

# It Is Finished

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**Bible Text:** John 19:17-42  
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Thank you, choir.

Would you turn in your Bibles, please to the gospel of John chapter 19? The gospel of John chapter 19. I would like to begin at verse 17.

Speaking, of course, of the Lord Jesus we read:

And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.

Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews.'""

Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"

Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"

Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.<sup>1</sup>

And God add his blessing to this reading from his inspired Word.

Let's pray together.

*Father, once again before we proclaim your Word we cry out to you for your Holy Spirit to use your Word in your hearts to accomplish your purposes. Send it forth with power, Father. And we ask specifically if there be anyone here this day or anyone hearing this message dead in sins without hope, anyone who is uncertain about his eternal state, Lord, that you will work in that heart and accomplish the miracle, the miracle of the new*

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<sup>1</sup> John 19:17-42.

*birth. Bring new life. Bring the light of your Word to what were blind eyes. Open those eyes that he or might see. We ask it in Christ's name. Amen.*

As you know, it was on the first day of holy week that Jesus made his triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem and the pent up emotion of the crowds, many of whom no doubt had witnessed his miracles, many of whom no doubt had heard his powerful teaching, burst forth in adoration and praise.

“Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”<sup>2</sup>  
“Save us. Save us now,” they cried.

But as we prepare our hearts to come to the Lord’s table this morning I would like to turn our thoughts toward the sacrifice that accomplished our redemption and to frame our portrait of Christ’s atonement with his poignant words from the cross, “It is finished. It is finished.”<sup>3</sup>

What is significant about these words? To what did they primarily refer?

Of course, we cannot know what was uppermost in Jesus’ thoughts when he spoke these words, but there are a number of ways that they can be understood in light of the rest of Scripture. What was finished? What is it that Jesus meant, “It is finished”<sup>4</sup>?

Well, he may have been referring to that long road of humiliation which began at Bethlehem some 33 years before when the shepherds were told one night that, “unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”<sup>5</sup>

Lo, within a manger lies,  
He who built the starry skies.

The years of submission to Mary and Joseph in Nazareth, as he increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man, the subordination of himself to Joseph in the carpenter shop, he who formed the oceans and mountains and forests by his powerful word alone was now making yokes and chairs and broom handles with a saw, a knife, a chisel. The three wearying years of public ministry were now finished when he labored tirelessly traveling from village to village teaching, healing, performing miracles, dependent upon the charity of others without a place to lay his head. The conflict with the religious hierarchy of Israel was now finished. The very ones who might have been expected to recognize and embrace him. But instead they said, “This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 21:9.

<sup>3</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 2:11.

<sup>6</sup> Mark 12:7.

And that final process of betrayal, punishment and death which began in the upper room the deceit of Judas, the arrest in the garden, the illegal trial, the slapping, beating, mocking, scourging, the indignities before the people, the shouting of the masses for Barabbas, the slow procession to Golgotha, the excruciating pain of the spikes being driven into his hands and into his feet, the mocking and taunting of the Pharisees and scribes.

He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'<sup>7</sup>

And the forsaking by his apostles.

All of this was now mercifully finished. The long painful road and the man of sorrows was at its end. But in another sense the great plan of the ages for the redemption of mankind, or at least the most integral part of that plan, the offering of the sinless sacrifice was now complete.

"It is finished."<sup>8</sup>

The plan that was foreshadowed in the Garden of Eden where God said to the serpent, "{He] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."<sup>9</sup> The seed of the woman, he, the seed of the woman "shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."<sup>10</sup>

That plan of the ages that was pictured in the sacrificial system was now finished. The burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, trespass offering, all these things were fulfilled now.

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said [and here he quotes from Psalm 40]: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure."

Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.'<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew 27:42-43.

<sup>8</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 3:15.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

“It is finished.”<sup>12</sup>

That long road foreshadowed in the sacrificial system is completed now upon Christ’s death. It is finished. All the words of the prophets that had to be fulfilled by my life are now fulfilled, at least those leading up to this point. The wondrous birth in Bethlehem, the... out of the tribe of Judah, out of the stem of Jesse, that sojourn in Egypt, the preparation of the messenger, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the miracles, the triumphant entrance, the rejection by the people.

And all that David and Isaiah said concerning the circumstances of my death, all those things have now been fulfilled or are presently set in motion.

Consider just some of them.

“I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.”<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 50 verse six.

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth.”<sup>14</sup> Isaiah 53:7.

He would die with wicked men. “They made his grave with the wicked.”<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 53:9.

But he would be with the wealthy in his death. “But with the rich at His death.”<sup>16</sup> Joseph of Arimathaea, 53:9, Isaiah.

We read this morning from Psalm 22 which so clearly declares, which so clearly reveals the cross.

But if you are cynical like Pontius Pilate, you know, I say, it is possible that these prophecies could have been fulfilled by chance in Jesus. He just happened to be born in Bethlehem, the right place at the right time and all these other things just happened by chance.

Is that, in fact, possible? Yes, it is certainly possible. Peter Stoner in the book *Science Speaks* took 48 of the prophecies that were fulfilled in Christ and he examined them on the basis of the laws of probability. He is a mathematician. His figures were reviewed by a committee of the American Scientific Association and found to be, quote, “dependable and accurate in regard to the scientific material presented.”

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<sup>11</sup> Hebrews 10:1-7.

<sup>12</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 50:6.

<sup>14</sup> Isaiah 53:7.

<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 53:9.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

He calculated that the probably that these 48 prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus by chance was one in 10 to the 157<sup>th</sup> power. That is a number so large that to attempt to grasp it you must think in terms of electrons.

Now electrons are so tiny that if you counted as fast as possible day and night it would take you 19 million years to count an inch of that, 19 million years day and night counting as fast as possible to count an inch of electrons. It would take you 22 million years if you took Sundays off.

Now, children, this is an amazing fact. So let me try to put it terms you will understand. Electrons, you can't see them. They are very, very tiny. Electrons are so tiny that if you started counting them from the time he was born, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, day and night from the time he was born, Mr. Carpenter would only have counted about a quarter of an inch of that.

Trying to convey...

Now, think about it. If there are so many electrons in an inch that it would take 19 million years to count them, how many do you think there would be in a bucket or in a barrel or in a swimming pool or in an ocean? To imagine the number that we gave a moment ago, 10 to the 157<sup>th</sup> power, mathematician Peter Stoner says you would need an inconceivably large volume of electrons comparable, perhaps, to the size of the known universe. The odds mathematically that Jesus could have by chance alone fulfilled all these 48 prophecies, Stoner said, would be like marking one electron, putting it in this soup of electrons, the size of the known universe, blind folding somebody and saying, "Go pick out that particular electron." That is the odds of all these things being fulfilled in Christ by chance.

"It is finished."<sup>17</sup>

All that the prophets have spoken concerning my life and my death have been fulfilled.

Dr. Ray Vandrian points out that at 3 PM what the Jews called the ninth hour, a shofar, a ram's horn was used as a trumpet was sounded in the temple to indicate that a lamb had been offered for the sins of the people. So every day at about 3 PM this ram's horn was sounded to indicate that a lamb had been offered in the temple for the sins of the people. At the very time when the people of Jerusalem would have normally heard the shofar, they heard, instead, the Lamb of God crying out, "It is finished."<sup>18</sup>

It was certainly true that the whole sacrificial system was now fulfilled, the final ultimate sacrifice had now been offered and Jesus could cry out, "It is finished."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

“It is finished,”<sup>20</sup> Jesus said. The death blow to Satan is being inflicted. The enemy of all righteousness who thinks that my death means his victory will discover that my death means his defeat. He who now rejoices over me as the wolf rejoices over the dying lamb will find that lamb become a lion. He who has held mankind in his clutches for all these years will be shocked to discover that the battle he thought he had won, in fact, lost him the war.

He thought that once he had seduced Eve and through her, Adam, to disobey God, there would be no hope for mankind for God had said, “The day you eat of this fruit, you shall die.”

He wondered that God would slay the innocent animal and clothe Adam and Eve. He marveled that they did not physically die that die. How could God be holy and not execute the sentence that he pronounced? What was God up to? What was all this business of sacrificing sheep and goats? What was all this talk of a Messiah? Why would the Lord of glory leave the majesty on high and confine himself to human flesh? What did he come to do? Cast out a few demons? Raise a few dead people? What a royal waste of time? Doesn't he know that my demons will find another host and the man whom he raised will die again? How ineffectual were such efforts in the whole scheme of things.

Did Jesus think he could just waltz into Jerusalem and the people would embrace him as their king? Did he think he could sit on David's throne as the prophet said he would? Then he greatly underestimates my power in the minds of men. He must not know, Satan must have thought. He must not know that I have the chief priest in my back pocket and I know what makes the Pharisees tick. And I have Pontius Pilate's number.

This prince Jesus will die like a dog with thieves and scoundrels and I will have the last laugh.

What a supreme pleasure to see him slapped and mocked and dressed up like a buffoon, revealed to be the fraud that he is while his pitiful band of followers scatter and hide themselves under the nearest rock.

What good is all this talk about love and peace and forgiveness now? What good are all his exalted principles of righteousness now? He should have accepted my offer in the wilderness when he had the chance. I would have given him all the kingdoms of the world if he would have just worshipped me. Or, at least, that is what I told him.

But he was so pompous as if all he had to do was trust God and everything would work out. Well, what has God done for him lately?

Satan gloated at the cross no doubt. But in three short days he would realize that his supposed victory was short lived.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

“It is finished,”<sup>21</sup> Jesus said. Satan has been dealt his death blow. The white witch will discover to her horror that Aslan will rise again more powerful than ever.

“It is finished.”<sup>22</sup> I have completed all that had to be done in order to redeem men. I have fulfilled all righteousness, walking blameless before my Father and before men. I have done always those things that pleased him. I have loved my Father with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. I have loved my neighbor as myself every single day. All that men fail to do, all my Father’s righteous laws, they failed to keep, I have now kept. I have lived 33 sinless years so that as I die it is not for myself, because I do not deserve to die. I could now give my life as a ransom for others. It is finished. I have completed all. It had to be done for man’s redemption.

“It is finished.”<sup>23</sup> This great weight of sin that has been placed upon me, this burden that has so troubled my soul these last few days, this fearful judgment of my holy Father has now exacted the full penalty. My soul which has been exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death can now rejoice that it is finished. I have been sore amazed and very heavy. My loving Father has forsaken me. He has abandoned me to die alone. The God of all comfort has withdrawn his comfort. The God of all compassion has turned his face away. It has pleased the Lord to bruise me. He has put me to grief. He has made my soul an offering for sin. My visage was marred more than any man. All they that see me laugh me to scorn. I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, despised of the people. God has made me to be sin for others. Thousands of years of wrath, holy anger and indignation have been poured into this cup which my Father has given me to drink.

John Piper puts it this way in his book *The Passion of Christ*, “Sin is not small because it is not against a small sovereign. The seriousness of an insult rises with the dignity of the one insulted. The creator of the universe is infinitely worthy of respect and admiration and loyalty. Therefore failure to love him is not trivial. It is treason. It defames God and destroys human happiness. Since God is just he does not sweep those crimes under the rug of the universe. He deals a holy wrath against them. They deserve to be punished and he has made this clear. “The wages of sin is death.”<sup>24</sup> Romans 6:23.

“The soul that sins shall die.”<sup>25</sup> Ezekiel 18:4.

There is a holy curse hanging over all sin. Not to punish sin would be unjust. The demeaning of God would be endorsed. A lie would reign at the core of reality and therefore God says, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”<sup>26</sup> Galatians 3:10.

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<sup>21</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Romans 6:23.

<sup>25</sup> Ezekiel 18:4.

<sup>26</sup> Galatians 3:10.



But the love of God does not rest with the curse that hangs over all sinful humanity. He is not content to show wrath no matter how holy it is. Therefore God sends his own son to absorb his wrath and bear the curse for all who trust him.

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.”<sup>27</sup>  
Galatians 3:13.

This is the meaning of the word propitiation in the text, “God put Christ forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith,” Romans 3:25.

Still quoting Piper here. “It refers to the removal of God’s wrath by providing a substitute. The substitute is provided by God himself. The substitute, Jesus Christ, does not just cancel the wrath, he absorbs it and diverts it from us to himself. God’s wrath is just and it was spent, not withdrawn.”

The cup of God’s wrath for sin has therefore been poured out upon his Son. God made him to be sin for us, he who knew no sin. And now Jesus has endured God’s wrath for his bride, for his sheep, for his church. He has given his life a ransom for many.

“It is finished.”<sup>28</sup>

There is at least one more thing that was finished at the cross. If you are one of Christ’s sheep, if you are one of God’s elect, if you are of his bride, your personal debt was paid at the cross. Jesus’ phrase, “It is finished,”<sup>29</sup> you know, he spoke in Aramaic. His phrase, “it is finished,”<sup>30</sup> when translated into Greek in the writing of the New Testament is τετελεσται (te-tel’-es-tai).

When the term was used on a bill of sale it meant simply, it is paid. It is paid in full.

Jesus did not die as a vague sacrifice for ambiguous sins. He did not die in the hope that just maybe somebody somewhere would believe in his sacrifice and be forgiven. He came as the good shepherd to give his life for his sheep. He knew which sheep were his. He said, “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring.”<sup>31</sup> He died for his bride. He died for his Church. Husbands are called to love their brides as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it.

If you are a Christian, he actually paid for your sins upon that cross. They were all included. He foresaw them all. There is nothing you need to do, nothing you ever could do to atone for your sins. They have been atoned for once and for all by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

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<sup>27</sup> Galatians 3:13.

<sup>28</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> John 10:16.

“Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust.”<sup>32</sup>

Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. 1 Peter 3:18.

Your part is simply to believe. Believe that this has been accomplished. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

You say, “But how do I know if I am of the elect?”

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will know.

But what if repent and believe and then sin again?

Jesus died for all your sins, not just the ones you committed before you believed.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”<sup>33</sup>

Believer, your debt has been paid. It is finished. It is complete. It does not require your penance. It does not require your obedience. It does not require your good works to complete it. If it is real, however, good works will, indeed, follow it because you become a new creation.

“Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”<sup>34</sup>

Jesus is not a co Savior. He doesn't do half the job and leave the rest to you. He actually saves us.

“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”<sup>35</sup>

Have you experienced this saving power? You can experience it even this day if God is working in your heart, if you recognize yourself to be a sinner, if you see your pride, your selfishness, if you realize you have broken God's holy law, you have taken his name in vain, you have dishonored father and mother, you haven't kept his day, you have hated in your heart and broken the Sixth Commandment. You have lusted in your heart and broken the Seventh Commandment. You have coveted. You have broken the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment. You can repent of those things here and now.

And Jesus said, “If you will come to me...”

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> 1 Peter 3:18.

<sup>33</sup> 1John 1:9.

<sup>34</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew 1:21.

<sup>36</sup> Matthew 11:28.

How do you do that? You just simply come to him and say, “Lord, I am a sinner. I have broken your holy law, but you say in your Word that if I repent and lay hold upon Jesus Christ, all my sins will be forgiven. Father, I believe that you created me. I believe that you sent your own Son to come and redeem me. I believe he lived that sinless life, died upon the cross, rose again from the dead. I want him as my Savior. Come into my heart and give me this eternal life. I believe that Jesus paid for those sins upon the cross and I want him as my Savior. Come. Forgive me. Save me. Give me this gift of eternal life.”

If you will come to God that way, if you will mean that in your heart, pray that prayer sincerely, he promises he will forgive all your sins. He will adopt you into his family and you will live with him forever.

God is offering that to you by faith in his Son.

Let’s pray.

*Father, I do pray that you would convict us of our coldness, of our lack of zeal. Convict those of us who know you, Lord, who are living for the comforts of this world. Convict us of not loving those who are outside of Christ as we ought. Convict us, Lord, of our selfishness. And, Lord, I pray for those who are here who may be outside of Christ. Father, may this be the day of salvation for them. Do a might work of grace we ask. Thank you for Jesus and what he has done for us. In his name we pray. Amen.*