

When All Hope Is Gone

"But they rested on the Sabbath..."

Luke 23:56 (NIV)

When our Lord died there were several events that shook the faith of the people and caused the nation to fear. The darkness was a miracle because it was the wrong time for a solar eclipse to happen and also the length of the darkness was altogether too long. The event cannot be explained except to say it was the hand of God.

Jews feared the darkness and believed it was a curse from God to live in darkness. (e.g. John 9:1-2) When they wished to tell someone off they would say something such as, "May your light go out in darkness." Job spoke of the days when he was rich and content as the days, "...when his lamp shone upon my head and by his light I walked through darkness!" Job 29:3 (NIV)

St. John of the Cross who lived in the 1500's wrote a book called, *Dark Night of the Soul* and the title became a popular phrase for referring to times of spiritual confusion or trauma when a person senses they are abandoned by God. Jesus' cry of abandonment from the cross is the most haunting word He ever spoke. We know that the time of darkness was the time God forsook our Lord

as punishment for the sins of the people.

Another phenomenon that occurred with the death of Jesus was an earthquake. In Numbers 16:32 we read of the earth opening its mouth and swallowing up those under God's judgment. This, of course, refers to an earthquake. So the people of Jesus' time were familiar with an earthquake being linked to God's anger.

Again we connect this event with the anger of God being focused on Jesus.

The disciples of our Lord felt all of their hopes were dashed to pieces in the death and burial of their beloved Master. It was perhaps the darkest and most disturbing time in all of their lives. God caused this time of extreme disturbance to their faith to occur (Acts 4:27-28). Truly the disciples abandoned all hope for the future Luke 24:13-24.

The darkest time in their lives was that day between the cross and the empty tomb. Do you see your own life mirrored in that experience of the disciples? Your time of confusion and despair has lasted much longer than that of the disciples in this story. However, the principle is the

same. God's people have dark nights of the soul and this event occurs in the lives of all His people.

Can you take heart in the knowledge that though God has given you an Easter Saturday He shall bring relief in due course? In Nahum 1:12 it says, "Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more."

It was God's will for His Beloved Son to die and be raised the third day. This action on God's part brought dreadful sorrow to the disciples. God allowed them to grieve for a time. Psalm 30:5 says, "For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." (NIV)

If after coming to the cross and believing in Jesus you have experienced this dark night of sorrow, have faith in the sure promises of God as it is written, "The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears..." Isaiah 25:8. Truly all hope is not gone when we trust in the Lord.

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