

ROAD TO ANASTASIS

It Is Finished



Let's take a walk with Jesus today. It will not be an ordinary stroll. Let's walk back to Calvary – the place also called Golgotha - the place of the skull where Jesus bore the sting of death for us – the place where He proclaimed “It is finished.” To what was Jesus referring that was finished? Was it the pain? Was it the agony and embarrassment of the crucifixion? You can be certain that it was much more than the physical torment of the cross. What Christ finished on the cross began in the Garden – the Garden of Eden. **Genesis 3:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*

When Jesus cried it is finished from the place of the skull, He knew He crushed the head of Satan himself forever..

Early in His ministry Jesus said in John 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Paul explained Christ's finished work this way in **Romans 10:4 (ESV)** ⁴ *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

In the Greek, the words “*It is finished*” are one word – *Tetelestai*. **John 1:29 (ESV)** ²⁹ *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! When Jesus cried *Tetelestai* – it is finished, He had at that moment taken away the sins of the world. **Hebrews 10:5-10 (ESV)** ⁵ *Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; ⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”... ¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

Jesus, our Lord, crossed the valley of the shadow of death to be raised to walk in newness of life! Hallelujah what a Savior!

Read John 19:16-18 (ESV) ¹⁶ *So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, ¹⁷ and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.*

Pilate, governor of the province of Judea where Jerusalem was located, was a man who knew the right but chose to do the wrong instead. When the Jewish leaders had Jesus in their power and wanted to kill him, they had to obtain Pilate's permission. But, I don't want to focus on Pilate in this lesson. I want us to see Jesus and the work He came to finish.

We have all visualized the scene in our minds before, Jesus struggling to carry His cross up Calvary's hill. His back is already shredded from the scourging with a whip made of leather thongs weighted with pieces of lead or sharp metal. Even as the picture of Jesus is etched in

minds, let's also etch in our memories, three aspects of the work of redemption that Jesus finished for us.

Christ's death was voluntary! *John 10:17-18* *The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again. 18No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."* Christ voluntarily finished the work of paying the price for our sins.

Christ's death was substitutionary! *1 John 2:2 (ESV)* ² *He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.* Jesus took my place! He took your place! We do not have to pay the ultimate price for our sins. Jesus was our substitute. The Bible speaks of three kinds of death: spiritual, physical, and eternal. The biblical concept of each of these aspects of death is that it involves separation. Although it is difficult for our finite minds to comprehend, on the cross Jesus experienced not only physical death, but spiritual and eternal death. He was separated from God and experienced God's divine wrath. *Mark 15:34 (ESV)* ³⁴ *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* Jesus actually underwent as our substitute the suffering of eternal hell!

And, Christ's death was adequate! When Christ finished His work, there was nothing left for us to do as far as our eternal salvation is concerned. Christ's redemption for us is adequate because the deity of Christ gave infinite value to the sacrifice He offered. *Romans 6:23 (ESV)* ²³ *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Another aspect of the work that Jesus finished on the cross involves His fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Read John 19:28-30 (ESV) ²⁸ *After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst."* ²⁹ *A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.* ³⁰ *When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

Before Jesus finished His work on the cross, there was one Old Testament prophecy yet to be fulfilled - *Psalms 69:21* *They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.*

At the beginning of the agony of the crucifixion, Jesus had refused the gall they offered him. He did taste its bitterness. *Matthew 27:34 (ESV)* ³⁴ *they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.* I cannot conclude totally whether the first and second drinks offered Jesus on the cross both contained vinegar or not. Some commentators suggest it did – others say it did not. It was common practice to have a cup of spiced wine for those being crucified to drink to make them insensible to pain. Gall and myrrh are interchangeable words. *Mark 15:23 (ESV)* ²³ *And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.*

Jesus was thirsty. He knew the prophecy – they would give Him vinegar to drink but in order to fulfill that prophecy, He said, "I thirst."

Bible students say that over 300 distinct Messianic prophecies can be found in the Bible. Let's recall just a few.

Micah 5:2 (ESV) ² *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Zechariah 9:9 (ESV) ⁹ *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Isaiah 53:7 (ESV) ⁷ *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.*

Can you see your King on page after page of God's Word? Have you tarried among the pages of the Bible long enough to discover for yourself the Jesus of the New Testament as being the ultimate fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies?

As they removed the body of our precious Lord from the cruel cross, even more prophecies were fulfilled.

John 19:31-37 (ESV) ³¹ *Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would 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. ³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. ³⁵ He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. ³⁶ For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”*

Another Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled as the soldiers refrained from breaking the legs of Jesus. **Psalms 34:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ *He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.* Out of all the atrocities, which were committed on the body of Jesus, one must wonder at the symbolism of no broken bones. However, remembering that Jesus is our Passover Lamb we read regarding the body of the Passover lamb in **Numbers 9:12 (ESV)** ¹² *They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break any of its bones; according to all the statute for the Passover they shall keep it.* The strength of the body is in the bones. Not a bone of Christ being broken symbolizes that though He was crucified in weakness His strength to save us is not broken.

The next fulfilled prophecy “*They will look on the one they have pierced*” is a reference to **Zechariah 12:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.*”

Many of those that were His betrayers and murderers were pricked to the heart, and eventually came to believe in Jesus. However, we must not visualize only people from the past as the ones

who pierced the Savior. Even as we look and wince at the agony of Jesus on the cross, we must remember that we too are guilty of piercing Him.

Before we leave the foot of the cross, let's go back to the Garden for a moment. **Genesis 2:21-22 (ESV)** ²¹ *So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.* ²² *And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man..* In the Garden of Eden, God prepared a bride from a rib taken from the side of the First Adam. Because of the substitutionary death of the Second Adam (Jesus) on the cross, the Bride of Christ – the Church would be formed from the blood and water that flowed freely from His side.

Read John 19:38-42 (ESV) ³⁸ *After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was 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 away his body.* ³⁹ *Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight.* ⁴⁰ *So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.* ⁴¹ *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.* ⁴² *So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.*

The sting of death is sin, but Jesus Himself overcame it by His sinless life; His sacrificial death; and His resurrection. In his booklet, *It is Finished*, Richard W. DeHaan relates how this wonderful and thrilling truth was brought home to him and his brother when they were small boys. They were walking with their father in an orchard where he kept his beehives. One of the bees zeroed in and stung Richard just above his right eye. Richard remembers crying with pain and brushing the bee away. Then it flew toward his brother, Marvin, who waved his arms frantically and fell to the ground in fear. With tender concern, Marvin's father pulled him to his feet saying, "Listen, son, that bee can't hurt you. It can only scare you." He then showed him the dark speck still embedded in the flesh above his brother's eye and continued, "There's the bee's stinger. It had only one and he left it in your brother. The bee is now harmless. It can still scare you with its buzzing, but its power to sting is gone." The father then took the opportunity to teach the boys a spiritual lesson. Pointing out that the Bible speaks of sin as the sting of death, he compared it to a bee sting. He explained that even as Richard, the older brother, had removed the possibility of the bee's harming Marvin, so our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, took the sting out of death by dying on the cross for our sins. He emphasized that a child of God may still become uneasy in the face of death, and because of a reluctance to leave loved ones, he may see it as an unwelcome enemy. But he reminded us that death is really harmless, and can no longer injure us in any way. Rather, God makes it a blessing, for it becomes the means by which the spirit enters Heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 (ESV) ⁵⁵ *"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"* ⁵⁶ *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.* ⁵⁷ *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*