



The Torn Veil

Why Jesus Matters

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An Introduction

As one reads the Bible, they will begin to encounter a veil of separation, a wall or barrier that keeps humanity from God. This veil of separation is a result of our rebellion against God. This rebellion is so egregious and vast that nothing, apart from divine intervention, can resolve the conflict. Therefore, nothing we do can remove this wall. Its removal is only possible through the work of another. The existence of that veil and the removal of it is the *Story* the Bible tells.

Part 1—"In the Beginning" (Gen. 1-3)

Our *Story* like all stories starts with, "In the beginning God." In the beginning God created a world where He would dwell with His people and their joy would be full (Gen. 1, 2). God employed every possible means so they would be able to "taste and see" that He is good. Initially, this creation is in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10-15). The Garden of Eden was a place of utopia. His presence - who He is - caused Eden to be perfect. In the midst of this Eden, God put His people. He designed them with the need to be in His presence. The Garden could not complete them. Only God completes humanity. Apart from God, humanity is incomplete. This is His design. He wove Himself into the threads of their fabric. Their life with God is a consequence of being in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26, 27).

God would come to the Garden during the cool of the day so that His people might enjoy His presence (Gen. 3:8).

They heard the sound of **the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day**, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (Gen. 3:8)

However, the *Story* of man takes on dark overtones. In time, humanity believed they could do better by becoming more like God apart from God (Gen. 3:1-8). They believed they were capable of achieving happiness separate from Him. This rebellion for equality caused a humanly irreconcilable rift between man and God that only God could resolve. Because of this rebellion against God, He would drive them from His presence.

So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life. (Gen. 3:24)

Thus, the *Story* starts with a lavish Garden and joy only to soon fall into unfathomable darkness and trauma. If this were where the *Story* ended, the human condition would be hopeless and helpless. Nevertheless, God . . . God would step in and literally “save the day.”

Part 2—"A Partition Between"
(Exod. 26:33)

He could have walked away from the situation and allowed humanity to remain as they were in this sad and darkened state. Yet in the context of tyranny, God immediately acted to undo the result of humanity's rebellion. He told the serpent how the **woman's seed** (i.e. Jesus) would one day crush his head (i.e. that he would be defeated), but in the process the heel of the woman's seed would be bruised (Gen. 3:15 [i.e. the crucifixion]). To be sure, God will win, but there will be a cost involved for humanity's restoration from their state of rebellion. He then showed how this act of reconciliation would come through death and blood (Gen. 3:21), for without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin (Lev. 19:10). Such remission would come through the sacrificing of innocent animals. The shedding of blood is the cost for sins remission (i.e. forgiven). Until the

fulfillment of this **Seed Promise** (arrival of Jesus) and the completion of this **Blood Picture** (crucifixion), He would offer many symbolic illustrations or shadows of what this would look like.

Yet the shadow still contained a partition (or veil) that would continue separating humanity from Him. **“For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins”** (Heb. 10:4). God visualized their separation from Him by a hung veil. This separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and Temple of ancient Israel.

You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and **the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies.** (Exod. 26:33)

It is suggested the veil was sixty feet high, thirty feet wide, and a hands breadth thick (approximately four inches thick).¹ Within the veil were woven angelic cherubim. The

veil and cherubim reminded the worshipper of the Garden where flaming angels barred their way back (Gen. 3:22-24).

Only once a year could/would the high priest enter into the Holy of Holies to offer a blood sacrifice for his sins and for the sins of the nation (Exod. 30:10; Heb. 9:7). No one else could enter. It was within the Holy of Holies where the presence of God would dwell. The moving tent (i.e. Tabernacle) is an image of the Garden of ancient lore. Here, God would meet with His people, and through a blood sacrifice, they would find mercy and obtain forgiveness.

Within the Holy of Holies sat the Ark of the Covenant and above the Ark, the Mercy Seat. It was above the Mercy Seat between the two cherubim, God's presence would be "seen." No one could look upon God and live (Exod. 33:20).

Although God provided a way for His people to be reconciled to Him, there was still a wall of separation. There would be a regular and daily need for sin's remission. Blood was necessary. Those who brought the blood sacrifice looked for the final and fullest fulfillment of the ancient promise in the coming of the promised seed.

In the midst of pain and suffering, still there is hope. God did, God is and God will provide a way for permanent joy. To this the prophets spoke. Let us look and listen to the prophets of ancient Israel.

Part 3—"He will swallow up
the Covering"
(Isa. 25:6-8)

As we journey toward fulfillment, God will continue to affirm His faithfulness to His Word. God is the fullest and final promise keeper. Through various prophets, God would continue to affirm the ancient promise. Listen to Isaiah as he speaks to a nation on the brink of destruction.

⁶ The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; a banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, and refined, aged wine. ⁷ And on this mountain **He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations.**

⁸ He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. (Isa. 25:6-8)

The prophet speaks of a time when the veil of separation is forever gone. A day of

removal is pending. One day, sin will be forever gone. That which bars humanity from open and free access to God would forever be removed, but by whom and when?

The language of the prophet speaks of a lavish banquet for all people. There is provision made for all who desire to come. The provision drips with an excess that is only appropriate for God. There is an abundance enabling all the invited to come and be fully satisfied.

The banquet of God's creation knows no human limitation. Only the nature of God sets boundaries to the excess. Moreover, because He is infinite and without outside limitations, the provision He makes is equally without definition. Oh, what a feast awaits those who come!

Listen to how the prophet Joel speaks of God's provision.

¹⁸ Then the LORD will be zealous for His land and will have pity on His people. ¹⁹ The LORD will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine and oil, and **you will be satisfied in full with them**; And I will never again make you a reproach among the nations. ²⁰ But I will remove the northern army far from you, and I will drive it into a parched and desolate land, and its vanguard into the eastern sea, and its rear guard into the western sea. And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up, for it has done great things." ²¹ **Do not fear**, O land, rejoice and be glad, for the LORD has done great things. ²² **Do not fear**, beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness have turned green, for the tree has borne its fruit, the fig tree and the vine have yielded in full. ²³ **So rejoice**, O sons of Zion, and be glad in the LORD your God; for He has given you the early rain for your vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, the early and latter rain as before. ²⁴ The threshing floors will be full of grain, and the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil. ²⁵ "Then **I will make up to you** for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you. ²⁶ **You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied** And praise the name of the LORD

your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you;
Then **My people will never be put to shame.** ²⁷
**Thus you will know that I am in the midst of
Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and
there is no other; and My people will never be
put to shame."**

The prophets spoke of a day. A day when the veil is forever gone and the people of God would enjoy the presence of God for His glory and their joy. Nevertheless, when would this day be?

Part 4—"The Veil of the Temple
was Torn"
(Matt. 27:51)

The Bible is careful to keep the main thing the main thing. The entire *Story* from Genesis through Revelation has as **its adhesive a commitment to the Seed Promise**. The entire *Story* shows the progression and preservation of God's promise. Any reading of the *Story* should reveal how Jesus is at the center of the *Story*. He is its apex.

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the **Seed Promise** and the completion of the **Blood Picture** (Matt. 1, 2). God is keeping His Word to restore His people in their relationship with Him. He will make up their lost years (Joel 2:25). All of the Gospels point to the truth that **Jesus is God's chosen Son who becomes for the people what they could never be for themselves**. He is the Great High Priest

who brings the offering and is the offering for the sins of the people (Heb. 9:15-10:18).

The Bible tells how God tore the veil of separation hanging in the temple from top to bottom when Jesus died on the cross. God did what no human could do. He removed the separation and opened for all time the path of free and unhindered access (Heb. 4:14-16; 10:19-23).

And behold, **the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom**; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. (Matt. 27:51)

And **the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom**. (Mark 15:38)

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ because the sun was obscured; and **the veil of the temple was torn in two**. (Luke 23:44, 45)

This thick curtain tore in two from top to bottom signifying that no human hand rent it. **There is nothing anyone can do to undo what God has done.** The veil is forever gone; the way is open. Now we can enjoy

and savor the great God and King, Jesus. Wow, this is incredible and indescribable. The New Testament shows how Jesus removes the wall of separation that exists between God and humanity because of their rebellion against Him. More specifically, this is the message of the Book of Hebrews. The author of Hebrews establishes the idea that Jesus Christ is the fullest and final Great High Priest who tears and thus removes the veil of separation and enters the Holy of Holies on behalf of His people. Moreover, it is because of who He is and who we are **in Him** that we now have an unfettered access to the Father. It is because of His person and work that His people are now able to enter through a torn veil and into the Holy of Holies and stand before the throne of grace and obtain mercy and find help in their time of need (Heb. 4:14-16). Jesus removes all condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

Therefore there is now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**. (Rom. 8:1)

In addition, it is **in Jesus** we now have peace with God.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:1)

It is because of Jesus Christ we can now have joy in life (John 10:10).

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

Yet, is this true?

Part 5—"The Veil is taken away"
(2 Cor. 3:15, 16)

It is always interesting to see the singularity of God's *Story*. Every story ever written finds its substance in this one *Story*. The apostle Paul speaks of this veil in 2 Corinthians 3.

¹⁵ But to this day whenever Moses is read, a **veil lies over their heart**; ¹⁶ **but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away**. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, **there is liberty**. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:15-18)

Once there was a veil; now there is no veil. Because of what He has done and because of who we become in Him we can now enter through the torn veil into the very Holy of Holies with boldness and confidence and encounter the presence and

glory of God (Heb. 4:14-16). It is only for us to experience what is now true, "In His presence is fullness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Ps. 16:11). This is not only a future hope, but also a present reality.

Part 6—"A New and Living Way
through the Veil"
(Heb. 6:19; 10:20)

The absolute and unadulterated joy His people now have is unconditional. Nothing more is necessary.

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and **one which enters within the veil.** (Heb. 6:19)

. . . by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh. (Heb. 10:20)

His body was broken (torn) on the cross in order to restore our relationship to Him. God through His Son Jesus Christ has done everything necessary for you and me to enter fully into His presence and enjoy Him forever. **There is nothing we can do to undo what Jesus has done.** There is no condition; there is no hoop to jump through or obstacle to overcome. The path into His presence has been washed in His

blood (Heb. 10:19-25). Unless and until Jesus Christ becomes the **every** in **everything**, we will continue to live the **no** in **nothing**. He is the **yes** of God (2 Cor. 1:18-20).

²⁰ For as many as are the promises of God, **in Him they are yes**; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. (2 Cor. 1:20)

He stands with open arms in the Holy of Holies waiting to embrace us. Why do we struggle with our failure or stumble numbly through places of bondage and disappointment? Friend, God loves you without condition, He accepts you without requirement, He forgives you without limit, He favors you without merit, and He serves you without reward. Jesus provides everything. All of this is yours **in Him**. He joys in your joy and your joy is full in Him.

Come and believe the promise. Believe Jesus and find in Him all you need and one day all you will want. If you have taken

time to read this short tract, then please allow me to ask one more question. “Do you recognize you are a sinner, broken in sin, and completely undone before God?” Moreover, “Do you recognize Jesus is your only hope in this life and in the life to come?”

If today, you recognize your own sin and brokenness and if today you see Jesus as your Savior from sin and death, then we invite you to begin your relationship with Him today. Talk to God right now. It is never complicated to come. God has made the way easy. Perhaps you can pray the following prayer.

Dear Jesus,

Up to this point, I have lived my life without you. I have tried to fix my own brokenness and instead of getting better, I have made it worse. I know you came to save sinners, to fix my brokenness. I know you died on Calvary to save me from my

sin. I know you rose on the third day to secure the victory for me from my sin and death. In your death, burial, and resurrection you lifted the veil of separation so that I might freely come to you. Today, I come in faith, believing the promises. Today, I accept your record, your *Story* as written in the Bible. Thank you for saving my soul this day. Thank you for forgiving me of all my transgressions. Thank you for lifting the veil. Thank you for giving me life with you. Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer, then we welcome you into God's family. I would encourage you to make your desires known. Perhaps you might write us a short note telling us of your decision to begin your relationship with God. You can contact us at office@waukeshabible.org.

Endnotes

¹ There is much information about the veil, but none of it is verifiable. For further study, see <https://cbumgardner.wordpress.com/2010/04/06/the-thickness-of-the-temple-veil/>
http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/49/49-1/JETS_49-1_97-114_Gurtner.pdf

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