

THE TORN CURTAIN

“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” —MATTHEW 27:50-51

Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the altar of fragrant incense became soaked with the blood of the sin offering as Aaron poured it on the horns of the altar. That day, the smell of burning blood, mingled with the fragrance of the incense, brought a different aroma to God than any other day of the year.

On the cross at Calvary, the work of the Lord Jesus Christ brought all the rituals to fulfillment and to an end. As Christ, the aroma that delights God, was made to be sin and mingled His sinless life with the sin of the world, He cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). The tarnishing of the purity of Christ when the sins of the world were heaped upon Him and He was made to be sin for us brought to the Father an unpleasant smell, and heaven remained silent. The Father turned His head away and withdrew from His Son.

But a remarkable thing happened. As Jesus cried out on the cross and dismissed His Spirit, at that exact moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The curtain which had divided the Most Holy Place, concealing the presence of God, was ripped apart as a divine act, and it was ripped apart from the inside.

God broke out! No longer was He to be approached in a building, nor through rituals and offerings that needed constant repetition. He had broken loose from the temple and its inner chamber to invade the lives of any man, woman or child who is willing to receive Him. They would now become the temple of His Spirit, the place He would make His home and the place from which He would do His work.

Beginning with Aaron, the priests knew that as the blood mingled with the sweet incense on the altar before the curtain in the tabernacle, they would at any moment be given access into the Most Holy Place where they would meet with God. The curtain would open and they would pass through. Since the Day of Pentecost when God poured out His Holy Spirit down from heaven, we have the divine privilege and invitation that is open to everyone – uninhibited, free and direct access to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank You for the ultimate gift of your Son who died in my stead. And thank You for breaking free from behind that curtain so that everyone may come to know and experience You.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I utilizing and enjoying free, uninhibited access to God through prayer?