



John 19:28-29

FINISHED!

Let's suppose you died and stood before the Lord God and He said to you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" What would you say? What do you think you would say?

Consider some typical responses I get from serious well meaning individuals. They go like this: "You know preacher, I am trying the best I can. That ought to be good enough." "God respects all our good efforts. Surely He is not going to reject us if we try hard to live a good life and do what we can to better mankind." "Oh, Joe was a good old feller. He didn't hurt anybody. A feller can only do what he can do, you know." "I joined the church and was baptized. I try to live a good Christian life." "My family has done well. I've been a good parent, a good provider and my kids have turned out fine. You know, I try to live an honest life. "I think you guys are entirely too serious about this Christian life thing. God doesn't expect us to get that serious over religion. You gotta have a life to live. "We are all trying to go to the same place. One religion is as good as the next. "

There is a basic flaw with those answers. Because of the finished work of Christ, personal salvation is not by works or even Christ plus my works, virtue or moral character. The reason is found in the saving work of Christ on the cross.

The message of the cross is the all sufficiency of Jesus Christ. The greatest thing that has ever happened in history took place at the cross of Jesus.

John 19:28-30 reads, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a *branch of hyssop*, and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."

The proof that the work of redemption and our salvation is finished is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is God's seal of approval. Nothing else can be added to His finished work.

The death of Jesus is the true Passover and the only effective means of inward cleansing from the effects of sin.

Let's reflect for a few moments on the man who spoke those words from the cross, "It is finished!"

THE MAN WHO SPOKE THESE WORDS

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The unique sufferer

What made Jesus uniquely different from any other man who was ever executed on a Cross? Colossians 1:15-20 tells He was the Son of God. The apostle Paul writes:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For He created all things, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities —all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven. ”

Yes, it is the God man who is dying. It is the Son of God, the second person of the holy Trinity who is being sacrificed. He has come to do the Father's will.

His own volitional choice to die

Jesus chose to go to the cross and die for mankind. John 10:11, 15, 17, 18 makes it clear that Jesus chose to die for His sheep. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep . . . I lay down my life for the sheep . . . For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." You can't get much clearer than that. This is the way Jesus understood and explained His own death.

Some people have the false impression that Jesus was a helpless victim of a sinister plot and His life was ended suddenly and unexpectedly as a martyr for a religious cause. That simply isn't the case. By His own testimony He tells us this was a free choice He made of His own free will.

Fulfilled prophecy

The crucifixion of Jesus was carefully predicted in the Scriptures. God planned His death.

The words of Psalm 22 were fulfilled at the cross of Jesus.

All who see me sneer at me;
They separate with the lip, they wag the head, *saying*,
Commit *yourself* to the Lord; let Him deliver him;

Commit *yourself* to the Lord; let Him deliver him;
Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him ”(vv. 7-8).

I“am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
And You lay me in the dust of death.
For dogs have surrounded me; ”
A“band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.
I can count all my bones.
They look, they stare at me;
They divide my garments among them,
And for my clothing they cast lots (vv. 14 18).

He is the Servant of Yahweh who is depicted in the suffering songs of Isaiah (42-53). The ancient *Targum* takes the view here that the Servant is the future Messiah, an individual and not the prophet, and not a personified collective, i.e., the nation of Israel. Jesus Christ is Yahweh's Servant, "My chosen one in whom My soul delights" (42:1). He is a covenant to the people and a light to the nations (v. 6). He opens the eyes of the blind and sets the prisoners free (v. 7). How much more graphic can you get than the poetic description of the Divine Sufferer in Isaiah 52:13-53:12? Read that grand passage substituting the personal pronouns with the name of Jesus.

Peter, preaching his finest sermon on the day of Pentecost after Jesus rose from the dead declared in Acts 2:23 24; 3:18 God's grand plan of redemption. "Just as you yourselves know —this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. But God raised *Him* up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for *Him* to be held in its power . . . But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled."

Now at the cross the body of Jesus was dehydrated from the hot Jewish midday sun and physical suffering during the six hours He hung on the cross. He revealed the burning physical thirst when He said, "I thirst." A sponge was filled with cheap sour wine and placed on a hyssop branch and shoved up to his lips. Jesus sucked some of the wine to sooth his fevered raw burning throat. He then gathered up his strength and gave a victorious shout, *Tetelestai!*

What did the incarnate Son of God say that is so important?

THE MEANING OF THESE WORDS

Let it be clearly and emphatically stated that Jesus did not say, "I am finished." He did not say, "I am done —it is all over with Me; men will have to bring their own merit as a supplement to Mine in order to be saved" (Jones). Jesus said "It," not "I." "It is finished!"

A victorious shout

It is a cry of victory. Jesus was not dying as some pathetic Jewish martyr. It is the victorious cry of our Substitute, our Representative, accomplishing a task on our behalf that we could never accomplish for ourselves. The 'it' that Jesus completed so perfectly is the personal penalty due us because of our individual sin. We deserve to die because we are sinners and Jesus paid our penalty for us.

Because He is not finished, the work He came to do was finished. We are not asked by God to continue His saving work and finish it for Him. You and I cannot finish it for Him. Neither can you add to the work that Jesus accomplished on the cross. Jesus accomplished all He came to do. He declared at the end of the day — Finished, Done, Completed! The death of Jesus perfectly finished His redemptive work. The Lamb of God made His great sacrifice for the world. All that we must do is believe it and rely upon it.

It would appear that the loud cry that Matthew, Mark and Luke referred to was, "it is finished." Leon Morris writes, "Jesus died with the cry of the victor on His lips. This is not the moan of the defeated, nor the sigh of patient resignation. It is the triumphant recognition that He has now fully accomplished the work that He came to do." The eyewitness John gives us the touching detail that He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. It "is the thought of a peaceful death, the death of One who trusts in His Father . . . His relation to death is not the same as that of other people." In his footnote Morris says, "Most important is the truth that Jesus' work was finished. He came to work God's work, and this meant dying on the cross for the world's salvation. This mighty work of redemption has now reached its consummation. It is finished" (*John*, p. 815).

Completed task

John uses the perfect tense signifying full completion of Jesus' work and the establishment of a basis for faith. It is finished. It has been completed and remains finished. Nothing more was needed. Now Jesus could rest in death. Jesus had reached His goal. Redemption is a successful accomplishment; a long, great work is completely done. Jesus speaks these words to His Father. The job His Father sent Him to do is finished. Our great Substitute has paid the great price of ransom, paid it to the uttermost penny. "It is finished" indeed! The redemptive shedding of His blood, done once for all, is finished and stands as finished forever. It will never need to be upgraded. It will never have to be repaired. It will never wear out. It will never be out of date. It will never be insufficient.

Jesus Christ is our great High Priest, "who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Hebrews 7:27). Calvary was the holy Temple of God and Jesus the great High Priest offering up the perfect sacrifice for sin. "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption . . . Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (9:11-12, 26). This was a sacrifice that never ever had to be repeated.

Tasker reminds us these words are "the triumph of His finished work, resounds over Calvary's hill . . . the work that He had come into the world to do has been accomplished; the one, perfect, all availing sacrifice has been offered. "

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The sixth statement from the Cross is actually one word in the original: *tetelestai*. It means, "It was finished and as a result it is forever done." You could translate, "It stands finished." "Done!" "It is finished!" is the perfect of a completed action, denotes an action brought to its termination like this line or sentence that ends in a period. Russell Jones says, "It is a word of accomplishment as well as relief, of satisfaction as well as of fact, of victory as well as of work." G. Campbell Morgan said, "It means that it was rounded out to perfection. Whatever He went to the cross to do was accomplished."

The dying by which we are redeemed says Morgan was "something deeper, something profounder, something rooted in Deity, into which human intellect peers reverently, always to be blinded by excess of light had been accomplished."

He had finished; it was over, it was done. The pains of hell gat hold upon Him. All the waves and the billows had swept across Him. He had breasted the storm, and accomplished God's purpose. When He knew all things were finished He said, "I thirst"; and then He announced His victory, "It is finished." Whatever the "it" stands for, that which brought Him there, the purpose of His going was fulfilled, completed, rounded out" (Morgan, *Gospel of John*, p. 297).

It was a farmer's word used to describe an animal so beautiful that it seemed to have no faults and defects. The farmer would look upon the animal and declare *Tetelestai! Tetelestai!*

It was a carpenter's word describing his unashamed satisfaction as he rubs his hands across the fine finish of a piece of perfectly finished furniture and says *Tetelestai!*

It was an artist's word describing the final stroke of the master painter, such as Picasso or Rembrandt, as he picks up his brush and makes the finishing touch to his canvas, never to pickup his brush again. *Tetelestai!*

It was a priestly word, which described a worshiper who brought in a perfect sacrifice, without spot or blemish in perfect health. It was the pride of his flock. The priest looked upon the perfect sacrificial lamb and declared *Tetelestai!*

A perfect sacrifice for sin

F. B. Boreham, in *A Handful of Stars* writes: "And when in the fullness of time, the Lamb of God offered Himself on the altar of the ages, He rejoiced with a joy so triumphant that it bore down all His anguish before it. The sacrifice was stainless, perfect, finished! He cried with a loud voice, '*Tetelestai*' and gave up the ghost." Never would God require another sacrifice like this one. It was perfect and complete.

Alfred Eldersheim gathers up the meaning of Christ's death with these words:

Christ on the Cross suffered for man; He offered Himself a sacrifice; He died for our sins, that, as death was the wages of sin, so He died as the Representative of man—for man and in room of man; He obtained for man eternal redemption, having given His life a ransom, for many. For, men were redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot; and Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity; He gave Himself a ransom for all; Christ died for all; Him, Who knew no sin, God made sin for us; Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—and this, with express reference to the Crucifixion. This sacrificial, vicarious, expiatory, and redemptive character of His Death, if it does not explain to us, yet helps us understand, Christ's sense of God-forsakenness in the supreme moment of the Cross. It's finished! "'

What made this sacrifice different?

What made this sacrifice different?

What was it that was so perfectly completed? "Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled . . . said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit" (vv. 28, 30). These words confirm that Jesus knew "that all things had now been accomplished (*Tetelestai*). All Scripture that was due to be accomplished in His passion had now been accomplished; the entire purpose for which the Father had sent the Son into the world was now assured of fulfillment . . . salvation and eternal life were henceforth freely available . . . In the consummating moment of death, He declares this work to be finished" (F. F. Bruce, *Gospel of John*, p. 374).

Lenski observes: "The death of Jesus finishes His redemptive work, the work of reconciliation and atonement. This specific work is now brought to a close. The Lamb of God has made His great sacrifice for the world. It is this that is now done. Our great Substitute has paid the great price of ransom, paid it to the uttermost farthing. It is finished indeed! . . . the redemptive shedding of His blood, done once for all, is finished and stands as finished forever. Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 26; Rom. 6:10 (*Gospel of John*, p. 1309).

"'It' was the torment of the payment of the penalty of the accumulated sin of all men. 'It' was the suffering of the full punishment of all the guilt of all time. 'It' was the experience of the combined hells of all who have offended God," writes Russell Jones.

The "it" of Isaiah 53:6 was declared finished. "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." It is the "it" of Isaiah 53:12, "He poured out his soul unto death."

The "it" of 2 Corinthians 5:21 was finished. "God has made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

The "it" of 1 Timothy 2:5 is finished. "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all . . ."

The "it" of Revelation 5:9 is finished. "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.'"

The "it" Jesus completely satisfied was the personal penalty due you and me because of our individual sin. James Proctor expresses it beautifully:

"Nothing either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.

"It is finished!" yes, indeed,
Finished every jot;
Sinner, this is all you need;
Tell me, is it not?

Cast your deadly doing down,
Down at Jesus' feet;
Stand in Him, in Him alone,
Gloriously complete." —James Proctor

Gloriously complete." —James Proctor

THE MESSAGE FOR US TODAY.

There is a powerful, relevant, vital and significant message in these words for you and me.

Jesus satisfied the demands of God's justice.

We seem to have forgotten in our day that God is a holy and righteous God. He is an impartial God who does not make decisions based upon personal biases. "For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law . . . on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Romans 2:11, 12, 16). No one will be left out. "*There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek . . .*" (v. 9). The Scriptures have locked us up in prison and has thrown the key away. "The Scripture has shut up all men under sin" (Galatians 3:22). No one is exempt because we have all sinned and failed in God's sight.

Because He is a holy God, Jones says God the Father was interested in those words of Christ. His sacrifice "satisfied the demands of God's justice. . . Jesus had paid the price of human redemption with His own precious blood, God can now receive the repenting, returning sinner both as a loving Father and as a just God." He adds, "The heavenly Father is now free to accept lost men into His eternal Kingdom without violating His holy justice" (p. 80).

Hell was also interested in these words of Jesus at the cross. When Jesus said, "It is finished" the doom of hell was complete. By Christ's vicarious cry Satan was defeated. Hebrews 2:14 tells us, "Through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Now, Jesus carries the keys of death and hell (Rev. 1:18).

Justification by faith

Earth was interested in those words. How can God remain a holy and righteous God and allow sinners in His presence? The apostle Paul gives us the answer in Romans 3:19-26; 5:6, 8; Galatians 2:16; 3:13, 22. All of these Scriptures stress the fact that MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IN THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST ALONE. There is no other way to stand right in the sight of a holy and righteous God. Galatians 2:16 is very clear when it says, "a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified."

You ask, "What must I do to be saved?" Because Jesus has paid our debt in full all we can do is trust Him. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31). That does not mean all of your household will be automatically saved. They will respond to the gospel and put their faith in Christ because they will see the change in your life and they too will want to be saved by God's free grace. Salvation is now possible because it does not depend on your efforts or your goodness. The apostle Paul could exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14). Only because Christ completed the work is it possible for any man to be saved. Now I need to repent and put my faith in Christ's work for me. Nothing else will give you eternal life. All you can do is receive it.

In your heart of hearts finish this sentence. Jesus Christ plus _____ saves.

What do you place in that blank? My virtue, goodness, hospitality, sacrificial giving to good causes, being a martyr, a missionary, baptism, church membership, sacraments, etc?

God's answer is NOTHING! It is finished!

All we need to do is call upon His name and believe on what He did for us on the cross. His sacrifice is all sufficient to forgive us our sins and cloth us in Christ's righteousness. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. "

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Title: John 19:30 FINISHED!

Series: Seven Last Saying of Christ

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