

Luke 23:44-49

⁴⁴It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over all the land until the ninth hour.

⁴⁵The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn down the middle.

⁴⁶Then Jesus called out in a loud voice, “Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.” And when He had said this, He breathed His last.

⁴⁷When the centurion saw what had happened, he gave glory to God, saying, “Surely this was a righteous man.” ⁴⁸And when all the people who had gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts. ⁴⁹But all those who knew Jesus, including the women who had followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these things.

Berean Standard Bible, UK

1

Luke 23:44-49

Power. 23:44-45

God draws a curtain. 44-45 “darkness came over”

God tears a curtain. 45 “veil of the temple was torn”

Purpose. 23:46

Christ commits His spirit. 46 “I commit My Spirit”

Christ departs His body. 46 “He breathed His last”

Perception. 23:47

Glory to the Father. 47 “he gave glory to God”

Glory to the Son. 47 “a righteous man”

People. 23:48-49

Those who departed. 48 “they returned home”

Those who stayed. 49 “stood at a distance”

2

Luke 23:44-49

Legal. 23:44-45

Sin’s dark veil. 44-45 “darkness came over”

Salvation’s torn veil. 45 “veil of the temple was torn”

Relational. 23:46

Christ's work on earth is complete. "I commit My Spirit"
Christ's work in Heaven commences.

Social. 23:47-49

The unsaved see glory. 47 "gave glory to God"
The saved keep watching. 49 "watching these things"

3

Christ's work is complete. Luke 23:44-49

The sign that the work was accomplished. 23:44-45

The darkness that was widely seen. 44 "darkness came over all the land"
The curtain that was hardly seen. 45 "the veil of the temple"

The saying that the work was accepted. 23:46

The unbroken relationship. 46 "Father"
The restored fellowship. 46 "into Your hands"

The spectacle that the work was amazing. 23:47-49

Acknowledging the Divine nature. 47 "Surely this was a righteous man"
Anticipating the Divine program. 49 "all those who knew Jesus... stood watching"

4

Luke 23:44-49

Into God's presence. 23:44-45

I need to escape the darkness of sin. 44 "darkness came over all the land"
I need to enter the presence of God. 45 "veil of the temple was torn open"

Into God's family. 23:46

I am in the Father's heart. 46 "Father"
I am in the Father's hands. 46 "into Your hands"

Into God's glory. 23:47-49

Look to the personality of God. 47 "Surely this was a righteous man"
Look to the program of God. 49 "all those who knew Jesus... stood watching"

5

What happened at the cross. Luke 23:44-49

What was accomplished at the cross. 23:44-45

There was darkness at the cross. 44 "darkness came over all the land"

There was division by the cross. 45 "veil of the temple was torn open"

What was accepted at the cross. 23:46

Relationships are restored at the cross. 46 "Father, into Your hands"

The spirit is received through the cross. 46 "I commit My Spirit"

What was amazing at the cross. 23:47-49

Jesus died an unusual death on the cross. 47 "Surely this was a righteous man"

Jesus lives an unfinished life beyond the cross. 49 "those who knew... watching"

Other possible titles

This is what it is all about

It all comes down to this

Finished

Done!

The death of death

End of the line

A simple death

Death opens a door

The world's darkest day

It is darkest just before the dawn

Darkness and death

Commentary

The following notes are from the free e-book, Timeline, which is available from the same site as these notes, www.sermoninspiration.net

Chronology

"It was now about the sixth hour," 23:44

Using the local Jewish reckoning of time, commencing at sunrise, the time was about noon.

"until the ninth hour" 23:44

By the same reckoning, the ninth hour of daylight is 3 pm.

Darkness

“It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over all the land until the ninth hour.”
23:44

All creation mourned at the cross.

⁴⁴It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁵The sun was darkened. (Luke 23:44-45)

This was not an eclipse. A solar eclipse occurs when we find ourselves in the shadow of the moon as its orbit takes it between the sun and the earth. A solar eclipse can occur only during the period of a new moon. The Passover, which is when Jesus was killed, is tied to the phases of the moon, and that feast always falls on a full moon. During a full moon, the moon's orbit is at the opposite side of the earth making it impossible for a solar eclipse to occur during Passover.

Furthermore, the longest possible solar eclipse from 4000 BC to 8000 AD, a span of 12,000 years, will occur on 16 July 2186. It will last 7 minutes 29 seconds and only be visible in South America. The darkness over the cross lasted three hours. Yet another confirmation that the darkness could not have been a natural darkness caused by an eclipse.

How widespread was this darkness? Was it local, regional, or worldwide? The Chinese were meticulous record-keepers of astronomical events. Do they record this phenomenon? Historic records outside Scripture are sparse. Darkness at noon in Jerusalem, would be darkness at 6 PM to 9 PM in China, and unnoticed in the East. However, we do have a chain of reliable historians giving a credible report of this darkness which was associated with a great earthquake. The Roman historian, Thallus, wrote a three-volume history of the Eastern Mediterranean world from the time of the Trojan War to his own time. Sadly, this work has been lost and only fragments of it exist in the citations of others. Thallus wrote in the middle of the First Century, at about the same time that the New Testament books were being written. His historic record includes a reference to this darkness.

Thallus, who was not a Christian, recorded this darkness, but he attempts to explain it away as nothing more than an eclipse. Thallus is quoted by Sextus Julius Africanus who then adds his own comment. Africanus wrote,

“A most terrible darkness fell over all the world, the rocks were torn apart by an earthquake, and many places both in Judaea and the rest of the world were thrown down. In the third book of his Histories, Thallus dismisses this darkness as a solar eclipse. In my opinion, this is nonsense.” [Africanus then goes on to explain that an eclipse is impossible at the time of Passover due to the phase of the moon.]

Africanus began life as a pagan, but converted to be a follower of Christ. He travelled extensively across the Roman empire. He wrote *Chronographiai*, a history of the world in

five volumes. Africanus also quotes another ancient historian as verification of the fact of the darkness. That historian was the Second Century author, Phlegon of Tralles.

Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth — manifestly that one of which we speak. But what has an eclipse in common with an earthquake, the rending rocks, and the resurrection of the dead, and so great a perturbation throughout the universe? Surely no such event as this is recorded for a long period. But it was a darkness induced by God, because the Lord happened then to suffer. And calculation makes out that the period of 70 weeks, as noted in Daniel, is completed at this time.

Tiberius Caesar was Emperor of Rome at the time of the crucifixion. He reigned from 17 September 14 AD until 16 March 37 AD.

Origen of Alexandria (182-254 AD), in his work, *Against Celsus* (Book II, Chap. XIV), wrote that Phlegon, in his *Chronicles*, mentions Jesus. Origen quotes Phlegon:

Phlegon of an eclipse accompanied by earthquakes during the reign of Tiberius: that there was "the greatest eclipse of the sun" and that "it became night in the sixth hour of the day [ie. noon] so that stars even appeared in the heavens. There was a great earthquake in Bithynia, and many things were overturned in Nicaea."

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (c155 AD – c220 AD), usually known simply as Tertullian, was a prolific early Christian author of Carthage in the Roman province of Africa. Tertullian refers to the darkness as a 'cosmic' or 'world event'. Appealing to skeptics, he wrote:

At the moment of Christ's death, the light departed from the sun, and the land was darkened at noonday, which wonder is related in your own annals, and is preserved in your archives to this day.

Tertullian could confidently assert that documentation of the darkness could be found in readily-accessible historical archives of his own time in the early Third Century. The distance from Jerusalem to Carthage is about 2,500 kilometres (about 1,500 miles) in a straight line.

These historians make it clear that the darkness at the time of the crucifixion was a literal event. It was also a geographically widespread, probably world-wide event as Jesus bore the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

On the Day of Pentecost, Sunday 28 April 30 AD, under the inspiration of the newly received Holy Spirit, Peter declared,

¹⁹I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

²⁰**The sun will be turned to darkness,**
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the great and glorious Day of the Lord.

²¹And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved.' (Acts 2:9-10)

Peter was quoting the Old Testament prophet, Joel 2:28-32, who predicted darkness at noon and darkness in the daytime. Joel was not alone in that prediction.

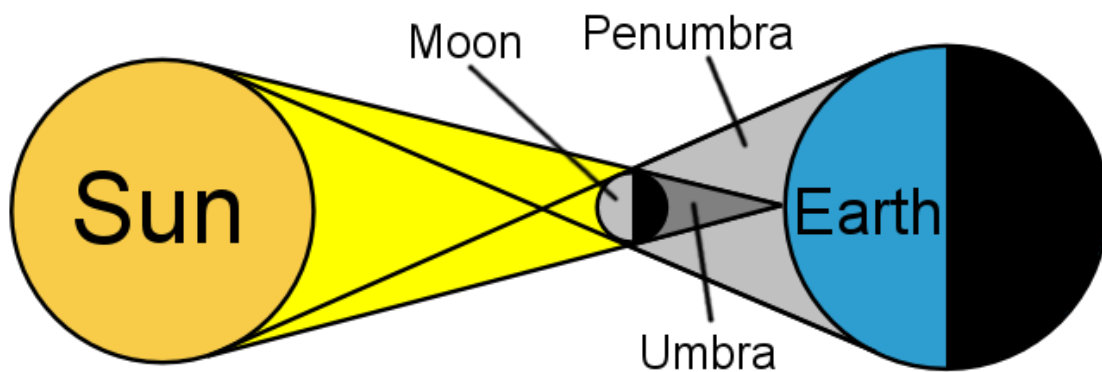
⁹And in that day,
declares the Lord GOD,
**I will make the sun go down at noon,
and I will darken the earth in the daytime.**

¹⁰I will turn your feasts into mourning
and all your songs into lamentation.
I will cause everyone to wear sackcloth
and every head to be shaved.
I will make it like a time of mourning for an only son,
and its outcome like a bitter day. (Amos 8:9-10)

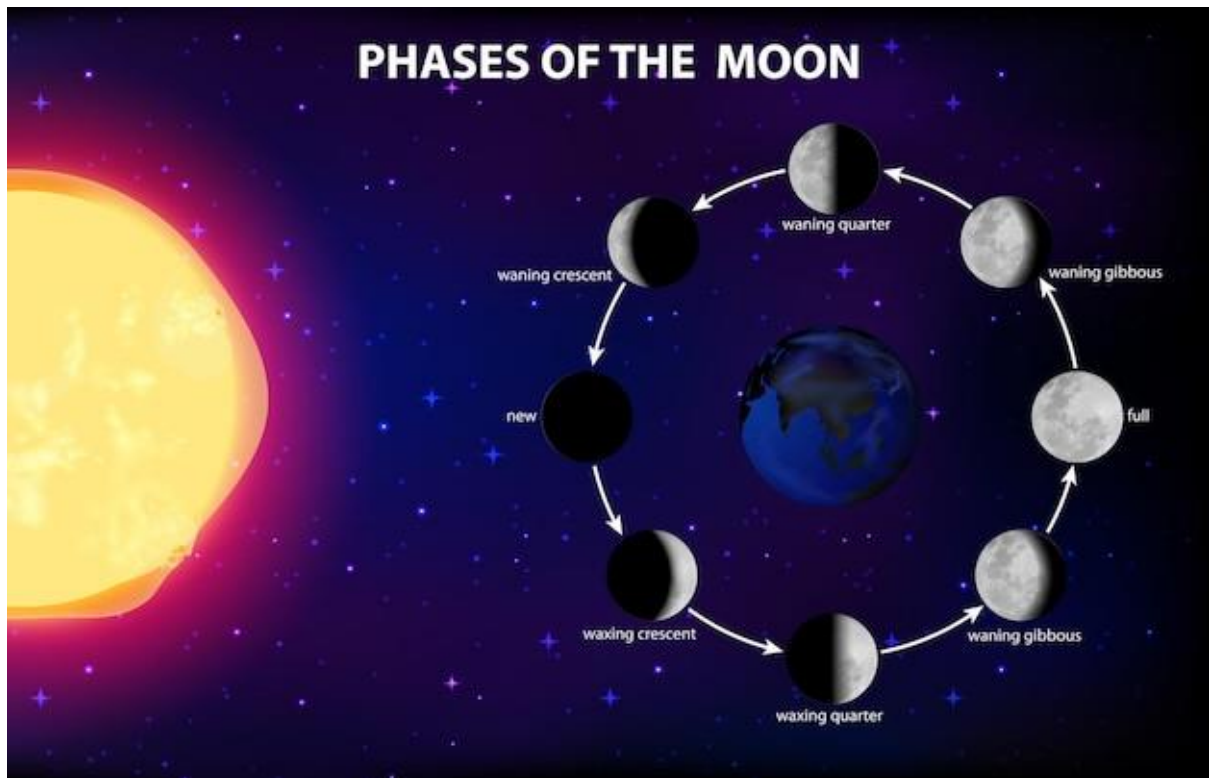
The darkness was real, because it was an illustration of the reality of the darkness of sin.

This is the verdict: The Light has come into the world, but people loved the darkness rather than the Light because their deeds were evil. (John 3:19)

When the Light of the World (John 8:12) was born, there was the light of an astonishing star in the sky. When the Creator of the universe died, all His creation groaned with Him and there was another sign in the sky. It was darkness.



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Solar_eclipse.png



https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/phases-moon-science-education_24085767.htm

The veil of the temple

“the veil of the temple was torn down the middle” 23:45

The moment of Jesus’ death was an event of cosmic significance. The earth shuddered.

⁵⁰ When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹ At that moment... the earth quaked and the rocks were split. (Matthew 27:50-51)

Matthew records what happened at the temple.

At that moment the veil of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.
(Matthew 27:51)

Mark has almost identical wording.

And the veil of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. (Mark 15:38)

Luke omits, and includes, extra detail.

... and the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. (Luke 23:45)

The temple in Jerusalem, like its predecessor, the tabernacle, was divided into two sections by a curtain. Priests were allowed into the first section. However, concerning the second section, known as the Holy of Holies, or the Most Holy Place, we read:

⁷ But only the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies, and then only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered... ⁸ By this arrangement the Holy Spirit was

showing that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been opened... ¹¹ But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come, He went through... ¹⁵ Therefore Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, now that He has died to redeem them from the transgressions... (Hebrews 9:1-15)

When Jesus died, His death tore apart the separating veil that kept all people, even the priests, away from the holiness of God's presence. Jesus' death opens the way for us.

When the curtain in the temple was torn, note the direction of the tear. It is not the direction one would expect. "The veil of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. (Matthew 27:51, and Mark 15:38) The tear was top-down, not bottom-up, and the inference we are to draw is that this was another Divine implication of the death of Jesus. God Himself opens the way for everyone to enter His holy presence.

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to **enter the Most Holy Place** by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way opened for us **through the curtain** of His body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold resolutely to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:19-23)

The fact that we no longer need priests in order to approach God is thanks to the fulfillment of the Old Testament symbolism by Jesus.

The curtain was inside the temple. It was a location visible only to priests. So, how can we be certain that this report of the top-to-bottom tear is accurate? The Day of Preparation was one of the busiest days of the year for the priests, many of whom would have been coming and going into the outer room of the temple. It was these priests who would have seen, and reported the tear. Over the next few weeks, "The Word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7)

For believers today, there is nothing to keep us from God's presence.

I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

"Jesus called out in a loud voice..." 23:46

While Jesus hung on the cross, He spoke seven times.

Statements by Jesus	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1. Father, forgive them			23:34	
2. Woman, your son				19:26-27
3. With Me in Paradise			23:43	
4. Why have You forsaken Me	27:46	15:34		
5. I thirst				19:28-29
6. Finished				19:30
7. Father, into Your hands	(27:50)	(15:37)	23:46	(19:30)

The seventh, and final statement from the cross was uttered in a loud voice, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit."

One thing that stands out about this final statement is the fact that it was given in a loud voice. This was a statement of triumph, and a statement of celebration. It was declared in a voice as loud as Jesus' broken body could muster.

And when Jesus had cried out again in a **loud** voice, (Matthew 27:50)

And Jesus uttered a **loud** cry and breathed his last. (Mark 15:37)

Then Jesus called out in a **loud** voice, (Luke 23:46)

Jesus did not go with a whimper. He did not die as a powerless victim. He went loud, and strong, and victorious!

Jesus spoke loudly, but what did He say? What was His final statement? It was,

"Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit." (Luke 23:46)

When Jesus went to the cross, He could address the First Person of the Trinity as 'Father', saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

During the period of darkness the relationship between Father and Son was diminished to Judge and victim. But now, the relationship is restored. Jesus next word is, "Father". Proof that the price has been paid; sin has been conquered; Satan has been defeated; Jesus is indeed Saviour and Lord.

No matter what we have done. What Jesus has done is bigger and better. No matter what sin we have committed; and no matter what sin has been committed against us; Jesus has now overcome it. His relationship with the Heavenly Father has been restored and that is the guarantee that our relationship with the Heavenly Father is also readily available, as long as it is through Jesus.

Jesus died.

He breathed his last breath. (Mark 15:37)

He breathed His last. (Luke 23:46)

Why did Jesus die?

How Jesus died is easy. He was crucified; nailed to a cross. But, why Jesus died is much more complex.

God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

“he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all . . . will also graciously give us all things” (Rom. 8:32).

Jesus also died to prove the justice of God: “God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement . . . to demonstrate his justice” (Rom. 3:25–26).

Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. (1 Pet. 3:18)

“You who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13).

The one who “knew no sin, became sin” (2 Cor. 5:21)—our sin—so that we might receive mercy.

Jesus paid the price for our redemption when he “gave his life as a ransom in the place of many” (Mark 10:45). Jesus reconciled us to God by bearing our sins himself (1 Pet. 2:24). “God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement through the shedding of his blood” (Rom. 3:25), exhausting God’s wrath against our unrighteousness.

Jesus’s death in our place is of first importance and was in accordance with the [Old Testament] Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3). His death fulfills the old covenant sacrifices, such as the sin offering, the Passover lamb, and the scapegoat of the Day of Atonement. He’s the Suffering Servant who was “pierced for our transgressions” (Isa. 53:5).

“God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19).

His work was done. His mission was complete. The price was paid. Sin is defeated.

Music and songs

Songs about darkness, 44 “darkness came over all the land”
Light of the world, You stepped down into darkness,

Songs about the curtain / veil, 45 “the veil of the temple was torn down the middle”

Songs about Jesus shout, 46 “Jesus called out in a loud voice...”

Songs about the Father and the Son, 46 “Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit”

Songs about the death of Jesus, 46 “He breathed His last”
Not all the blood of bulls, on Jewish altars slain, H

Songs about giving glory to God, 47 “the centurion... gave glory to God”

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. Were you ever afraid of the dark? What makes the dark scary for some people?
 2. List some reasons why you think God made the crucifixion a time of darkness (v45).
 3. Explain the significance of the curtain in the temple, and the impacts of it being torn (v45).
 4. What does v46 teach you about the death of a believer?
 5. What do the words and actions of the people who were present suggest about their perception of Jesus’ crucifixion (v47-48)?
 6. What do the different actions of those who followed Jesus suggest about their perceptions and expectations (v49)
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