



When Heaven Came Close - Matthew 27:50-54

When Heaven Came Close

- There are times in the heavenlies when stars get too close to each other, and it has a dramatic effect on both
 - Their intense gravity distorts them into "egg" shapes and triggers a mass transfer where the larger star steals material from the smaller one
 - The gravitational pull of the larger can seem to throw asteroids and comets at the smaller one
 - Eventually, they may spiral inward and merge into a single, larger, and highly magnetic star
 - It all depends upon how close they are to each other

When Heaven Came Close

- As magnificent, powerful, and hard for mankind to grasp that, it pales in comparison to when the Kingdom of God came close to the Kingdom of Man
 - It started with a child called Jesus of Nazareth becoming known as the Messiah
 - **Luke 17:20-21 AMP**, 20 Now having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He replied, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed or with a visible display; 21 nor will people say, ‘Look! Here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For the kingdom of God is among you [because of My presence].”

When Heaven Came Close

- As magnificent, powerful, and hard for mankind to grasp that, it pales in comparison when the Kingdom of God came close to the Kingdom of Man
 - Angels sang when Jesus was born, Magi worshipped, Man tried to kill Him
 - Then the Kingdom of God became mostly silent while it waited for its seed Jesus, the Son of God, to grow and mature
 - Jesus began to open up the Kingdom of God allowing mankind to observe it, to learn from Jesus' teaching, and accept Jesus as the promised Messiah

When Heaven Came Close

- As magnificent, powerful, and hard for mankind to grasp that, it pales in comparison when the Kingdom of God came close to the Kingdom of Man
 - Because mankind needed a perfect human substitute for their sin debt, Jesus offered up himself to be crucified on the cross
 - **Isaiah 53:5-6 NLT**, 5 But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. 6 All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.

When Heaven Came Close

- As magnificent, powerful, and hard for mankind to grasp that, it pales in comparison when the Kingdom of God came close to the Kingdom of Man
 - When Jesus breathed His last breath on the cross the Kingdom of God exploded upon the Kingdom of Man

Scripture

- **Matthew 27:45 AMP**, Now from the sixth hour (noon) there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.).
 - This was no eclipse of the sun but a supernatural event from God
 - In the Bible, darkness is often associated with God's judgment, wrath, and the spiritual darkness of sin
 - It was as if nature itself was grieving

Scripture

- **Matthew 27:50-54 AMP**, 50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud [agonized] voice, and gave up His spirit [voluntarily, sovereignly dismissing and releasing His spirit from His body in submission to His Father's plan].
 - **Luke 23:46 ESV**, Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.
 - **John 19:30 ESV**, When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Scripture

- At once, suddenly the Kingdom of God exploded into this darkness
 - **Matthew 27:51-53 AMP**, 51 And [at once] the veil [of the Holy of Holies] of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom;
 - the earth shook (*violently*) and the rocks were split apart.
 - 52 The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints (God's people) who had fallen asleep [in death] were raised [to life];
 - 53 and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, they entered the holy city (Jerusalem) and appeared to many people.

Scripture

- The effect on nonbelievers to these events was fear
 - **Matthew 27:54 AMP**, 54 Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, they were terribly frightened and filled with awe, and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”
 - **Hebrews 10:31 AMP**, It is a fearful and terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living (*angry*) God [incurring His judgment and wrath].

The Kingdom of God expressed itself in Kingdom ways after the death of Jesus

- The veil [of the Holy of Holies] of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom
 - This veil or curtain was 60' x 13' by 4"
 - Torn top to bottom, only God could do this
 - There is now access to the Mercy Seat of God where grace is now available to cover all our sins
 - We now don't need a religious priest to stand between us and God
 - Jesus is now our High Priest

The Kingdom of God expressed itself in Kingdom ways after the death of Jesus

- The veil [of the Holy of Holies] of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom
 - The only sacrifice I must bring is my repentant heart full of faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross
 - **Hebrews 7:25 AMP**, Therefore He is able also to save forever (completely, perfectly, for eternity) those who come to God through Him
 - **Hebrews 4:16 NLT**, So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

The Kingdom of God expressed itself in Kingdom ways after the death of Jesus

- The earth violently shook and the rocks were split apart
 - Like a dog shaking its favorite floppy toy
 - This was a sign of how momentous the events were surrounding Jesus' death
 - It's like creation itself is reacting in grief and awe to the death of the its Creator
 - Paired with the tearing of the temple curtain, the earthquake demonstrates that the barrier between humanity and God's presence has been permanently removed

The Kingdom of God expressed itself in Kingdom ways after the death of Jesus

- During the earthquake the tombs were opened
 - Jerusalem was surrounded by tombs
 - Families would hire stone masons to chip out a tomb for their loved ones and seal the entrance with a solid round stone
 - The biblical Hebrew word “tomb” was also used to symbolize the “womb”
 - In the Jewish mind the tomb was only a womb to hold their loved ones until God brought forth life again as prophesized

The Kingdom of God expressed itself in Kingdom ways after the death of Jesus

- During the earthquake the tombs were opened
 - The death and resurrection of Jesus has opened the tombs with hope
 - No more grieving without hope
 - Death no longer has a suffocating hold on us

The Kingdom of God expressed itself in Kingdom ways after the death of Jesus

- Many bodies of the saints (God's people) who had fallen asleep [in death] were raised [to life]
 - The word "saints" does not mean perfect people
 - It means people set apart, devoted to God, and faithful to the covenant
 - Many saints who had died in their faith in the Messiah were raised to new life following the resurrection of Jesus
 - **Vs. 53,** They came out of their tombs following the resurrection of Jesus

The Kingdom of God expressed itself in Kingdom ways after the death of Jesus

- Many bodies of the saints (God's people) who had fallen asleep [in death] were raised [to life]
 - These were the first fruits with a more and complete resurrection to come
 - **Leviticus 23:10 NLT**, "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you enter the land I am giving you and you harvest its first crops, bring the priest a bundle of grain from the first cutting of your grain harvest."
 - **1st Corinthians 15:20 ESV**, 20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

The Kingdom of God expressed itself in Kingdom ways after the death of Jesus

- Many bodies of the saints (God's people) who had fallen asleep [in death] were raised [to life]
 - Jesus was receiving a portion of the eventual harvest of saved, glorified souls
 - I believe these saints ascended with Jesus when He returned to Heaven
 - **Ephesians 4:8 ESV**, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."
 - They went into Jerusalem and were seen (*identified, known*)

The Kingdom of God expressed itself in Kingdom ways after the death of Jesus

- Summary – Many people who died believing in and following the Messiah, true to the Covenant, came out of their graves, walked into Jerusalem, and showed themselves to the living
- God's power and authority breaks through even when all seems to be lost
- Jesus' death breaks our tombs open, bringing us out from death's curse; and his new life makes possible our new life connecting victory to the seeming defeat

When Heaven Came Close

- This was not random chaos
 - It was God ripping the fabric/barrier between Heaven and Earth with the new Kingdom beginning
 - This was a Resurrection Preview like movie previews, just a snippet to catch your attention and allow you to look forward with excitement
 - Demonstrates the movie is real and complete and coming to a theater close to you soon

When Heaven Came Close

- What do our verses today mean for your future Christian?
 - **1st Thessalonians 4:13-18 ESV**, 13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

When Heaven Came Close

- Rejoice Christian, Rejoice
- **1st Thessalonians 4:13-18 ESV**, 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.
 - 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
 - 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

When Heaven Came Close

- Be ready
 - **1st Thessalonians 5:1-3, 6 ESV**, 1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, **and they will not escape.**
 - 6 So then let us not sleep (*give up, grow weary, loose hope*), as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober (*be ready*).

When Heaven Came Close

- Larry Norman wrote a song, “I Wished We’d All Been Ready”

[Verse 1]

Life was filled with guns and war
And everyone got trampled on the floor
I wish we'd all been ready

Children died, the days grew cold
A piece of bread could buy a bag of gold
I wish we'd all been ready

There's no time to change your mind
The Son has come and you've been left behind

When Heaven Came Close

- Larry Norman wrote a song, “I Wished We’d All Been Ready”

[Verse 2]

A man and wife asleep in bed
She hears a noise and turns her head, he's gone
I wish we'd all be ready

Two men walking up a hill
One disappears and one's left standing still
I wish we'd all been ready

There's no time to change your mind
The Son has come and you've been left behind



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