

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

MATTHEW 27:1-54

Accused people - clearly innocent of the accusations – usually look forward to their day in court. A trial should bring out all the facts and prove them *not guilty*.

But that didn't happen in the case of “[The Jewish Sanhedrin versus Jesus of Nazareth](#).” Jesus was chained and herded before a sham jury, and a bigoted judge. He was treated as a criminal, lied about, and sentenced to death.

This trial was the greatest travesty of justice the world has every seen.

And even though the official proceedings of this trial were over long ago – a verdict still is cast again and again. Every man, woman, boy and girl who have ever lived, sits in the jury box to cast a vote in the case Jesus of Nazareth.

The question Pilate will ask the Jews in our study tonight is a question every human must answer, “[What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?](#)”

Verse 1 “[When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death.](#)” It was against Jewish Law to render capital decisions at night. The Sanhedrin met in the morning to make it official.

It was early – the rooster had just crowed - probably around 5:00 AM. The Jewish leaders wanted to get the whole ugly affair over as soon as possible.

[“And when they had bound \(Jesus\), they led Him away and](#)

delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.” Prior to Pilate, the Roman procurators were kind to the Jews and respectful of their culture and religion. They were careful not to offend Jewish sensibilities, but Pilate was deliberately antagonistic.

He hated the Jewish way of life and was openly hostile.

When he arrived in Palestine in 26 AD he led his soldiers into Jerusalem under the Roman banner. The Roman flag carried an image of the emperor. The Jews considered this a form of idolatry - and it created an uproar against Pilate...

The procurator's job was to keep the peace, Pilate had done the opposite.

On another occasion Pilate built an aqueduct from northern Israel to Jerusalem.

It was a good idea and a tremendous engineering feat. But Pilate robbed the Temple to pay for the construction. The Jews revolted and word got to Rome.

Pilate was a clumsy, heavy-handed, and was eventually dismissed by Rome.

By this point there were two strikes against him, and he doesn't want to strike out. Pilate was in a conciliatory mood. He was on the political hot seat. He was inclined to do just about anything to *keep the peace* and thus *keep his job*.

Verse 3 shifts scenes... **“Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood."**

And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!"

The night before had been a busy night for the Jewish leaders... an exhausting night for Jesus... a humbling night for Peter... and a sleepless night for Judas...

Judas could've pacified his conscience if he'd seen Jesus do one dishonest, or hypocritical, or immoral act. But as he reflected back on his days with Jesus, he realized Jesus had done nothing wrong. He had truly betrayed innocent blood.

Judas tries to rid himself of the guilty by discarding of the blood money... "Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed..." Here's proof that forgiveness can't be bought. Restitution alone doesn't remove our guilt.

Restitution without repentance is worthless, and only leads to more despair.

We're told Judas "went and hanged himself." Deuteronomy 19:16 says a false witness who frames an innocent person receives the same punishment as the accused. Jesus was nailed to *a tree*. Judas hung himself from *a tree*.

There's no doubt Judas was sorry for what he'd done, but there's no indication he was ever repentant. Repentance is the willingness to change.

I meet folks who are disappointed and depressed about the mess they've made of their lives, but they refuse to do anything to change. They'd rather languish in their mess. Judas was a classic example of *remorse* without *repentance*.

Verse 6 "But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are

the price of blood."

And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day."

A potter's field was next to the potter's shop. When he cracked a pot - or spun a mistake he'd throw out the clay into a field. You couldn't grow anything in a field of sun-dried clay. All the potter's field was good for was an indigent graveyard. Yet isn't it interesting the blood money used to betray Jesus was used to buy a potter's field full of cracked pots. **Jesus is still purchasing crack-pots, namely us!**

"Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, "and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me." This was all done to fulfill Old Testament prophecy.

The verse quoted is actually Zechariah 11:12-13 rather than Jeremiah. Some have jumped to the conclusion that the Bible is in error... but not so fast...

The prophetic portion of the Jewish Old Testament began with the book of Jeremiah. Often the name "*Jeremiah*" was used for the whole section of Scripture not just the one particular book. The same is true with the name "Psalms". It spoke of a single book - but was also used to identify the whole body of poetical books.

Verse 11 "Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

About 13 years earlier, in 19 AD, the Romans stripped the Jews of their right to capital punishment. Jews needed Roman permission to carry out an execution.

To gain Pilate's cooperation they needed to prove Jesus was a threat to Rome.

Rome of course was ruled by an emperor. To claim to be a king was a threat to the authority of Tiberius. At least that's how the Jews hoped Pilate would see it.

"And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?"

Isaiah 53:7 predicted of the Messiah... **"As a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth."** God was His defense.

"And He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly."

Luke 23 tells us when one of the Jews mentions Jesus is from Galilee, Pilate thinks of Herod Antipas - the Roman puppet, allowed to rule over the northern region. Pilate decides to pass off his problem to Herod. It doesn't work.

After quizzing, mocking, and abusing Jesus - Herod ships Him back to Pilate.

Verse 15 **"Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas."** Barabbas was a terrorist - a leader in the local

militia.

Barabbas was a Timothy McVeigh type. He was a crazed, hate-filled, pseudo-patriotic nut who blew up daycare centers and government buildings.

The politician in Pilate sensed the Jews wanted to use him to do their bidding - yet there was something in Jesus that caused Pilate to believe in His innocence.

He didn't want to offend the Jews, but he wanted to squirm out of the situation.

Thus, he pulled up this custom of releasing a prisoner! Surely *good Jews would never want Barabbas back on the streets - he's a threat to women and children.*

“Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?”

For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.” Mrs. Pilate was Claudia Procula - daughter of Caesar Augustus.

In fact, it was through her that Pilate had secured his position or procurator.

Historical sources say that by this time Claudia had converted to Judaism. And later, after Jesus’ resurrection, she went on to become a Christian.

“But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas!"

Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

The Judge becomes the Defense Attorney. Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it." Pilate acts in fear.

To appease the crowd he condemns an innocent man.

Pilate tries to wash away his guilt with a water basin and a towel, but it didn't work. Only the blood of Jesus Himself can wash away the guilt of His rejection.

After the crucifixion Pilate was removed from office by the Romans and sent back to Rome. Church historian, Eusebius, records that Pilate was so tormented by a guilty conscience the rest of his life that he ended up committing suicide.

Pilate kept his job by selling out Jesus - but in the end lost not only his job, but his sanity and his very life. It reminds us of the words of Jesus, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

“All the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and

on our children."

Jews down through the centuries have regretted this cry. For 2000 years the Hebrew people have suffered over and over for their rejection of their Messiah.

Driven from their land in 70 AD, they've wandered the world for 2 Millenniums. If only the crowd that day had realized what they were wishing on their offspring.

This is a warning to parents. A parent does leave a legacy - either good or bad.

Decisions we make not only affect us - but our kids and even our kid's kids. The decisions we make often set a pattern for generations to come. Be careful.

"Then (Pilate) released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus..." The scourging had a nickname. It was called "the half-way death."

Many victims who were scourged never survived the ordeal. It was so brutal.

The Roman scourge or "*flagellum*" consisted of 12-13 leather thongs attached to a single handle. A lead ball was attached to the ends of the cords - and pieces of glass or metal were embedded in the thongs between the ball and the handle.

The victim was tied by the wrists and dangled about a foot off the ground.

The beating consisted usually of 39 lashes with the flagellum.

The first blows caused welts to form on the shoulders and back.

By the 7th or 8th blow the glass and metal had started cutting welts and churning up the muscle. It was not uncommon for a rib bone to fly off the body after a blow.

Before long the back had the texture of hamburger. The internal organs were exposed. At the conclusion of the beating the victim was cut down and would hit the pavement in a puddle of his own urine, feces, sweat, and blood.

Eusebius writes of martyrs who endured such beatings. They were "torn by scourges down to deep seated veins and arteries, so that the hidden contents of the recesses of their bodies, their entrails and organs, were exposed to sight..."

After the scourging, we're told Pilate "delivered (Jesus) to be crucified." The scourging was just the beginning of the horrors Jesus endured on the cross.

After the torturous scourging, "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him."

"Praetorium" is a Greek term for a general's tent or a military headquarters.

Most scholars believe the trial of Jesus took place in the Fortress of Antonio - located in the Temple precincts on the northwest end of the Temple Mount.

From here the Romans could police the crowds on the Temple Mount.

Today, when you go to Old Jerusalem you can visit the "Lithostratos" – this is the Greek word for the "raised pavement" in the Antonio Fortress.

There, several feet below street level, you can walk on this pavement. You can walk on the very stones over which Jesus was tried by Pilate and scourged.

The reddish stones give the impression the stones are stained with blood.

For me the Lithostratos is holy ground. It's a powerful place for reflection.

“And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head...”

The Greek word translated **"thorns"** can mean **"briers"** – and can refer to any number of plants that grow around Jerusalem.

These briers were thick and sharp. They penetrated the skin like little daggers. Blood is now streaming down Jesus' face - into his eyes and onto his cheeks.

This crown of thorns was the only crown that ever adorned Jesus' brow.

“And a reed (they put) in His right hand...” This was a mock scepter. **“And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"**

At the Lithostratos carved into the stones are lines and circles that make up a game the Roman soldiers played. It's called **The Game of the King**. This is why a mock robe, a crown of thorns, and a reed for a scepter were put on the victim.

Here's a picture... the **circle** is a crown... **B** is an initial for

Basilicus - Latin for *king*... The **scorpion** was the symbol of the Roman legion... The **double square** represents the die the soldiers tossed... The **horizontal line** is the victim's life...

Later a **sword crosses the line** - which is where the victim loses his life...

To me it adds to the horror of it all to realize the Roman soldiers were playing a game during Jesus' crucifixion. They were *making sport while killing God*.

"Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head."

Imagine they spit in the face of the God – then rough Him up some more.

Isaiah 50:6 gives us a detail of Jesus' torture that's not mentioned in the Gospels. They plucked out His beard. His face was severely disfigured.

Add it all up and Jesus was beaten beyond recognition. He looked like a boxer who'd gone 15 rounds and lost - or the victim of an airplane crash. Jesus' rugged body and kind features had been reduced to a quivering mass of bloody tissue.

If there'd been a funeral the family would've requested a closed casket.

Isaiah 52:14 tells us, **"His visage was marred more than any man; and his form more than the sons of men."** Hebrew scholars Keil & Delitzsch translate the verse, **"(He was) so disfigured, his appearance was not human, and his form not like that of the children of men."** Jesus looked more like a *monster* than a *man*.

If you'd been there that day the sight of Jesus would've been repulsive.

It's possible you would've vomited your lunch. The scene was so gross the producers would've refused to roll the footage during the nightly news.

Verse 31 **“And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified...”** Jesus was probably clothed with what the Romans called **"the short cloak"** – it was a loin cloth.

The short cloak was just enough to cover the victim's genitals. The Romans dressed their victim in a short cloak not to offend the Jewish sense of modesty.

Jesus was practically naked when He was crucified. And this was no accident. *Have you noticed how people identify themselves by what the clothes they wear?*

If Jesus had been crucified in a three piece suit hippies couldn't relate to Him.

If He'd been crucified in faded jeans corporate executive might not identify.

This is why God chose to clothe His Son in near nakedness so all people everywhere – *as long as they're humble* - could identify with Jesus.

“Now as they came out (probably out of the city). This too was prophetic. Hebrews 13:11 explains, **"For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp.**

Therefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered outside the gate." Jesus too was disposed of outside the camp.

“As they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.” *Here’s how it all usually happened...* The victim was accompanied to the execution by four soldiers called a **"quaternion."**

This execution party was led by a man with a plague, on which were written the victims crimes. He was preceded by two soldiers and followed by two soldiers – and the procession always took the long way around.

The scourged victim was paraded through the streets as a lesson to the masses. The Romans wanted the people to fear their power and authority.

When Jesus left Pilate’s judgment hall He carried the instrument of His execution. The **"patibulum,"** or crossbeam, was strapped to His shoulders.

It tipped the scales around 100 pounds. Jesus buckled under its weight.

By this point Jesus was exhausted.

He was coming off a sleepless night where He had been in great agony. In the Garden He’d perspired profusely and suffered a tremendous loss of fluids.

He was dehydrated. Even more so, He had lost a large amount of blood.

Jesus endured the Roman flagellation. He was beaten by the Jews. He was a strong man, but now He collapses. He

can't carry the Patibulum another step.

There was a man in the crowd named Simon. He was from Cyrene in North Africa - ancient Libya. He was probably a Jew on pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

He'd come to offer a sacrifice, celebrate Passover, and draw closer to God.

Mark's Gospel says Simon was just "passing by" – walking on his way to elsewhere when suddenly his journey and life are permanently interrupted.

He feels the press of a Roman spear on his shoulder. He's pushed out into the street and the Patibulum is hoisted onto his shoulders. He carries the cross that Jesus carries for Him. His short journey with Jesus changes his life forever.

Again Mark identifies Simon as the father of Alexander and Rufus. Mark's Gospel was written to the church at Rome - who must've known these men.

Romans 16:13 notes Rufus and his mother as believers in the church at Rome.

It's likely that Simon's experience led to his conversion. When he returned to Cyrene his whole family became believers. Later, the early church saw a vibrant Christian community develop in North Africa. Its founder was probably Simon.

“And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull...” "Golgotha" is Aramaic for "place of the skull." When Jerome translated the Bible into Latin he used the Latin word for skull, "calvaria" or Calvary.

Today, there is a place just north of the Old City and the Temple Mount – it's just outside the city wall. It's called **Skull Hill**. It was formerly Herod's rock quarry used for his building projects. Excavations left a depression that looks like a skull.

There are actually several sites where Jesus could've been crucified, but this is the most likely. Skull Hill is next to the road which leaves Jerusalem for Damascus. The Romans conducted their crucifixions next to roads – they wanted passersby to see. Today this area is still a travel hub – it's the site of an Arab bus terminal.

Jesus was crucified either by the road (at eye level), or on the hill above.

Verse 34 tells us that at the execution site, **“they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.”**

"Gall" is the same word translated **"myrrh."** It was a pain-deadening narcotic.

Romans gave their victims this stupefying potion not so much as an act of mercy, but to prolong the death. It made the execution more of a spectacle.

Most victims took the narcotic to knock the edge off the pain, but not Jesus.

Jesus went to the cross to bear the full brunt of our sin. He bore every ounce of our pain and punishment by Himself. There will be no valium for the Savior.

Verse 35 says simply, **“Then they crucified Him...”** Look at Him now... His body hangs from the crossbeam. His legs are pushed up so His heels are just under His buttocks. The weight of His body is supported by the 7 inch iron spikes that have been driven into His hands. A single spike has been driven through both heels.

His two most sensitive nerve centers are throbbing in excruciating pain.

As His arms fatigue, cramps sweep through the muscles. He can take in air, but to exhale He has to push up on the spikes. It's a painful struggle just to breathe. In fact, most crucifixions ended in the victim's asphyxiation.

Add to this the pain of Jesus' lacerated back rubbing back and forth against the rough-cut timbers. And this goes on – not for minutes - but for long, long hours...

Here's another agony... a deep crushing begins in the chest. The sac around the heart – the pericardium - slowly fills with serum and compresses the heart.

A squeezed heart struggles to pump thick, sluggish blood into the tissues. Tortured lungs are frantically gasping for air. Jesus is about to die.

In Jesus' case we know the cause of death was not asphyxiation. John 19:34 says a Roman soldier thrust a spear in Jesus' side - out came blood and water. That only occurs when the heart ruptures. Jesus died of a broken heart.

Roman orator, Cicero, called crucifixion the cruelest and most frightening form of execution ever invented. Cultured Romans refused to say the word “*cross*”.

It makes you wonder... if Jesus had to die, why God didn't choose a more humane method – the gas chamber, or electric chair, or lethal injection?

Something quick and easy and painless... But here's the answer - our sin is never quick, or easy, or painless... It not only breaks God's Laws, but it breaks His heart. God chose the cross because He knows it's what our sin deserves.

The cross tells of the severity of man's sin - the sincerity of God's love.

Verse 35 “**And (they) divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.**”

Matthew quotes Psalm 22:18. These details were prophesied beforehand.

How sad, while Jesus suffers on the cross the Roman soldiers below Him shoot *craps* for his *cloak*. They show the Savior not the slightest sliver of sympathy.

“And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

This wooden plague was called the **“Titulus.”** On it the Romans listed the crimes of the accused.

John's Gospel tells us that this title was written to infuriate the Jews. When they read it they demanded that Pilate change it to read, **“He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'”** Pilate

answered, "What I have written, I have written."

In the end the Jews couldn't silence Jesus' true identity.

And when Jesus returns at the end of the age we'll see a similar declaration on His side - not just "**King of the Jews**", but "**King of kings and Lord of lords.**"

"Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left." We know the identity of one of these men. One of the thieves was the Apostle Paul's father. In Romans 6:6 he tells, His "old man was crucified with Christ".

"And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself!

If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him."

Notice again, the Jews wanted a *Christ* - but not a *crucified Christ*.

Jesus was proving He was the Messiah by going to the cross. In their minds Messiahship meant coming off the cross – it meant miracles not sacrifice.

They didn't think the Messiah would have anything to do with the cross.

And the same is true today. People want heroes. They want

someone to exemplify the indomitable human spirit – showcase human potential.

They want a hero who demonstrates the best and highest in mankind – who inspires us to greatness - who makes us feel good about ourselves.

People today have no problem pursuing a *Christ-consciousness* - they don't mind Christ as a *spirit guide* - or as the *epitome of human self-actualization*.

But a *crucified Christ*... that's another matter. A crucified Christ means man has a problem. Everything is not all-right. We've sinned. It highlights *human depravity* not *human potential*. Folks today, like Jews of old, want a *Christ* without a *cross*.

The mocking crowd continue to shout at Jesus in verse 43, “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'”

Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.”

“Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.” The sixth hour of the day was 12:00 noon - the ninth hour was 3:00 pm.

For three full hours the world was blanketed with a supernatural darkness.

It was *midnight at midday*. The Greek word translated land is the word “*geo*” - from which we get our word “*geography*”. It implies a worldwide darkness.

When Jesus was born - when the Light of God came into

the world - a star was shining in the night sky. It guided the wise men from the East to worship Him.

But when He died the sky turned black. The light was snuffed out.

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Jesus spoke in Aramaic - the language of the common people.

“Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" His cry had nothing to do with Elijah. They misunderstood.

The words Jesus cries are the opening lines of Psalm 22 – a remarkable psalm that describes in amazing detail the death and sufferings of the Messiah over 1000 years before it all occurred. In these final utterances Jesus was revealing His true identity. Any student of Scripture would've been taken back by His words.

Jesus' cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” represents one of the most mysterious moments in history. Somehow on the cross, God the Son became alienated from God the Father – God became severed from God.

In John 8:29, Jesus said, "He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." From eternity past, Jesus enjoyed perfect harmony with His Father, yet now He's stung by His rejection.

When Jesus shrieked, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" the sins of all men were thrust upon His

sacrificial shoulders. The Lamb received His load.

Jesus was spotless. Morally, his heart was as tender as a baby's soft skin. It would've been a shock to His system to feel a mere speck of sin - but imagine the piercing fright, the staggering horror of suddenly sensing the sin of the whole world.

The sin of the rapist, the serial killer, the child molester, the secret gossip, the greedy betrayer - the sin of all mankind was thrust upon His innocent shoulders.

1 Corinthians 5:21 sums it up, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Jesus was God. He never ceased being God. He lived forever with the Father in warm, unbroken fellowship. Yet for a moment the *Son of God* became an *Orphan* - God was separated from God, so we could be united to Him.

When Zach was two years old he was hospitalized with an infection.

The doctor wanted to feed him antibiotics through an IV. The nurse asked us to leave the room. Inserting the IV would be painful for Zach, and she didn't want him to associate the pain with us. Being a nurse, Kathy was smart. She complied.

But I stood just outside the door to be as close to my little buddy as possible.

I wasn't prepared for what happened. Suddenly the screaming started. I'll never forget Zach shouting, "I want my Daddy, where is my Daddy?" I could've jerked the door off its

hinges. But I didn't. Love made me wait until the procedure was over!

Standing in the hall, tears rolled down my cheeks. God spoke to my heart, "Now Sandy, you know what I endured when My Son died for You" I've never known His love as strong! Love for me and you made the Father wait outside the door!

Verse 48 "Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him." This wine lacked the narcotic.

Jesus took this sponge to moisten his lips so he could utter His final words.

"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit." Notice, Jesus' life was not taken from Him. He dismissed His spirit. He died voluntarily.

Vs 51 "Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (snap); and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split (crackle), and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised (pop)..." Snap, crackle, pop... How do you know you have real Rice Krispies?

The same way you know it's the real Messiah? A snap, crackle, and pop...

Snap... The veil in the temple was colossal – 60' tall by 30' wide by 10' thick. It required 300 priests to move. It was a

symbol of our separation from God. Man is barred from God's presence until something is done to satisfy His righteousness.

Yet when Jesus died this veil split in two. On the cross the penalty of sin had been paid in full. Forgiveness was earned. Now God is holding open house.

Now through Jesus we can come boldly to God - at anytime, at anyplace.

Notice too, we're told the veil split from top to bottom – not bottom to top.

God is exact in His typology. Salvation flows downward – from top down. Our salvation is the result of God's grace and Jesus' work, not our own efforts.

Crackle... The earth quakes - rocks split. When God gave the Old Covenant on Mount Sinai the earth shook. Now it applauds again at a New Covenant.

Man's sin produced an adverse effect on all nature – thorns and thistles made it harder to till the ground. At the cross, even nature saw its salvation. This was a preview of coming attractions. The cross will ultimately liberate all of nature.

Pop... Several tombstones blew off the mouths of the graves. Three days later there were even a number of impromptu resurrections. It was proof that the death of Jesus meant life for all who believe. *Snap, crackle, pop...* what a day it was...

Verse 53 “**And coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to**

many.” This was wild! People dead 5 years, 50 years, 500 years were resurrected and seen cruising the city of Jerusalem.

When Jesus rose from the dead He took with Him into the presence of God those Old Testament saints who had been in Hades waiting on His salvation.

Some of them must've stopped over on earth for a time.

“So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!" This battled-scarred sergeant, a centurion, knew men.

He'd commanded men. He'd fought with and against many a man. And He knew Jesus was no ordinary man. He said, **"Truly this was the Son of God!"**