

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME THREE

STUDY EIGHTEEN

What Happened *After* Jesus Died?

Mark 15:37–41

Oh, our Father, we thank You for helping us understand that even in what seem to be small details after a great event, You speak in unmistakable ways.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

GREAT events can overshadow what follows them. You probably remember where you were and what you were doing on September 11, 2001, when you first heard the news of the attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. But you likely have difficulty remembering what happened the next day, September 12.

Similarly, you probably recall walking across the stage to receive your college diploma. Or the moment the pastor at your wedding said, “I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride!” Or the first time you held your newborn baby and gazed into his or her eyes. What happened afterward? The next day? It’s a bit of a blur. The more significant the event, the less we remember the events that came after.

No one can forget Jesus’ crucifixion. The soldiers hammering the spikes into His hands and feet. The blood dripping down Jesus’ face. The writhing of His body as He struggled to breathe. The three hours of darkness that blanketed Golgotha like a shroud. And, finally, Jesus’ last breath as His swollen lips formed the words, “It is finished!” (John 19:30).

These scenes stick with us. And yet, most of us can’t recount what happened right after Jesus’ death and before His burial. Mark and the other gospel writers describe several remarkable and miraculous events. In the passages for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we’ll examine these events. And we’ll glean some timeless truths that will strengthen our faith and increase our devotion to our Savior, who died, was buried, and rose again.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Find solace and quietness in the presence of the Lord. Thank Him for always being there. Express to Him your joy at calling Him Father through His Son, Jesus. Extol Him for who He is!



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The Son of God became flesh to offer Himself as a sacrificial Lamb to atone for the sins of the world. His death on the cross signaled the completion of His mission but not the end of His power or His ministry. While His body hung lifeless on the cross, before Joseph of Arimathea took it down for burial, Mark's camera kept rolling. Let's see what his lens and the lenses of the other gospel writers captured.



Observation: What Happened After Jesus Died?

Observation is an important step in the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method. Details that seem insignificant prepare us for a more accurate interpretation and application of the biblical text.¹

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Carefully read each passage listed in the chart below and fill in the details that you observe from the Scriptures.

Events After Jesus' Death		
Title	Scripture	Observations
Tearing of the Temple Veil	<i>Matthew 27:51;</i> <i>Mark 15:38</i>	
Shaking of the Earth	<i>Matthew 27:51, 54</i>	
Opening of the Tombs	<i>Matthew 27:52–53</i>	
Response of the Centurion	<i>Matthew 27:54;</i> <i>Mark 15:39;</i> <i>Luke 23:47–48</i>	
Presence of the Women	<i>Matthew 27:55–56;</i> <i>Mark 15:40–41</i>	



Interpretation: Significant Events After Jesus' Death

What do these events mean? Let's do some research. To grasp the significance of the tearing of the temple veil in *Mark 15:38*, read the article "*Veil*" in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible* at biblegateway.com. Explain the vital role of the veil in the tabernacle. What is the implication of this enormous piece of tapestry being torn apart "from top to bottom" after Jesus' death?

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After the veil tore from top to bottom, the earth shook violently, terrifying the centurion and the other soldiers who had crucified Jesus and watched Him die (Matthew 27:54). “This man truly was the Son of God!” the centurion proclaimed (Mark 15:39). In his gospel, Mark plants this man’s confession like a flag on a mountain peak. What message would this scene convey to Mark’s readers in Rome? How does the Roman centurion’s statement reflect a central theme in the book of Mark?

Boulders split and they see this. It’s an astounding power from the One who created the rocks. It’s as if the rocks were shouting, “Our Creator has died!” And this is their only way of expressing their grief. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

As the earth shook, “tombs opened” and “the bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead” (Matthew 27:52). How do we understand this sign? Consult the online commentary [Constable’s Notes](#) to explain the significance of this amazing raising of the dead.

In [Matthew 27:55](#), how significant is the scene of the many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked on from a distance? What message does their courageous devotion to Jesus communicate to you?

Remember the disciples when Jesus was arrested in the garden? They all forsook Him and fled. Right? Not the women. From Galilee until now, they are there to minister to Him. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Correlation: Truths That Strengthen Our Faith

The writer to the Hebrews gives us a closer look behind the scenes of Christ's accomplishment. Compare [Hebrews 4:14–16](#) and [6:19–20](#). What has Jesus, our great High Priest, done for us through His death? What does the tearing of the veil mean for you personally?

At the death of Christ, God was saying, “I am accessible. Come within the veil. I am available. I invite you. The sacrifice has been paid; the Lamb of God’s blood has been poured once for all to cover the sins of the world.” Our High Priest has opened the door, and now you can come to your heavenly Father in prayer. I can “come boldly before the throne of grace that I may receive mercy and grace to help in a time of need.” That’s because the veil has been torn by God.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The earthquake that split rocks and opened tombs heralded a future resurrection for all believers. How do [John 11:25, 35–44](#) and [1 Thessalonians 4:16–17](#) give you hope?

Throughout his gospel, Mark features the women who responded in faith to Jesus. What can you learn from the commitment of these women who stayed close by Jesus while others fled, according to [Mark 15:40–41](#); [Luke 8:1–3](#); and [23:55–56](#)?

I want to say to you women who love Christ and might very well be the strongest voice in your home for Christ: stay with it. There’s something about your devotion. Hats off to you. Thank you for being the model of devotion that we men often wish we were. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Application: What Does All This Mean to Me?

Pastor Chuck offers us five ways we can apply this message to our lives.

First, *the veil teaches us that access through prayer is available*. Sometimes we lose our motivation to bring our requests to God, or we feel that we are not qualified to have such direct access. In what way has the Holy Spirit used this passage to encourage you to boldly approach God's throne because of the torn veil?

Don't ever be reluctant. You don't need a priest to represent you before God. No, the veil has been torn in two. We needed a priest before the veil was torn, but now we are believer-priests. We bring our own needs. You will never interrupt Him; He has time for you. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Second, *the earthquake reminds us that the power of God is impressive*. How does the rock-splitting power of God encourage you in your current circumstances?

Don't ever forget it. Read it into every one of the reports from the doctor. Read it into every financially stressful situation you're going through. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Third, *the open tomb tells us that mysteries in life are unexplainable*. Some events in life we can't explain. How does this truth strengthen your faith and teach you to keep a humble posture?

There are mysteries that remain mysteries most of your life. Don't ever be afraid to say, "I don't know. This stumps me." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Fourth, *the centurion teaches us that the work of conviction is effective*. If the cynical heart of this battle-hardened soldier could soften toward God, so can the heart of someone in your life who seems too proud to surrender to Jesus. How does this account of faith encourage you?

Don't ever think someone's heart is too hard. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Finally, *the women teach us that devotion to Christ is timeless and unconditional*. As years of ministry go by, we tend to drift from our first love and devotion to Christ. Why not take some time to ask the Lord to ignite your zeal and kindle your love for Him?

I pray regularly that I'll never cool off, that I'll never get tired of dealing with spiritual things, and that I'll never lose my love for the truth of God's Word and the God of the Word. I pray the same for you. May it never cool off.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for helping me understand that even in what seem to be small details after a great event, You speak in unmistakable ways. Thank You for 24/7 access to Your throne. Help me to remember Your rock-splitting power. You can open any tomb. You can save anyone. Add flame to my love and my zeal for You. In Jesus' powerful name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](http://insight.org)" at insight.org.

For the 2027 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2011, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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