

JOHN 19:16-30
IT IS FINISHED!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 19 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

As we have seen over the last several weeks, Jesus has gone through three religious trials.

The first was with Annas, who was not the High Priest at this time, but still held the power of the High Priest.

Then with Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas and he was the High Priest.

And they are trying to gather charges against Jesus so that they can send Him to Pilate to be put to death. The problem for them, and there were many, was that no one was able to agree what He did wrong. The witnesses were contradicting each other.

And finally, Jesus was brought before the High Priest, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin or the Jewish religious Supreme Court you might say. And it is here that they sentence Jesus to death because He being a man made Himself equal with God!

And so they now bring Jesus to Pilate and He is going to face three civil trials.

One before Pilate, which got Pilate nowhere. And once Pilate hears that Jesus is from Galilee he sent Jesus to Herod, since he was in Jerusalem for the Feast days, Passover, he was in town.

At this second civil trial with Herod, all Herod wanted to do was be entertained by Jesus. He wanted Jesus to do some kind of miracle for him. But Jesus refused. Herod knew all about Jesus and no miracle was going to change what he thought of Jesus. To Herod, Jesus was a nobody. So Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate for the third and final civil trial.

And as we have seen, Pilate is afraid that the Jews might complain to Rome about him, so he knows Jesus is innocent and yet the Jews want to have Jesus crucified! And, in spite of all that Pilate knew, he let the crowds of Jews, the Jewish religious leaders drive him to do what he really didn't want to do!

And, if you remember, Pilate had Jesus scourged, which made his back like raw meat. He was beaten. A crown of thorns was placed upon His head. He was so badly disfigured by all that they did to Him that He did not look like a man anymore!

And it is here, hoping that these Jewish people and leaders would see this broken and bloodied man and have compassion on Him as he brought Jesus out before them and said, **“Behold the Man!”** John 19:5.

But the Jewish religious leaders had no compassion on Jesus, and they said, **“... ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him!’”** John 19:6.

Now, as we read of all these injustices, and they were very unfair, we need to remember that from eternity past Jesus knew what it would take to redeem sinful man. Even before He created man, He knew that He would be the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world!

I am not saying that those in the crowd that were calling for His crucifixion or Pilate or the Roman guards were not responsible for their actions, they were. But God knew all that would take place ahead of time and now that hour had come!

Let me share this true story with you and you will see what I mean that it is all about the cross!

We are told,

The mother of a nine-year-old boy named Mark received a phone call in the middle of the afternoon. It was the teacher from her son's school.

"Mrs. Smith, something unusual happened today in your son's third- grade class. Your son did something that surprised me so much that I thought you should know about it immediately."

The mother began to grow worried.

The teacher continued, "Nothing like this has happened in all my years of teaching. This morning I was teaching a lesson on creative writing. And as I always do, I tell the story of the ant and the grasshopper."

"The ant works hard all summer and stores up plenty of food. But the grasshopper plays all summer and does no work. Then winter comes. The grasshopper begins to starve because he has no food. So he begs, 'Please Mr. Ant, you have much food. Please let me eat, too.'"

Then I said, "Boys and girls, your job is to write the ending to the story."

"Your son, Mark, raised his hand. 'Teacher, may I draw a picture?'"

"Well, yes, Mark, if you like, you may draw a picture. But first you must write the ending to the story."

"As in all the years past, most of the students said the ant shared his food through the winter, and both the ant and the grasshopper lived. A few children wrote, 'No, Mr. Grasshopper. You should have worked in the summer. Now I have just enough food for myself.' So the ant lived and the grasshopper died."

“But your son ended the story in a way different from any other child, ever. He wrote, ‘So the ant gave all of his food to the grasshopper; the grasshopper lived through the winter. But the ant died.’”

“And the picture? At the bottom of the page, Mark had drawn three crosses.”

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Now, as simplistic as that picture may be, it points us to a reality of what Jesus has done for us. He has taken our sins, and He has paid for them all. The death of the innocent to pay for the sins of the guilty! That is what we will be looking at this morning as we look at these words that Jesus said from the cross of Calvary – ***IT IS FINISHED!***

Many today don’t think that is a true statement because they try to add to the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary by trying to be good enough to enter into heaven. As we will see, you can never be good enough, unless you are perfect or without any sin, and we all fall far short of that to enter into heaven.

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

THE ROAD TO CALVARY – JOHN 19:16-18

THE KING OF THE JEWS – JOHN 19:19-22

FULFILLED PROPHECY – JOHN 19:23-24

THE WOMEN AT THE CROSS – JOHN 19:25-27

IT IS FINISHED – JOHN 19:28-30

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in John chapter 19, beginning in verse 16 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we look at this topic – ***IT IS FINISHED!***

JOHN 19**VERSES 16-18**

First of all, Calvary was located outside the city of Jerusalem, just as the Scriptures tell us.

We are told in Hebrews 13:11-13, **“For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.”**

Also, the idea here is this. Paul is telling us that they need to make a clean break from Judaism and for us today; we must make a break from whatever is holding us back from Jesus and meet Him where He is at!

In Galatians 3:13-14 we are told, **“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”**

How did He do this?

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:21, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

You see, He became sin for us, paid in full the penalty for our sins so we can have the righteousness of Christ imputed into our lives!

Now, because crucifixions occurred long ago, I think we miss the brutality of this form of capital punishment. In fact, crucifixion was so awful and degrading that polite Romans wouldn't talk about it in public.

The Roman historian Tacitus called crucifixion "*A torture fit only for slaves.*"

Also, one commentator made this statement regarding crucifixion. He wrote,

"Archaeologists discovered in 1968 the remains of a man crucified in Jesus' era. The study of the remains revealed that the victim was nailed to the cross in a sitting position, both legs over sideways, with the nail penetrating the sides of both feet just below the heel. The arms were stretched out, each stabbed by a nail in the forearm."

Dr. Nico Hass, Hebrew University anatomy professor described it as "a compulsive position, a difficult and unnatural posture," meant to increase the agony of the sufferer.

Here in John, all we are told is that they delivered Jesus to be crucified.

Now, to get to Calvary, Golgotha, the place of the skull, the Romans would not lead their prisoners by the shortest route. They would parade them through the streets of Jerusalem to Calvary!

And making up this procession there were four soldiers. The one in front held a sign that had written on it the crimes the person had committed.

There were two others on the side of the prisoner and another behind him. The prisoner would carry the cross beam which weighed some 100 maybe 150 pounds to where they were to be executed.

And the reason that they took the long way through the city with these prisoners was to show others that if they cross Rome, if they violate Roman law, they too would be walking this road to Calvary! It truly struck the people watching with fear and made them think twice before they committed any crimes.

Also, keep in mind that Calvary was located on a hill and the reason Rome did this was again to show others what would happen if you crossed Roman authority, broke Roman law.

Today, below Calvary is a bus stop and once again people are coming and going not even realizing what took place above them some 2,000 years ago!

For Jesus, at this point He was at the point of exhaustion. He was up all night. He was beaten, scourged, lost lots of blood and now to carry this cross beam through the streets of Jerusalem and up to Calvary, it was too much.

And as Jesus fell to the ground, we are told in Luke 23:26, **“Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.”**

This man, Simon, came from North Africa, probably for the Feast of Passover, and now this man is called to carry the cross for Jesus. This was not an honor; it was probably horrifying that he had to carry the cross of a criminal. And yet, there was something about Jesus that did not drive Simon away, but to Jesus!

Now we are not told a lot about crucifixion, what it was like in the New Testament. Psalm 22 gives us a picture of Jesus hanging on the cross and the affects it had on Him, but not much more than that.

So let me take a minute and speak about crucifixion, because it was a brutal way to die!

One writer put it like this,

A medical doctor provides a physical description: The cross is placed on the ground and the exhausted man is quickly thrown backwards with his shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flex and movement.

The cross is then lifted into place.

The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees flexed.

The victim is now crucified.

As he slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain - the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves.

As he pushes himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, he places the full weight on the nail through his feet. Again he feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of his feet.

As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward to breathe.

Air can be drawn into the lungs but not exhaled. He fights to raise himself in order to get even one small breath. Finally carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically he is able to push himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen.

Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as he moves up and down against the rough timber.

Then another agony begins: a deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

It is now almost over - the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level - the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues - the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air.

He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues . . . Finally he can allow his body to die.

All this the Bible records with the simple words, "And they crucified Him." (Mark 15:24).

What wondrous love is this?

- Adapted from C. Truman Davis, M.D.
The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 8

That is what our Lord endured for us so we can be restored back to God the Father.

Also, keep in mind that Jesus was centered between a believing criminal and an unbelieving criminal.

Now they didn't start out that way. They both were guilty; they both were not believers. But the love of Jesus touched one of them and he got saved.

And I think the idea here is that each person has a choice to make, to receive Jesus or reject Him but that gift is open to all! They both had a choice to make and only one received Jesus and entered into Paradise with Him!

THE ROAD TO CALVARY was difficult, it was painful, and Jesus did that for us!

As we read on, we will see what Pilate does, as he places a sign – ***THE KING OF THE JEWS!***

VERSES 19-22

So, Pilate places this sign over the head of Jesus that read, "**JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.**" It was a sign that the Roman soldier was carrying in front of Jesus on His way to Golgotha or the place of the skull. And this upset the Jewish religious leaders, they wanted Pilate to change it.

And you can go to Israel today and you can see that here at Golgotha, formed into these rocks, is the face of a skull! It is wearing away, but I have pictures of this skull when we were there and it is amazing!

But Pilate stands up for this sign he has placed over Jesus, but He couldn't stand up and free this innocent man!

Interestingly enough, in the Greek it suggests that the Jews kept asking Pilate, they repeatedly asked Pilate to change this sign to read, "***This man claimed to be the king of the Jews.***"

And Pilate refused to change this sign and he literally said, ***“What I have written, I have written, and it will always remain written.”*** I guess he dug his heels in on this.

Clarke may give us some insight into why he refused to bend on this one. He wrote, ***“That is, I will not alter what I have written. The Roman laws forbade the sentence to be altered when once pronounced; and as this inscription was considered as the sentence pronounced against our Lord, therefore, it could not be changed.”***

Now why the three languages?

Think of it like this.

Hebrew is the language of religion.

Greek was the language of philosophy.

And Latin was the language of law.

They all were involved in the crucifying of Jesus just as we are!

You see, whatever walk of life you came from, whatever your background is, you can know that Jesus is King! And you can either accept that or reject it, but it doesn't change the fact that He is King!

Think about this for a minute. On either side of Jesus were criminals guilty of the crimes that they committed. They had a sign above them of the crimes they committed.

But here is Jesus and what is the crime that He is being put to death for?

BEING THE KING OF THE JEWS!

Now that was not exactly correct, Jesus is King over all creation and not just the Jews! And what that means is that He committed no crime but was willing to go to the cross for the purpose of paying a debt we could never pay. The sinless One paying a debt for the guilty one, you and me!

As we read on, we will be looking at – ***FULFILLED PROPHECY!***

VERSES 23-24

As you read this, “**... when they had crucified Jesus ...**” it doesn’t mean that the crucifixion was completed, it was over, that Jesus had died.

What that means is that the cross had been dropped into the hole in the ground so it is standing upright. And at this point the crucifixion just began.

It is around 9 am at this point and around noon we see darkness cover the land as the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus.

But here, these Roman soldiers took all that Jesus had, His clothes and they are dividing them up.

It is possible that as Jesus hung on the cross, He was either naked or with just a loin cloth on.

Think about that. Our Lord, our Creator, did that for us, suffered the shame, the pain, because He loves us that much!

Do we have evidence or support for this taking place?

We do as Lane sheds some light on this as he wrote, “*Men were ordinarily crucified naked (Artemidorus II. 61). Jewish sensitivities, however, dictated that men ought not to be publicly executed completely naked, and men condemned to stoning were permitted a loin-cloth (M. Sanhedrin VI. 3). Whether the Romans were considerate of Jewish feelings in this matter is unknown.*” (Lane, commentary on Luke)

Remember what I have called these verses – ***FULFILLED PROPHECY!***

Now you may be wondering where in the Bible do we see this spoken of, where in the Old Testament?

We see this in Psalm 22:18. Remember what I said earlier. That Psalm 22 is a picture of Jesus hanging on a cross, all His bones are out of joint, as would happen as the prisoner was crucified. And this is what the verse says, **“They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”**

This prophecy was given to us by David some 1000 years before this event happened.

This seamless robe they did not want to tear up because it was worth more as a whole garment, you could wear it.

Now many will look at what happened to Jesus as just a random occurrence and that is the end of it.

Not at all. Keep in mind that there were 33 prophecies fulfilled in all on this one day alone!

Things were not out of control, but they were being fulfilled just as God had spoken!

Let me give you some examples. And this is important. You see . . .

The Christian faith is built upon the reality of Christ’s death and resurrection.

Jesus’ death removed the barrier of sin between humankind and God, and brought into being a new era of relationship.

Prophecies given hundreds of years before Jesus was even born were precisely fulfilled when Jesus died.

Every one of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the events surrounding Jesus’ crucifixion was carried out.

The Old Testament prophesied that Jesus' soldiers would pierce his hands and feet, cast lots for his clothing, and hurl insults at him. This prophecy was, indeed, fulfilled.

Mark 15:25-32 says, "It was the third hour when they crucified him." The written notice of the charge against him read: "the King of the Jews."

Those who passed by hurled insults at him in the same way the chief priests and teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him. (See also Ps. 22:16-18; John 19:23-24).

Another Old Testament prophecy predicted that none of Jesus' bones would be broken.

This prophecy was carried out as well. John 19:33 says, "But when they came to Jesus, and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs." (See also Ps. 34:20; Zech. 12:10.)

Isaiah predicted that Jesus would be despised and rejected by men, and in addition would experience much sorrow and suffering.

Jesus certainly did face sorrow and rejection.

During his ministry Jesus was rejected by some of his followers (John 6:66), the Pharisees (John 7:47-53), Judas Iscariot (Matt. 26:14-16), Peter (Matt. 26:69-75), and even God the Father (Matt. 27:46).

- <http://bit.ly/3RLx4LR>

Again, God told us beforehand the events that would take place so that we might believe that He is Almighty God, the One who has come to save us from our sins – ***FULFILLED PROPHECY!***

As we read on, we will be looking at – ***THE WOMEN AT THE CROSS!***

VERSES 25-27

Here we see four women at the foot of the cross and there is also one man, John, who is with the women.

What about the other disciples, where were they?

The others were all hiding, they were fearful, but these women were there with Jesus.

First of all, we see Mary the mother of Jesus.

Can you imagine the pain she was going through as she watched her Son go through all of this?

Remember in Luke 2:34-35 as Simeon prophesied over Jesus and then he said this about what Mary would go through, **“Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.’”**

And that is exactly what we see here, a sword piercing her heart as she watches her Son being crucified for the sins of the world! He was born to die!

I think at times we read these Scriptures, but we miss out on the reality of what was going on, how these individuals were feeling.

Can you imagine being there and seeing your child like that? I have a hard enough time watching commercials for those hospitals that treat kids with cancer, let alone it being my own. But Mary was there, and her heart was truly being pierced by seeing her beaten, bloodied Son hanging there!

We also see Mary’s sister, Salome, the mother of James and John which would make them cousins to Jesus!

There was Mary, the wife of Clopas, who could have been one of the men Jesus appeared to on the road to Emmaus.

And Mary Magdalene who had seven demons cast from her by Jesus.

They all stood there in horror, in pain seeing their Lord, their Son, their relative, their friend crucified!

What a lesson for us that no matter the pain, no matter the cost, are we ready to serve Jesus at the foot of the cross?

These women were!

Now as Jesus is hanging on the cross, bearing all that pain, He sees His mother, Mary.

He also saw one of His disciples that He loved.

Who is this disciple that Jesus loved?

I believe it is John.

Now in saying that, I am sure all His disciples felt that way.

Why?

Because Jesus loves all of us the best, we are special to Him, don't forget that fact. Don't let Satan mess your mind up so that you think God doesn't love you, He does!

The big question here is why did Jesus entrust John with the care of His mother instead of having her own children take care of her?

Did you ever wonder about that? I did!

I think the reason is simple. At this point His brothers and sisters were not believers yet, and thus, the bond between believers can be closer than the bond between our own families if they don't believe.

Why is that?

Because of Jesus, we have Him in common, we are part of the same family, the body of Christ, and thus, our love for Him and His Word is the same.

Also, John was related to Mary, she was his aunt. That is another reason.

That is why I believe John is told to watch over Mary by Jesus, as Jesus was the oldest and cared for His mother after His stepfather Joseph died, and now He entrusts John to take over that task.

One more point here. Why does Jesus call His mother “Woman” instead of “*Mom*” or “*Mother*”?

My pastor put it like this as he wrote,

In calling His mother “*Woman*,” the Lord did not show any lack of respect. But it is noticeable that He did not call her “*Mother*.”

Does this have any lesson for those who might be tempted to exalt Mary to the place where she is adored?

Jesus here instructed John to care for Mary as if she were his own *mother*.

John obeyed and took Mary **to his own home**.

- Pastor Phil Ballmaier

What a scene this must have been. And for Jesus to even have the strength and mind to do this, entrust His mother to John, is incredible!

As we finish up this morning I want to focus on this last point because it is so important – ***IT IS FINISHED!***

VERSES 28-30

John skips over those three hours of darkness that covered the earth, from noon till 3 pm. This is when the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus and the Father turned His face from the Son! John focuses on the short time before Jesus gave up His spirit!

We are told that the soldiers gave Him sour wine to drink.

He was thirsty and dehydrated. They probably tied a sponge to the end of a rod with hyssop and pressed it to His lips. (Hyssop is a plant, also used at the Passover - Ex. 12:22.)

This is not to be confused with the vinegar mixed with gall, which had been offered to Him earlier (Matt. 27:34).

He did not drink that because it would have acted as a pain reliever. He must bear our sins in full consciousness.

It was then, after He paid in full the penalty for our sins that He cried out ***TETELESTAI*** in the Greek, or “**It is finished.**”

The work of redemption was completed, the price had been paid!

Many miss the point of this word, *tetelestai*.

Tenney tells us, “*The verb telew (teleo, ‘to finish’) was used in first and second centuries in the sense of ‘fulfilling’ or ‘paying’ a debt and often appeared in receipts. Jesus’ statement ‘It is finished’ (tetelestai, tetelestai) could be interpreted as ‘Paid in full.’*”

Exactly, our debt for our sin was paid in full by Jesus. There is nothing we can do to add to that, it is a completed work.

It is as Paul said in Colossians 2:13-15, **“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”**

All our sins; past, present and future sins have been nailed to the cross of Calvary, they have been paid in full.

When a prisoner back then was released from prison, serving his sentence, on a piece of paper that had his crimes on, the words – ***TETELESTAI*** were written! In other words, he paid his debt for the crimes he committed.

What that meant was that if someone caught you outside of prison, you had documentation that the debt was paid, and you are no longer in bondage to the crime you have committed.

That is what Jesus has done for us, He paid in full the penalty for our sins as I have said!

Think about how just a few words can change everything in our lives.

In a courtroom, when these words are spoken – ***“Not guilty!”*** It changes everything!

When you propose to your girlfriend, and she says – ***“Yes!”*** It changes everything!

But there has never been a word that has been spoken that has impacted every person on this planet more – ***TETELESTAI!*** Those words spoken by Jesus to us.

At this point, when Jesus said that word and gave up His spirit, we are told in Matthew 27:51, **“Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split.”**

Keep in mind that at this time in Jerusalem, at the Temple, the priests were preparing to offer the evening sacrifice.

And as they were, this veil that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom and not from the bottom to the top!

This woven fabric, layered one layer on top of another, measured some sixty feet high, some thirty feet wide and anywhere from twelve to eighteen inches thick!

In fact, this veil was so heavy that it took three hundred priests to hang it!

What is the point of this veil?

That sin had separated man from God! You could not enter into the presence of God, into the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant was and God dwelt above the Mercy Seat!

The only one who could was only the High Priest, and only once a year. He alone could enter into the Holy of Holies, past this veil, into the presence of God on the Day of Atonement!

But now that veil is torn in two and the point of that is so important.

Sin had separated man from God but now that separation was opened up by Jesus who paid in full the penalty for our sins and restored our relationship with God the Father.

That is what Peter said in I Peter 3:18, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

Now let me share with you what took place from 9 am until noon and then I will focus on those last three hours, from noon until 3 pm when Jesus gave up His spirit!

Keep in mind that during those first three hours it was light out, there was no darkness.

And here we see Jesus speak and He said . . .

- **“Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’”** Luke 23:34.
- **“And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’”** Luke 23:43.
- **“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.”** John 19:26-27.

What is the focus here in these three statements that Jesus made?

The focus is His love, His concern for others, even at a time when He is in pain, suffering. Never forget that Jesus cares for you, He loves you.

Does Jesus care for humanity in general?

Of course He does, but He also loves you and is concerned for you so much so that He died for you so that you can live with Him!

Now as we move from noon to 3 pm we see a darkness covering the land and it may not just be a darkness that covered the area around Jerusalem, it could reach even farther than that.

You see, historical records show that there was darkness around this period of time during daytime!

We are told of this event,

We should not think that the strange darkness was caused by an extended eclipse of the Sun, for that could not have occurred on the day of the Crucifixion. An eclipse of the Sun only occurs when the Moon is directly between the Sun and the Earth, thus blocking out its light.

The day of the Crucifixion was the day before the traditional Passover, which was on the 14th Nisan. On the 14th Nisan there was a full Moon, as was always the case at Passover time. The Moon was therefore on the far side of the Earth away from the Sun.

Furthermore, no eclipse of the Sun can last more than seven and a half minutes in any one place, and this strange darkness lasted for three hours. A supernatural event caused darkness to fall during Christ's death.

Thus for three hours a strange darkness covered the land. The sky was clear, and the stars appeared. People would be asking themselves whether 'the end of the world' had come.

- <http://bit.ly/3RJ6VNs>

Keep that in mind, that this could not be an eclipse and that this darkness covered the land.

We can go to 52 A. D. and read a Greek secular historian named Thallus who recorded the following:

On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun.

- Julius Africanus, Chronography, 18:1

Again, it could not be an eclipse of the sun.

Also, Africanus discusses another ancient who bore testimony to the darkness of Christ's crucifixion and that is Phlegon. He wrote,

Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth to the ninth hour; it is clear that this is the one. But what have eclipses to do with an earthquake, rocks breaking apart, resurrection of the dead, and a universal disturbance of this nature?

- Julius Africanus, Chronography, 18:1

He also said this, as he quoted in Eusebius' *The Chronological Canons*, "*However in the fourth year of the 202nd olympiad, an eclipse of the sun happened, greater and more excellent than any that had happened before it; at the sixth hour, day turned into dark night, so that the stars were seen in the sky, and an earthquake in Bithynia toppled many buildings of the city of Nicaea.*"

The early church Father Origen reported a statement by a Roman historian who mentioned this darkness.

There was also a supposed report from Pilate to Emperor Tiberius that alluded to the emperor's knowledge of a certain widespread darkness, even mentioning that it was from twelve to three in the afternoon.

Now, once this darkness came upon the land, as the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus, He cried out, "... 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" Matthew 27:46.

God the Father turned His face from the Son as the sins of the world were placed upon Him!

It is after this that we see the Lord speak three more times, and He said . . .

- **“After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’”** John 19:28.
- **“And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, ‘Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ Having said this, He breathed His last.”** Luke 23:46.
- **“So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.”** John 19:30

Please understand that *“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.”* (Morris)

All that Jesus came to do, to save man from His sin, to restore that fellowship with God the Father that had separated man from God, it was now completed!

As Meyer tells us, *“From the gates of Eden the blood of sacrifice had begun to flow, augmented by the confluent streams of the years. From that moment, however, not another drop need be shed. The types were finished now that the Antitype had been realized.”*

Absolutely!

But the problem for many is that they see Jesus finish the work that He came to do but we must finish the work, complete it to save ourselves. If we don’t then we won’t be saved.

We are not saved by grace plus works but by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone!

Some call this *“Cheap Grace!”*

I don’t think it is cheap at all. It cost Christ His life to save me!

But how do I know that the work is completed by Jesus?

In Mark 16:19 we are told, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, **“So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.”**

The event spoken of here does not take place in Galilee, but some 70 miles away or so, in the area of Bethany by the Mount of Olives, some 40 days after His resurrection.

And now we see that the Lord is now seated at the right hand of the Father, the place of authority and honor.

Also, the priest would never sit down, there were no chairs in the Temple for the work was not completed.

But now Christ, our Great High Priest has sat down.

Why?

Because the work is finished! He paid in full the penalty for our sins by His shed blood!

Let me close with this for you to think about. We are told,

After hearing the gospel explained, people often say, ***“You mean there’s nothing I can do to deserve it? That’s too easy.”***

People object to the idea that God gives unmerited favor so freely to unworthy sinners. Many find it difficult to trust a God who offers salvation as a free gift.

Bible teacher G. Campbell Morgan told of a coalminer who came to him and said, ***“I would give anything to believe that God would forgive my sins, but I cannot believe that He will forgive them if I just ask Him. It is too cheap.”***

Morgan said, ***“My dear friend, have you been working today?”***

“Yes, I was down in the mine.”

“How did you get out of the pit? Did you pay?”

“Of course not. I just got into the cage and was pulled to the top.”

“Were you not afraid to entrust yourself to that cage? Was it not too cheap?” Morgan asked.

“Oh, no,” said the miner, ***“it was cheap for me, but it cost the company a lot of money to sink the shaft.”***

Suddenly, the truth struck him. What cost him nothing salvation - had not come cheap to God.

This miner had never thought of the great price God paid to send His Son so He could rescue fallen humanity.

Now he realized that all anyone had to do was to ***“get into the cage”*** by faith.

Because of God’s grace, salvation is a free gift. But to receive it, we must stop trying to pay for it and start trusting what Christ has done on the cross. It’s free, but it’s not cheap.

Salvation is free to us, but it cost God an enormous price.

- <http://bit.ly/3x8zgn2>

IT IS FINISHED!

