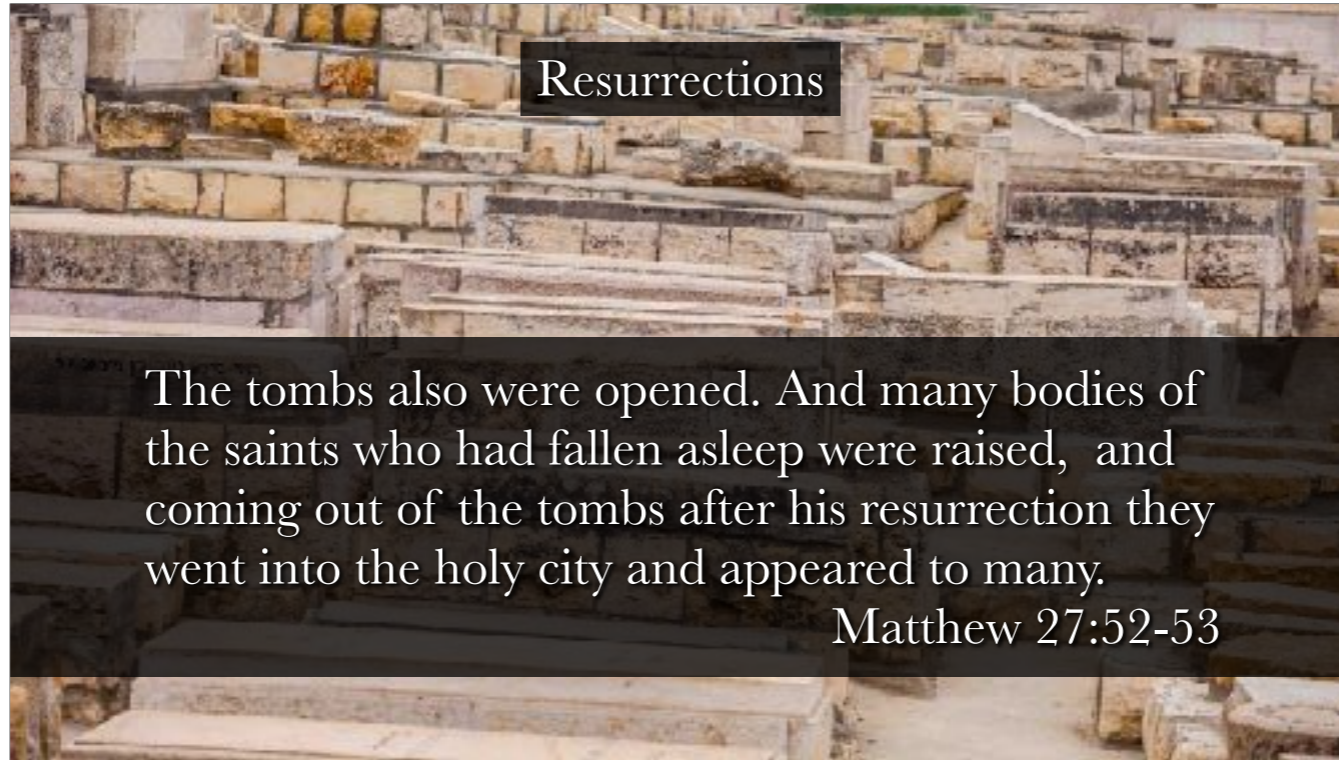
Resurrections

The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Matthew 27:52-53

- Victory over Death

- 1 Corinthians 15:54-57 — When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.



- This looks past the death of Jesus to his resurrection, and the resurrection of life
 - John 11:25-26 — Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”
Matthew 27:54



- Luke 23:47 — Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, “Certainly this man was innocent!”
- Matthew 27:54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Call to Action

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THE EASTER STORY

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Matthew 27:38-66, Mark 15:25-47, Luke 23:35-56, John 19:28-42.

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The Power of the Cross: Part 2 — Signs in Nature

1 Corinthians 1:17

Synopsis: The Power of the cross is also evident in the darkness, the tearing of the curtain, the earthquake and the resurrections. These events should fill us with awe and remind us that in that moment our God was accomplishing his great plan for our salvation. (Adapted from The Cross by Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

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“Let all that you do be done with love.”