

Sermon Ser.: “The Darkness and the Dawn”—Lord of Life, Westfield, IN—4/18/03 (Good Friday)

Title: “The Day God Answered: `Amen!’”

Text: Matthew 27: 50-54

Intro.: *Thunder over Louisville—the Finale’s Ultimate Statement*

Theme: Jesus redemptive death was so complete in satisfying God’s wrath and sin’s obligation of death that God put an exclamation point in the aftermath to emphasize his approval.

The End of the Beginning of our Redemption

- The roadblock to God, the Father, is removed (51)
 1. The torn curtain was a graphic daily reminder of sin’s destructive impact
 1. Only High Priest, once a year, with the blood of a lamb could go behind it
 2. 1 ½ feet thick miraculously torn by divine mandate
 3. “torn from top to bottom” – emphasis that our salvation was a God-thing
 2. Jesus’ payment ended the separation of sin between God and us
- Death is not a “period” but a “comma” in our lives
 3. Jesus did not have his life ripped from him but he willing lay it down (released)(50)
 1. *“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.” John 10:17-18*
 4. Death of believer in Jesus not the end—continuation of existence in which “all things are made new”

The Beginning of the End of our Redemption

- The thunderous signs of his death signal the beginning of the end
 1. God announced beginning of the end times through the earthquake at Jesus’ death
 1. *“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.” Matthew 24:7-8*
 2. Instead of terror at uncontrollable destructive signs, see as a prelude to coming age
 1. **Ills.:** Northridge, California Earthquake—1/17/94, over 100 Californians literally died of fright
 2. It led the Centurion and his company of soldiers to confess belief in Jesus
 3. *“But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” Luke 21:28*
- The thunderous power of his death assures our resurrection
 3. Jesus’ death conquered sin and its consequence of death
 1. *“The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor 15: 56, 57*
 4. Jesus death makes ours nothing more than “sleep”
 1. The resurrection of dead believers, prior to Jesus’ death, meant as statement
 2. A completion of our redemption must involved the reclamation of our body from the grave (redemption of whole person—soul and body)
 - *“Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” Rom. 8:23*
 - **Ills.: Benjamin Franklin’s epitaph**—*“The body of Benjamin Franklin, Printer, like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out and stripped of its lettering and gilding, lies here. . . Yet the Work itself shall not be lost; for it will, as he believed, appear*

once more in a new and more beautiful edition, corrected and amended by the Author."

Matthew 27:50-54

⁵⁰And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. ⁵²The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

⁵⁴When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"