

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### "THE CROSS, PART 3"

For individual study or discussion

The death of Jesus Christ on **the cross** emerges as the cosmic turning point for the entire creation, fall, redemption narrative. On the cross, the Second Adam bears the curse of sin as he undoes the disobedience of the first (1 Corinthians 15:21-26). In Luke 23:44-56, God's plan for our salvation is accomplished, ultimately paving the way for the climactic event of the resurrection. Jesus' sacrifice pierces the darkness of sin and death as God once again makes his dwelling place among men.

#### The cosmic ending at the cross (vv. 44-46)

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ reaches its climax when Jesus commits his spirit to the Father, breathing his last breath. At the same moment, the supernatural events of a midnight day and the temple curtain tearing in two are triggered. Dr. John V. Fesko reflects on their cosmic meanings: *"As darkness fell upon the land, the creation mourned as the Creator was suspended between heaven and earth. Christ's suspension, however, was how God would reunite heaven and earth, and once again open the way to his presence. But now, because of Christ's suspension, God tore the temple veil in two, which meant that the way into the Holy of Holies was once again open—heaven and earth were reunited. Rather than humans trying to scale the heights of heaven to gain access to God, he rent the heavens and came down to humans."*<sup>1</sup>

- How do Jesus' final words echo David's trust in Psalm 31:1-5?
- What is the significance of darkness in OT passages like Amos 8:9 and Zephaniah 1:15? Read Mark 15:34 and Matthew 27:46. How does Christ's call to God in the parallel passages signify darkness?
- Hebrews 9-10 provides an excellent summary of the OT sacrificial system under the Mosaic covenant. Discuss the tearing of the curtain which led into the most Holy Place and its significance for you. (cf. Hebrews 10:19-22)

#### The different responses to the cross (vv. 47-49)

When the crowds watch the composure of Christ on the cross as the gory scene becomes shrouded in darkness, certain eyewitnesses are struck by wonder and distress. A Roman centurion recognizes that they just killed an innocent man (v. 47). The crowds leave *"beating their breasts"* with remorse. And the women who had been faithful followers of Jesus stand at a distance, watching in sorrow.

- In Luke 2:30-32, Simeon prophesies *"for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."* Who is the Gentile who sees the *"light of revelation"* in today's passage? (cf. Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39)
- The passage tells us that the crowds left beating their breasts after witnessing the cosmic events that took place that day. Read Acts 2:14-41. As the people listen to Peter's sermon at Pentecost, what is the likely impact of these events that are still fresh in their memories?

#### The courageous burial of the Christ (vv. 50-56)

At the beginning of Luke's gospel, we are introduced to a faithful remnant of God's people who are awaiting the consolation of Israel (Luke 1-2). And now, we find in verses 50-56 another faithful remnant among the devoted followers of Christ: Joseph of Arimathea and the women who followed Jesus from Galilee. Joseph boldly requests the body of Jesus from Pilate, providing it with a new tomb for burial. At the same time, the women watch and follow—their quiet witness setting the stage for the pivotal role they will later play in the resurrection narrative.

- What do we learn about Joseph of Arimathea's character from Luke's description, and how does he fulfill prophecy from Isaiah 53:9?
- In what way does Christ's rest in the tomb on the Sabbath echo the creation narrative in Genesis 2:2, and how might this foreshadow the resurrection?

DATE: April 13, 2025

SPEAKER: Chad/Brian

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 23:44-56

### Family Dinner Table

#### It's Going to be All Right

I'm sure you are familiar with J.R.R. Tolkien's epic story, *The Lord of the Rings*, and the moment when Frodo and Sam encounter darkness on their quest to destroy the ring at Mount Doom. At one point in the story, when the hobbits see the dreadful plains of Gorgoroth before them, their faith falters at the thought of crossing into Mordor. Warily, Sam looks up into the night sky and draws hope from a star poking a hole in the darkness: *"There, peeping among the cloud-wrack...Sam saw a white star twinkle for a while. The beauty of it smote his heart, as he looked up out of the forsaken land, and hope returned to him. For like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that in the end, the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty for ever beyond its reach...Now, for a moment, his own fate...ceased to trouble him...And putting away all fear, he cast himself into a deep and untroubled sleep."*<sup>2</sup> In his book *King's Cross*, Tim Keller tells how the darkness of a cancer diagnosis wasn't as overwhelming when he connected Sam's star with the hope of the cross: *"I remember thinking at the moment: It's really true. Because of Jesus' death evil is a passing thing—a shadow. There is light and beauty forever beyond its reach because evil fell into the heart of Jesus. The only darkness that could have destroyed us forever fell into his heart. It didn't matter what happened in my surgery—it was going to be all right. And it is going to be all right."*<sup>3</sup>

- Discuss how suffering and evil are "passing things" in light of Christ's ultimate victory over sin and death on the cross.

#### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

East Lake Expression Engine,  
supported partner ministry

#### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

David, supported national partner

<sup>1</sup> Fesko, John V. *Suspended Between Heaven and Earth: A Good Friday Reflection on the Cross of Christ*. April 7, 2023. ModernReformation.org. <https://www.modernreformation.org/resources/articles/suspended-between-heaven-and-earth>

<sup>2</sup> Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*. 1993. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Company. 922

<sup>3</sup> Keller, Tim. *King's Cross*. 2011. NY NY. Penguin Group. 211