

# LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

## 18 FEBRUARY 2021

Lent Devotion/Day 2/Thursday, February 18, 2021

**Matthew 27:50-51:** 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.

**Hebrews 10:19-22:** Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

### **Genesis 3:17-24:**

- 17** To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.
- 18** It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.
- 19** By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."
- 20** Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.
- 21** The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.
- 22** And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."
- 23** So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.
- 24** After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

### **Colossians 2:13-14:**

- 13** When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,
- 14** having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

**Meditation:** Since the fall of humans in the garden, people have lived with the knowledge that they are separated from their creator. Jews in Jesus' day know this full well, and in case they forgot, there was the curtain – the great, heavy curtain of blue, purple and scarlet thread and finely twisted linen (see Exodus 26:31). Four inches thick and so strong the historian Josephus said that horses tied to either side of it pulling could not tear it in two, it separated two rooms in the tabernacle.

Though the curtain was beautiful, its real purpose was not. It did not simply separate two rooms; it existed to bar entrance to God's holy place. It sent a message about the separation between God and people, serving as a reminder that no one was to ever approach God except in the limited ways he meticulously prescribed.

The curtain represented a closed door, open only to the high priest, and to him only once each year. And the only way he could survive entrance to that holy place was by the sprinkling of blood. The curtain constantly reminded God's people of their sin and the separation it brought between them the One they longed for. The curtain, in one piece for so many years, communicated that God is holy, and his people, in their sin, were not.

As we enter this Lenten season, we prepare our hearts to celebrate the day the curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom, from God to human. Jesus was the true and perfect sacrifice, paying the penalty for all sin – once for all. The curtain no longer served a purpose. Let us solemnly remember Jesus' sacrifice on the day the holy place was opened to us.

**Prayer:** *Almighty Father, I rejoice in the knowledge that you actually want to be with me, a sinner, and to have me with you. I realize that your grace is far beyond my ability to comprehend. The sword of judgment that should have been held over me was broken on your Son and removed all barriers between us. Teach me how to come before you with the proper mix of humility and confidence. I confess my need for you and trust in what you have done for me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

-from **once a day/40 Days to Easter**, Kenneth Boa and John Allen Turner, Zondervan