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## **SEVEN MIGHTY MIRACLES CLUSTER AROUND CALVARY**

**By Joshua Stauffer**  
**Kernersville, North Carolina**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Supernatural and miraculous events surround the death of Christ. Jesus Christ was the great Miracle-Man of history. His birth was a miracle, His ministry was one of performing miracles, and His resurrection was the greatest miracle ever wrought in history. It should be noted that all miracles Christ performed were wrought through, or by reason of the cross; therefore, it should not be considered as incredible for miracles to be wrought at the cross.

The great center of infinity of time, or of the eternal past and the eternal future is that period from the time the Son of God also became the Son of Man, in which He came down and was incarnated in the flesh, so that He might be born to die and be resurrected to be alive forever, all for the sake of developing a new creation. His coming brought the dividing of time. Before this great period, time is designated as B.C., (in reality there was no before Christ, for He is eternal and did not have a beginning). What is meant by B.C. is, time counted before Christ became incarnated in the flesh. The coming of Christ became the great pivot from which time measures backward and also forward. From then on, time is considered as A.D. Time may very fittingly be designated as B.C. and A.D., or before Christ, and in the year of our Lord.

Jesus Christ is the central Person of the Godhead, the central Person of the human race, and the central Figure of the Bible. The mighty universe was created by Him and is sustained by Him (John 1:3; Col. 1:16). These are upheld by Him and revolve around Him; eternity and time revolve around Him; prophecy and history revolve around Him; therefore, salvation and damnation hinge upon the attitude a person takes toward Christ and the cross.

Calvary became the place where the greatest conflict of all ages was fought. This was the place where Christ, the SEED of the woman, was engaged in a death struggle with Satan, that Old Serpent. While Satan, the Old Serpent and sin were crushing the life out of the Redeemer, (after His holy birth, holy life and holy works, not having done anything worthy of death), He was submitting unto death that He might pay the penalty for sin, forgive sinners, abolish death, and crush the Old Serpent's head and bring defeat to Satan and his kingdom, and eternal triumph to the cause of righteousness.

Christ did not die in vain, but His death was the greatest accomplishment of His ministry. The veracity of His claims was true, for He was all and more than He claimed to be. The very fact that miracles occurred before His death and after His resurrection, attests His claims, which were witnessed by nature, the earth, men, God and angels.

Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion means, the place of a skull. The Greek word "Calvary" also means a skull. This was the hill of execution and the place where malefactors were beheaded or crucified. Calvary was the place chosen to crucify Christ. This mount of execution and the curse that accompanied crucifixion, have both been transformed by Christ into a place of pilgrimage, and given occasion for the birth of many songs, making Calvary appear as a sacred and hallowed spot.

Jesus Christ, the great Miracle-Man of history, Whose birth was a miracle, His ministry was that of performing miracles on a wholesale scale, Himself experienced the mightiest miracle of the ages when He was resurrected from the dead. The seven miracles which cluster around Calvary are:

1. The Miracle of Midnight Darkness at Midday.
2. The Veil Riven from the Top to the Bottom.
3. The Earthquake of Sorrow and Travail.
4. The Miracle of the Resurrection of Christ the Miracle-Man.
5. The Awakening of Many Saints who Slept.
6. The Earthquake of Joy and Triumph.
7. The Opening of Christ's Tomb.

Three miracles occurred before the greatest miracle of all time was performed, which was the resurrection of the Miracle-Man. After His resurrection, three more miracles came to pass.

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It has been suggested, when Christ was born the midnight darkness was transformed into midday glory that made the angels to rejoice and the shepherds to wonder. Christ, the Light of the world was born to die, and His face was set toward the cross. When the fullness of time came, Christ set His face toward Jerusalem where He might be taken. After the Last Supper, Christ and the eleven disciples resorted to the Garden of Gethsemane where shortly before midnight He was taken captive and led as a lamb to the slaughter. The chief priests, scribes and Pharisees. were so bent upon destroying Christ, that He was brought before the chief priests and the Sanhedrin, and within the next eight to nine hours, Christ was presented before six tribunals; namely, 1. Before Annas (John 18:13, 24). 2. Before Caiaphas (Matt. 26:57). 3. Before Council and Rulers (Matt. 27:1). 4. Before Pilate (Matt. 27:11-14). 5. Before Herod ('Luke 23:7-11). 6. Before Pilate (Luke 23:11-24). In none of these did the Sinless One receive justice, but in each one He was condemned to death. So rapidly did events occur that at nine o'clock in the morning (the very hour for the daily morning sacrifice) Christ was nailed to the cross and there He hung until three o'clock in the afternoon (the time for the daily evening sacrifice) when He died. At the very time the great struggle between right and wrong was being waged, the sun, the natural light of the world shone upon this pathetic scene while the Son of God, the spiritual Light of the world was pouring out His soul unto death. The sun witnessed this scene from nine in the morning until noon. It appears that this was more than the sun could bear. We read, "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land to the ninth hour" (Matt. 27:45).

What was taking place? Think of the indignities which were done to the Lord of glory! This was the hour of the prince of darkness. This was the hour when Satan, demons, sin, hell and wicked men were doing their very worst against the very best One. Yes, this was the hour when the Father and the Son of God, with heaven and holiness were doing their very best for the worst ones. This was the time when there was a converging of heaven and hell, sin and holiness, love and hatred; when the SEED of the woman and the Old Serpent were in a struggle of life and death, that caused the sun to blush, the Father to turn His face away from the Son and His back being turned toward the Holy One in this the greatest struggle of all time. By reason of this, the prince of darkness will be cast into outer darkness, and the darkness of sin in due time to be dispelled.

This darkness was not an eclipse, for it was only the third day before Easter, which always comes near the time of full moon. No eclipse of the sun, (which is merely a natural phenomenon) could ever bring darkness over all the face of the earth where the sun shines, and that for three full hours. The sun which is a million and a quarter times larger than the earth, and throws a glowing flame of fire for 250,000 miles in every direction, to black-out for three hours is not to be considered as a natural phenomenon.

What consternation this must have sent throughout the entire face of the earth in which there was no light at noonday ! What chemical reactions must have taken place in the sun !

It is reported that, Dionysius at Heliopolis, in Egypt, took notice of this darkness and said, "Either the god of nature is suffering, or the machine of the world is tumbling into ruin."

The Creator of the universe was made a sin offering and a curse. He was dying with the curse of sin laid on Him. It might be expressed that God hung the black crepe of death over the sun

while His Son was dying. It appears creation expressed its sympathy for the Creator-Redeemer in His dying hour. Such shame and wickedness that was being perpetrated on a holy, sinless and innocent Man, the sun never before witnessed; therefore, veiled its face. This darkness had its design, for it stopped the mouths of blasphemers who reviled Christ while He was hanging on the cross. It wrung a confession from their lips which attested the divine Sonship of Christ. Now they were made to fear greatly and cry out, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54).

No, this phenomenon was not of meteorological causes. It must be considered as a directly supernatural event associated with the death of Christ. The miraculous occurrence of darkness in the land of Egypt for three days is recorded in Exodus 10:21, 22. This darkness was a plague and sent as a punishment against Egypt to awaken them of their rebellion against the Lord by refusing to please the children of Israel from Egypt.

There is a language in all of God's creation. The Lord spoke about the stones crying out (Hab. 2:11; Luke 19:40). In Job 12:8, it is stated, "Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee." God created the sun and there is a language in the sun (See Ps. 19:1-4). The sun witnessed the indignities of wicked men against Christ, and the shame He bore while He was dying a vicarious death to bring spiritual life and light to lost, darkened souls. All who reject Christ and His atoning merits will have many witnesses that will witness against them in the day of judgment. These will be cast into outer darkness because they have rejected Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

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## 02 -- THE VEIL RIVEN FROM THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM

It is written, "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Matt. 27:51). This miracle was a phenomenon that is mentioned with an exclamation of "behold." This means, lo, look, see. It virtually means, "turn aside, and look on this sight and be astonished."

What force or power rent this veil? No stranger, no Gentile and no Israelite, only the priests were allowed to enter the holy place. The high priest and the priests were permitted to enter into the holy place daily to burn incense on the golden altar, to eat the holy bread, to trim the seven lighted candlestick and replenish the oil.

The veil of the temple which divided the most holy place from the holy place was an elaborately woven fabric with 72 twisted plaits of 24 threads, and in size was 60 by 30 feet, being thick like a comforter, and would have required two yoke of oxen to rend it. The thick veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. It is inconceivable to consider men entering the holy place to attempt rending the veil. If attempts had been made by men, they would have ripped it from the bottom to the top. The time of the rending of the veil synchronizes with the very time Jesus Christ expired, even the time when His literal heart was broken -- ruptured -- rent. This was the hour of the daily evening sacrifice which occurred at 3:00 p.m. This being the Passover day, the high priest was supposed to be in the temple replenishing the oil and trimming the lamps and burning incense on the golden altar which stood directly before the veil. Think of the crash he heard!

Consider the consternation he must have felt as he heard, looked, and saw the rending, then saw into the most holy place! What feeling must have come to him!

The Jews condemned Christ for saying to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," interpreting it to mean the literal temple. By this demonstration of the riven veil, Christ allowed them to know that if He had pleased to do so, He could very easily have destroyed their temple of worship, which already had been left desolate because they had rejected Him.

The rending of the veil has rich significance. From Hebrews 10:19 and 20, we learn that this veil was a figure of the flesh of Christ. When this rent was made it brought the concealed room into access with the worshiper, and face to face with the most holy place. It signified that a new and living way has been opened that all may approach the throne of God. The veil restrained people from drawing near to the most holy place. Christ the God-Man opened a way for Himself as well as for all people to enter into the presence of God. His blood which He shed, gave Him the right to enter once for all into the heavens. The sacrifice under the law was offered in the outer court, but the blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat within the veil. Through the shedding of Christ's blood, we have boldness to enter into the very presence of God without any slaying of animals, any man-appointed priest, or man-made temple. Truly, approaching God and praying are blood-bought privileges. If we would associate the value of the blood of Christ with our prayers, they would be more precious and valuable before God and the throne of grace.

The rending of the veil was a sign of the removal and fulfillment of that which was typical of the atonement, but now was accomplished and finished by reason of the great atonement which Christ made. In this miracle there is a great mystery. The temple of the Jews was a figure of Christ's body which now was dissolving. He was the true temple in which dwelt the fullness of the Godhead. He was the true Bread of Life, the Light of the world and His intercession was golden, that is, holy, heavenly, fragrant and availing. In His heart and life the law was perfectly kept and never broken in any respect. When Christ cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost, and so dissolved the temple of His body, the literal temple of the Jews as it were responded to that cry, and the echo of the voice rent its veil. This signified that the revealing, the unfolding of the symbols and the fulfillment of the ceremonies of the Old Testament had been fulfilled.

Now, the holy of holies is laid open. Now, we see the veil and the wood representing His sinless humanity. Now, we see the significance of the mercy seat and Christ as the great Sacrifice for sinners slain. Now, we see that the pot of manna signified Christ as the Bread of Life. Now, we see the significance of the law inscribed on tables of stone, perfectly preserved in the ark, whose wood and gold enshrouded them, as the moral and ceremonial law having been perfectly kept in Christ's heart and life. Now, God saw the reality of the blood of His Son-the Passover Lamb, shed and applied on the mercy seat of Christ's own heart -- the blood splash made by reason of a broken heart shed in His inner cavities, making contact with His Deity. Now, as God said, there came the full realization and meaning, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" and also, "There (that is, the blood applied on the mercy seat above the preserved law) will I meet with you and I will speak with you." Yes, great is the mystery of the riven veil.

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### 03 -- THE EARTHQUAKE OF SORROW AND TRAVAIL

It is stated that, "The earth did quake and the rocks rent" (Matt. 27:51). It is to be observed that two earthquakes cluster around Calvary. The first earthquake occurred at the instant when Christ died, and the second earthquake occurred around the moment when Christ arose from the dead. How can it be accounted for that both of these earthquakes are associated, the one in the very area and the moment when Christ died, and the other earthquake in the same area and time when He arose from the dead? In the ordinary sense, an earthquake, which is the trembling of the earth, is caused by the falling of the rocks or by volcanic shocks, is not to be considered as a miracle, but as a natural phenomenon.

The area around Mount Calvary is not considered volcanic. If it serves God's purpose, He can command an earthquake. There is a difference between an earthquake occasioned from a natural phenomenon, and an earthquake that is commanded by God, or the rending of the rocks as the manifestation of His power or displeasure. Several such occasions are recorded in the Bible. When Korah and his company rebelled against Moses and the Lord, we read in Numbers 16:25-33, the Lord made a new thing and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up alive. Also, when Jonathan and his armor bearer were in battle in time of war against the Philistines, God gave Jonathan great power in slaughtering the people, and there came a trembling in the host and the Lord made the earth to quake (I Sam. 14:15). During the time of Elijah's discouragement and despondency he fled to Mt. Sinai, where the Lord gave him an object lesson by sending a strong wind that rent the mountains, then came an earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire. This prepared Elijah for God to speak to him in the still small voice (I Kings 19:11, 12).

This earthquake of sorrow and travail was not a mere natural phenomenon, because it is to be associated with the death of Christ. It appears that all nature was in sympathy with the sufferings of Christ. Christ, the great Creator and Upholder of all things was dying. Job made a very significant statement when he said, "Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee" (Job 12:8). There is a language in all of God's creation and there is a language in the stones or rocks. This is indicated throughout the Old Testament and also the New. Frequently throughout the Old Testament, rocks or stones were used as markers, memorials and witnesses. This is stated in words like these, "These stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." Christ said, "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." All of God's creation becomes responsive to the Creator. It is stated that the whole earth is full of the glory of God. It requires anointed eyes to see this glory. The facts and realities of the curse and sin also are inscribed in the earth. This earth has gone through many devastating and cataclysmic changes by reason of sin. It also is stated that the whole creation has been groaning and travailing under the burden of the curse of sin since the fall of Adam. Now that the burden of sin, that is, the sins of all men of all time were laid on Christ, the whole creation groaned under such weight.

While the Creator was dying to bring redemption not only to a fallen race, but also to a fallen planet, the earth as it were became convulsed with tremors which rent the rocks and brought contortions in its topography. The earth quaked as if it feared to absorb the blood which was so precious that it was intrinsic, yea, infinite in its value, which signified the mighty shock that would prove to be a fatal blow dealt to Satan, to the devil's kingdom, to sin and the curse occasioned by sin that would bring the downfall of all of these.

The miracle of this earthquake of sorrow and travail, which convulsed the earth, was a witness, an attestation of the truth that the Sufferer was the Messiah, and the Son of God. The very fact of the death of Christ is not only written in the Scriptures by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but is written in the sun, when its light went out, and also is written in the earth by the precious blood which Christ shed when He died.

Yes, "Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee." This very earth yet will witness to the fact that Christ the crucified One truly was the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world. In due time it will be delivered from the curse occasioned by sin.

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#### 04 -- THE MIRACLE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, THE MIRACLE-MAN

An angel witnessed the resurrection of Christ; therefore, he could witness to the women who came to the grave that, "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:6). The resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Miracle-Man and the Miracle-Performer is the greatest of all miracles of all time and is to be noted as the miracle of all miracles.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the greatest demonstration of God's power that ever has been expressed in all time. To create the mighty universe, when there was no pre-existing material, was an easy matter for God. The Psalmist by inspiration wrote relative to the creation as a demonstration of God's power: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth ... Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spake, And it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:6-9). It was easier for the Infinite, Omnipotent God to create the universe than it is for man to breathe. God is self-existent and independent of all contingencies. Man's existence is dependent upon food, water, and air, and also on God the Giver and Sustainer of life. However, to redeem the world and restore man, and reinstate him in the full image of God was an entirely different matter. To do so, the Son of God had to condescend to become the Son of Man, agonize, sweat blood, and shed His blood-even die. Throughout the Old Testament period, whenever God called attention to the fact of the greatness of His power, He always reminded His people Israel of their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, their redemption by the blood of a Passover lamb, also the parting of the Red Sea to allow them to make their escape from Pharaoh and his army.

In the New Testament, whenever it pleased God to call the attention of men to the greatness of His power, He cited them to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul, in writing of this fact to the Ephesians, and in praying for them asked God, even the Father of Jesus Christ, to give them the spirit of wisdom and' to open the eyes of their understanding that they might know what was the exceeding greatness of His power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead (Eph. 1:16-20).

It also is to be noted that the resurrection of Christ makes possible the spiritual resurrection of all who are dead in trespasses and sins, then eventually the literal resurrection of all the saints.

It requires the same effort, even the same power which God demonstrated in raising Christ from the dead, to quicken a sinner into newness of life, which transforms him from a sinner into a saint. This is a spiritual resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ is the most stupendous miracle in history. This fact is mentioned directly 104 times in the New Testament. Christ said seven times before He died that He would rise again. After He arose, He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs which cannot be gainsaid. He testified to His own that He was alive and that He would never again die. The Old Testament said He would rise from the dead. The four Gospels state that He arose from the dead. The Epistles state that He arose. The book of Revelation says that He had been dead, but arose to be alive for ever. Even the earth said, He arose from the grave (Matt. 28:2).

The tomb of Christ was sealed and made sure by governmental authority, and guarded by Roman soldiers. Regardless of the tomb being guarded, the time had come when the tomb could conceal Him no longer. The fullness of time had come for the crucified Christ to arise from the dead.

All of the powers, whether that of governments, soldiers, priests, wicked men, unbelievers, including the power of death and the power of Satan with every demon -- all combined could not retain Him in the tomb, nor restrain Him from rising from the dead. In the operation of the resurrection of Christ, there was cooperation in the Godhead, each Person demonstrating infinite power in bringing Him back to life. The resurrection of Christ is attributed to God the Father (Col. 2:12); God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11; I Pet. 3:18); and even to Christ Himself (John 10:17).

There had been so much power in the life of Christ, the words of Christ, the blood of Christ and also the death of Christ, that when sin was stinging Him to death, He died so triumphantly that death was given such a terrific blow which left it so stunned, that even death could not prey on His body so long as He remained dead. His body, though dead, was inviolate and did not see corruption. Many bodies of men have greatly deteriorated, and different organs of the body have disintegrated even before physical life ceased. Not so with the body of Christ! No cell, of all the billions of cells, disintegrated in the three days in which His body was dead. It had been prophesied that He would not see corruption (Ps. 16:10). This was actually and literally fulfilled. It also had been prophesied that His soul would not be retained in hades.

It was the Holy Spirit who mightily and miraculously brought the spirit of Christ from hades, back into the tomb, where the body of Christ was resting in hope, and infused it into this body, quickening it into life as well as spiritualizing and immortalizing His flesh. This mighty quickening enabled Christ to resume His own body to miraculously and mysteriously slip out of His grave clothes without undoing them, and also in a miraculous manner to pass out through the walls of the tomb, leaving it sealed, but empty. Certainly, for a brief period of time the soldiers, if they only had known it, were guarding an empty tomb. The resurrection of Christ was the crowning miracle of all time. Whoever believes the doctrine and miracle of the resurrection of Christ will never have any trouble in believing any other Bible miracle or Bible doctrine. (See Acts 26:8).

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## 05 -- THE AWAKENING OF MANY SAINTS WHO SLEPT

"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matt. 27:52, 53). The awakening of these many saints has perplexed many scholars and created many questions such as these: Who were these saints? How many arose? Why did they come forth? What has become of them? What are they doing now? Regardless of how we interpret the awakening of the bodies of many saints and their appearance in the holy city, we all must agree on this one fact, that this was another mighty miracle which clusters around Calvary. This was a strange incident which is recorded only in Matthew. It could be possible, though it is not stated that the evangelist himself came face to face with one of these saints.

It is to be observed that the graves were opened at the death of Christ by reason of the earthquake which rent the rocks and broke open those tombs. However, these did not arise or come forth from the graves until "after His resurrection." This Scripture has been interpreted in different manners. Some explain the clause "after His resurrection" to mean "His raising them." If this is what is meant, then the appearance of these saints in Jerusalem occurred on the afternoon of the crucifixion, which is not accepted by a majority of scholars.

This miracle clearly reveals the efficacy of Christ's resurrection. This miracle also proves that His death was a victory over death and hades which opened the doors to everlasting and immortal life. It also proves that the death of Christ is the life of the world.

The setting and context of this miracle are interesting and enlightening. The fact of the bodies of the saints which slept and arose is mentioned by associating it with the death of Christ, when in reality, it did not occur until "after His resurrection." The death of the God-Hero brought about the first earthquake which shook the earth and rent the rocks, and graves were opened. The open tombs were a witness that His death had broken the bands of death. Historically the awakening of the many saints belongs in chapter 28. Why is it associated with His death? and why did they not awaken till after His resurrection? The Holy Spirit placed it here to show the great effect of His death and that death was swallowed up in victory. Well may the Scriptures proclaim and the saints shout, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (I Cor. 15:54, 55).

Now the great question is, Who were they, and what became of them? This omission simply heightens the interest of this incident. We are not told who they were. Probably they were saints who were well known at this time. Some scholars claim they were Simeon, Anna and Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, and Elisabeth. This we can only conjecture.

We are not informed what happened to them. If they had risen at the time of Christ's death, and before His resurrection, then of course, from the Scriptures we could safely assume that they died again, such as did the persons who were resuscitated, such as Lazarus, the widow's son, and Jairus' daughter. The reason for assuming this is, Christ is first in resurrection.

In the consideration of the three following Scriptures we may assume several facts: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20).

Christ is the first person who has ever been resurrected. Those who were raised from the dead were merely resuscitated and died again. The second Scripture is, "That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23). Here it is specifically stated that Christ would be the first who should rise from the dead. The third Scripture is that of Colossians 1:18: "And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence." Here, also, we learn Christ is the firstborn from the dead. Another Scripture may well fit here and that is the one Peter quoted in relation to Christ's resurrection: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." (Acts 2:29)

There are three lines of consideration or reasoning that we may follow: First, they are still walking the streets of Jerusalem, which is most unlikely and not a reasonable line of consideration.

Secondly, that they died again and were entombed a second time, which is not likely, for why should they be raised to appear to some on the streets of Jerusalem, when their names are not given nor their testimonies recorded? It is to be noted that a revelation of the unseen and the state after death is not given by any person who died and was resuscitated, but this revelation is given only by God Himself and Christ Who was dead and is alive forever. Also, why should they have been raised from the dead after their mission on earth was done, to soon die again?

A third consideration has been given, and that is. these saints were taken up with Christ when He went into heaven as an earnest of the first fruits of the resurrection of the saints, or as a small sample of what the full harvest will be when all saints will be resurrected.

The Scriptures are rich in their teachings, and the Bible is its own and best commentary. The Tabernacle, five offerings and seven feasts of Exodus and Leviticus were a type of Christ and pointed forward to Him Who fulfilled the ceremonial law in His death and resurrection. The feast of Firstfruits typified His resurrection even as the Passover typified His crucifixion and death. The feast of Firstfruits occurred on the morrow (Sunday, or first day) after the Sabbath (seventh day). The Israelites were commanded to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of their harvest. This sheaf was typical of Christ and His resurrection. (See I Cor. 15:23; I Thes. 4:13-18). Christ was first in resurrection, but the saints who arose occurred immediately after His resurrection. A sheaf is composed of many stalks of unthreshed wheat, which implies many.

Christ said, "Except a corn (grain) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Christ spoke concerning His own death (the single grain of wheat) dying, being buried and arising again, coming forth as a sheaf. By comparing Heb. 12:23 with Eph. 4:8-10, there is an inference that these "many bodies of the saints which slept arose" were taken into heaven with Christ.

This may be illustrated by the voyage and the discovery of a new world made by Christopher Columbus. On his return voyage, he took with him some red men to prove to Ferdinand the king, and Isabella the queen, and the country of Spain that these were a sample of the race of red men and the evidence of the discovery of a new continent.

This interesting miracle of the resurrection of these many saints reveals that by reason of the death and the resurrection of Christ, all the saints will be released from the bonds of hades and the grave to be resurrected and raised up to immortal life. When the resurrection of all the saints will occur, another mighty miracle, on a tremendous scale will be wrought by the Miracle-Man? Who experienced a miraculous resurrection. The church triumphant, even His mystical body will be like unto Himself, resurrected, transformed, raptured, and glorified, to forever be with Him in glory.

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## 06 -- THE EARTHQUAKE OF JOY AND TRIUMPH

Even as there was an earthquake in the moment of Christ's death that rent the rocks and brought distortions to the topography of the earth, so there also was an earthquake associated with the resurrection of Christ. No details are given in relation to this earthquake, and all that is stated is, "And, behold there was a great earthquake." (Matt. 28:2). In the Bible, earthquakes are mentioned as expressions of God's power, of His presence and His anger. Mt. Sinai shook at the presence of God (Ex. 19:18). Certainly the presence and the power of the Lord were both manifested at the resurrection of the Son of God.

The purpose and the design of this earthquake were entirely different from the one associated with His death. The Creator and Redeemer, having risen from the dead, became a guarantee of the deliverance from the bondage of the curse and the groan occasioned by sin. When Christ arose from the dead, the earth responded in a vibrant and harmonious note that brought to it a great shout of rejoicing so that the earth quaked with delight, or as if the earth chuckled to the extent that the rocks heaved up and down like the muscles in the body contract and relax while laughing. Calling attention again to the quotation of Job, "Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee" (Job 12:8), the fact of Christ's resurrection was being recorded in the earth. The earth can witness to the fact that Christ as Creator and Redeemer, Who had died, also became alive again. The earth was loosed from the bonds of death; therefore, quaked in exaltation in shaking off the fetters of the grave.

At that very moment a shining angel flashed some light on the guard and frightened them so greatly that they fell and became as dead men. When the guard recovered, they fled from the scene and came into the city and showed the chief priest all the things that were done.

The resurrection of Christ was a signal of His victory, and reveals that He was triumphant over Satan, hades, death and the grave. Could we but know what took place among the departed saints, the heavens, God the Father and all the holy angels, there must have been great rejoicing in the upper, heavenly and invisible world. When the heavens rejoice, the earth may also be glad. The prophet wrote, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come" (Hag. 2:6, 7). The Desire of all nations (Christ) has come, but He was not accepted by the nation of Israel nor any Gentile nation. The shaking the earth received by Christ's first coming at the time of His death and also at His resurrection is but a specimen of the shaking this earth will receive when He comes the second time. When the deceased saints will be

resurrected and the living saints transformed, and together are caught up, this world will receive a terrible shaking. When Christ will set up His kingdom on earth, the voice from heaven shall declare the Sonship and Kingship of Christ, and all kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, Who shall reign for ever and ever. This world will receive a terrible shaking at Christ's second coming, in which the earthquakes that will be associated with His coming will shake this world such as it never has known before. For a further study in this area, consult the following references: Isaiah 2:19; 13:13; 24:18; Joel 3:16; Heb. 12:26; Rev. 6:12; 11:13; 12:10. Christ could not manifest His full glory and power to Israel in His first coming because of the unbelief of the Jews. They rejected Him. The great mission of His first coming was to die and establish His spiritual kingdom. When He comes the second time, He will enforce His redemptive rights, shoulder the governments and set up the Theocratic kingdom on earth. He is "The Desire of all nations," that is, the Deliverer, and is subconsciously the desire of all nations, which means He will bring all desirable things desired by the nations, such as peace, health, prosperity and joy without sorrow. However, Christ will subdue all nations, judge them, shake Satan and demons out of the heavenlies, and shake all rebels, sin and uncleanness out of the earth. This world is sadly in need for Christ to return and give it a good cleansing to eliminate Satan, demons, evil doctrines and unwholesome governments, and to set up His own glorious kingdom wherein will dwell righteousness and peace.

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## 07 -- THE OPENING OF CHRIST'S TOMB

"The angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it" (Matt. 28:2). Since there is a language in all of God's creation, and Christ mentioned that in His presence there should be rejoicings and shoutings, and if the intelligent, moral beings do not recognize the majesty of God and His greatness, the rocks would cry out with shouts of praise and exultation (Lu. 19:40). If we could but know, or have heard the language of the stone which sealed the opening of the tomb as it rolled away from the tomb, that enclosed the body of Christ, it enjoyed taking some delightful somersaults and expressed jubilations by reason that the Creator-Redeemer was alive and the tomb was empty.

The rolling back of this stone was a powerful argument in favor of the resurrection of Christ. Had He not risen, the angel certainly would not have rolled the stone away to expose the body of Christ to further dangers of being molested or destroyed. The act of the angel and the rolling away of this stone were witnesses to the fact that Christ had risen.

It had been prophesied that His body should not see corruption (Ps. 16:10). The human body of Christ which He assumed in the Incarnation, was not merely to benefit Him so long as He lived or to the time when He died. This body which had been prepared for Him by the Holy Spirit was assumed to be retained in perpetuity. Christ was born in this body, lived in it, was anointed in it, overcame Satan in this body, labored on earth while He dwelt in it, suffered and died in this body, and this body was buried without it being touched by any taint of corruption. This is the body in which He was resurrected and in it appeared alive to witnesses appointed beforehand (Acts 10:40, 41). Christ ascended in this body, and in it is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He will come again in this body to reign in it, and never forever will He lay it aside.

This mighty angel who rolled the stone away possessed authority and power to break the seal of the tomb and roll the stone away. This angel then sat upon this great stone, which symbolizes a note of triumph over all the obstructions to the resurrection of Christ. There he sat as if to defy all the powers of sin, Satan, darkness, the Roman government and unbelieving Jews, to roll the stone back to the tomb again.

The bright countenance of this angel frightened the guard so that these men shook with fear and became as dead men. When the earth shook, these hardened soldiers shook also. Their duty was to keep a dead man in his grave and to challenge any one who would seek to remove His body. This guard could keep men from removing the body of Christ, but they were completely powerless to prevent God from raising Christ from the dead or prevent man to take charge of the tomb. When Christ was alive again their service no longer was necessary, and it was legal and appropriate for an angel to frighten them from that scene. The angel did not need to speak to them. The majestic look of this angel with his countenance of purity and glory were sufficient to frighten them so that they fled from the scene.

The message of the angel to the women was good news. He assured them of the resurrection of Christ and directed them to bear the news to Christ's disciples. The angel even invited the women to come and see the place where the Lord had lain.

The stone was not rolled away to permit Jesus to come out of the tomb, for He already was out, but the stone was rolled away to allow the news to get out that Jesus was out and to let the women and disciples enter in to see for themselves that He was out. The act of this angel must be considered as a miracle, because it was more than the ordinary laws of nature. It was an event transcending the power of ordinary, natural agencies. It was an event wrought in the natural world by the intervention of, and the exertion of divine power.

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THE END