

Tetelestai

As a young student I once heard the Greek word "**Tetelestai**" - IT IS FINISHED

Since then, every time when somebody is saying or asking did you do this or that It's if the Holy Spirit constantly remind me - "It is Finished"

I, Jesus Christ already done everything for you!

Tetelestai

"It is Finished"

So I decided to put something together of my understanding of this only one Greek word - **Tetelestai** - but with such a deep meaning that we still discover daily more and more what Jesus meant when he said it on the CROSS.

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"Let there be Light" – Gen 1:3

IT IS FINISHED

In John 19 just after Jesus received the vinegar He spoke one word before he voluntarily gave up the ghost - Tetelestai. In English it has been translated to three words: "It is Finished"

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished ^{G5055}: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. John 19:30

G5055

τελέω

teleō

tel-eh'-o

From G5056; to *end*, that is, **complete**, *execute*, *conclude*, **discharge** (a debt): - **accomplish**, **make an end**, expire, fill up, **finish**, go over, **pay**, perform.

Looking at the Strong's the word Tetelestai - τελέω - teleō (pronouncing tel-eh'-o) it means;

- To end - That is complete
- Discharge all debt
- It has been accomplished
- To make an end
- Finished
- Paid

PAID IN FULL!

THREE words in English, ONE word in Greek – TETELESTAI!

- The **GREATEST WORD** from the **GREATEST MAN** on the **GREATEST DAY** in all **eternity**!
- One word, but no word ever uttered has so changed the history and destiny of mankind.
- In Latin Tetelestai is rendered with two words "**Consummatum est**" (It is consummated)
- Jesus spoke 7 times on the Cross (Luk 23:34; John 19:36; Luk 23:42; Mat 27:46; John 19:28,30, Luk 23:46).



- **TETELESTAI** was Jesus' next to last word and was followed by "**Father, INTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.**" (Luk 23:46-note)
- "IT IS FINISHED!" (Yes, indeed - Finished, every sinner, this is all you need - Tell me, is it not?" (Ira Sankey)
- Everything still outstanding has now been "PAID IN FULL"

Christ's RESURRECTION is the **Father's "AMEN"** to His Son's declaration:

"IT IS FINISHED."

- Looking at the Cross we see the work of **redemption** completed.
- Looking at the open tomb we see Jesus' finished work fully accepted by the Father.
- The **payment required for sin is death** (Gen 2:17- Rom 5:12-, Rom 6:23-) and when Christ said **TETELESTAI**, He was saying that the sin debt was "**PAID IN FULL!**"

His righteousness has been credited to your account (Rom 4:3-note, Rom 4:24-note, Gal 3:6-7-note).

- We owed a debt we could never pay. Jesus paid a debt He did not owe!
- Tony Evans says "All the funds necessary to pay for our total redemption were put up by Jesus Christ on the Cross."
- Warren Wiersbe put it "**He took my bankruptcy and covered it with His solvency.**" He didn't just make a down payment and then expect me to keep up the instalments. "But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26-note).
- His **empty tomb** and His **resurrection** are indisputable testimony to the fact that the Father **accepted His Son's payment** for sin on our behalf, as our Substitute.



TETELESTAI

Is not a cry of **defeat of a dying Man**, but a cry of **triumph of a Living**, Life Giving Redeemer, a divine proclamation that the WORK OF REDEMPTION had been fully, finally and forever accomplished (John 4:34, John 17:4).

TETELESTAI is the perfect tense of the verb **teleo** which is derived from **telos** (a goal achieved, a consummation, a result attained) and means;

- **To bring something to a successful end** to or to its intended or destined goal.
- It does not mean just to complete a task but to carry it out fully, to bring it to the finish or to perfection.
- It follows that Jesus' cry of TETELESTAI is a word of finality.
- The idea is "**It is finished**, it stands finished, and it **always will be finished!**"
- His work of redemption is **complete and nothing needs to be or can be added to it**.
- **Sin is atoned** for (Heb 9:12, Heb 10:12),
- **Satan is defeated** and rendered powerless (Heb 2:14-15, 1 John 3:8), every requirement of the Law has been satisfied and **God's holy wrath against sin has been satisfied** (or propitiated) (Ro 3:25, Heb 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 4:10).
- **Redemption is eternally secured**. We are reconciled in Christ's "fleshly body through death" that we might be presented before God "**holy and blameless and beyond reproach**." (Col 1:22).

Speaking of Christ's cry of TETELESTAI, Frank Boreham makes the interesting observation that

- "This divine self-satisfaction appears only twice, once in each Testament. When He completed the **work of Creation**, He looked upon it and said that it was "**very good**," (Gen 1:31)
- When He completed the **Work of Redemption**, He cried with a loud voice **TETELESTAI!** (John 19:30) It means (*in essence*) the same thing."



TETELESTAI is in the perfect tense which describes a

- **PAST** completed act with **PRESENT** effect, emphasizing that the past completed event of Christ's death on the Cross has ongoing, even **permanent effects**.
- Jesus' sacrifice may have occurred in time and space, but its results will last for eternity!
- In other words, when Jesus declared "**IT IS FINISHED**", He was saying that His mission to redeem sinners had reached its intended goal and that the benefits to the **redeemed would last throughout eternity**.
- "This means that my **sins are on Jesus, not on me. Yes, there is sin within me** (only in my carnal flesh, body and soul) **but not on me**. My sinful nature keeps luring me toward sin, and even in my best moments my works are tainted with selfish motives.
- **But legally**, I am accepted on the basis of the merit of Jesus. Figuratively speaking, I **have a new set of clothes and a clear record in heaven**. The **righteousness of Jesus** has been (forever) credited to my account." All that truth in one Greek tense! Beloved our Redeemer's ransom payment is sufficient for **this life and the life to come!** (Erwin Lutzer)
- May God enable us by His Spirit, to live victoriously in light of the truth of this "Word of the Cross" (especially the great word "tetelestai") which is the "**power of God**" to us "who are being saved (daily by the Spirit)" (1 Cor 1:18).

SCOPE OF WHAT "IT" IMPLIES

Christ's great shout from the cross means that no one who believes in Him is saved "on the instalment plan" -- and much more.

- 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. (John 19:28-30)

Why do true Christians glory in the cross of Jesus Christ? Why is it both our right and our responsibility to glory in the cross? Why is it both our right and our responsibility to carry the message of the Gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world? It is because of that **shout uttered by our Lord Jesus Christ as He gave up His life as a ransom for many: "It is finished!"**

"Tetelestai!"

Can we find, anywhere, a more significant utterance by God or man? These words have an infinite depth of meaning that is wrapped up in the eternal counsels of God. Godly commentators through the centuries have admitted that we can only scratch the surface in exegeting them. But even to scratch the surface is to reveal great treasures from the vast, immeasurable storehouse of God's grace.

"**It is finished!**" In the original Greek of the New Testament this is a single word: **Tetelestai**. It means, "**It is accomplished**" - or - "**It is complete.**" What did our Lord mean by these words?

Nine things that the Scriptures tell us are finished and accomplished by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on a cross of shame, on our behalf. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but let us consider what Christ has accomplished by His cross.

1. Christ's Obedience: A Full & Finished Work

- First, the work of God the Son in the great covenant of redemption, designed and agreed upon by the triune God in eternity past, that work was brought to **completion on the cross**. "It is finished!"



- We read of this in the first chapter of Ephesians. God the Father has chosen a people for Himself in eternity past. God the Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, came into the world voluntarily to live a life of perfect obedience, perfect righteousness, a righteousness that could be imputed to poor fallen sinners who have no righteousness of their own.
- In His prayer to the Father the night before His crucifixion in John chapter 17, the Lord Jesus declares that He has completed that work - His active obedience on our behalf. He prays, "**Father, I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.**"
- Not only that, on the cross Jesus made full and **final atonement for our sins**. We read in verse 28 of our text in John chapter 19, "**Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' "** The word "**accomplished**" in verse 28 is same word as in verse 30 - *tetelestai*. In verse 28 it is translated, "accomplished" in the New King James. In verse 30 the same word - *tetelestai* - is translated, "It is finished!" At that moment in verse 28, the passive obedience of Christ - His sufferings for sin on our behalf - was complete. As the Apostle Paul tells us in Philippians 2:8, Jesus "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death - even the death of the cross."
- And because that is true, Jesus in verse 30 cries out with a loud voice (as we are told in the other Gospels), "It is finished!" **These are not words of weakness, or resignation, or desperation** - they are words of **triumph, shouted from the cross by our Savior**. "It is finished!" The great work of God the Son in providing the way for Hell-bound sinners to be justified, pardoned before the judgment bar of God - that great work is finished.



2. Old Testament Types & Symbols Fulfilled

Because the work of the Son of God in the covenant of redemption is completed, all of the Old Testament types and symbols and prophecies concerning the coming Savior of the world have been fulfilled. They are accomplished. They are finished.

- The **Levitical priesthood is finished**.
- The **Passover lamb** is finished.
- **The lamb of the Day of Atonement is finished**.
- **The daily sacrifices for sins are finished**.
- The type of the **scapegoat, bearing away sins outside the camp, is finished**.
- The type of the **High Priest on the Day of Atonement**, is finished.
- The **Old Testament sacrificial system is finished**.
- Jesus has come as both **Priest** and **Sacrifice**, all in one, **once for all**.
- Jesus has entered into the **Holy of Holies in Heaven**, of which the earthly tabernacle and temple were only types. He has entered in as a **perfect High Priest**, with the perfect sacrifice of His own blood. "It is finished!"

3. The Sin-Debt "Paid In Full"

Because the work of the Son of God in the covenant of redemption is completed, payment for our sins has been made in full. This word *Tetelestai*, which is translated "It is finished!" in verse 30, can also be translated, "**Paid in full**."

- Archaeologists have found many ancient business documents from the Greek and Roman world of that time -- bills, invoices, receipts for various kinds of things -- and they are marked with this word, "***Tetelestai***." "Paid in full."
- Dear friends, there is much confusion and false teaching about this in the church today. We need to get hold of this great fact once again: The Lord Jesus Christ did not go to the cross to make a **down-payment** for our redemption. He did not go



to the cross to make a **sacrifice** that would be only partially sufficient, so that we could add our **own righteousness to it, in order to stand on the Day of Judgment**.

- We are not redeemed from our sins on the instalment plan. Jesus did not make a mere down-payment on the debt, so that we could continue to make instalment payments on the debt by accumulating good works during the rest of our lives - so that on that basis, His righteousness plus ours, we could stand in the Judgment. No! We cannot pay the debt! **We need not pay the debt! Not one tiny part of it!** "Jesus paid it all!" -- "It is finished!"

4. No Condemnation: The Curse Removed

Because the work of the Son of God in the covenant of redemption is completed, the curse of the law has been taken away. Galatians 3:13 tells us that **Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law**, having been made a curse for us.

- Romans 8:3 tells us that what the law could not do because it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son.
- Romans 8:1 tells us that "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

How did this happen?

In Colossians 2:14 we read that Christ has wiped out the handwriting of the requirements of the law that were against us. God the Father has nailed them to His cross. **The law condemned us, but Christ has redeemed us, once for all, from the condemnation of the law. "It is finished!"**

5. Sin's Power Broken

Because the work of the Son of God in the covenant of redemption is completed, the power of sin has been broken.



- The Apostle Paul exhorts us in Romans chapter 6, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your **mortal body**, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."
- "It is finished!" We can live a **life that is pleasing to God** - not to pay the debt for our sins, but out of gratitude that the debt has been paid.

6. The Way Opened

Because the work of the Son of God in the covenant of redemption is completed, the barrier between sinful man and the very presence of God has been taken away.

- The Levitical high priest could **only enter the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle**, the very dwelling place of God among the Israelites, once a year. He had to **go in with blood to atone** both for himself and for the people or he would die before the presence of God. He himself was a sinner. And there was a **heavy veil** between the people and the dwelling place of God.
- But we are told in the Gospels that as soon as Jesus had uttered those triumphal words, "It is finished!" and had bowed His head and given up His life as a ransom for many for the remission of sins - as soon as that happened, the **veil of the temple in Jerusalem was split from top to bottom**. The Holy of Holies where no man except the high priest once a year had dared enter, was exposed to the view of all who served in the temple. **The way to God had been made open by the cross of Christ.**
- No longer would **men need to go to God through a human priest** who was a sinner like themselves. Jesus Christ, the **perfect High Priest**, has entered the **Holy of Holies in Heaven once for all**, and has **opened the way for us to approach the throne of God directly through Him**, and through no one else.



- The writer to the Hebrews says this, "Seeing that we have such a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...**Let us therefore come boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**" **We obtain mercy, and we find grace, because, "It is finished!"**

7. Satan Defeated

Because the work of the Son of God in the covenant of redemption is completed, **Satan has been defeated.**

- The writer to the Hebrews tells us that Jesus came in the flesh and went to the cross, **"that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil**, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).
- Satan's doom is sealed. His destiny in the lake of fire is certain.
- As Martin Luther wrote in his great hymn, "And lo, his doom is sure. One little word shall fell him." And here we have that word - *Tetelestai*! - "It is finished!" Because of that, we can stand against the Devil, as Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:10-18, putting on the whole armor of God.

8. Israel's Long Wait Ended

Because the work of the Son of God in the **covenant of redemption is completed**, the long **wait of Israel has ended. Israel's Messiah has come.**

- Most Jews, from Jesus' day down to our day, reject their Messiah.
- But Romans Chapter 11 tells us of a future in-gathering of Jewish believers: "after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in...all Israel shall be saved."
- "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day," Jesus told the Jews in John Chapter 8. And one day, **because of the finished work of Jesus Christ, Abraham will**



rejoice to see an in-gathering of his descendants according to the flesh, who are also his spiritual descendants as we are. A coming generation of ethnic Israel will turn to the Messiah that they have long rejected. The promise of God is sure, because "It is finished!"

9. A Glorious Eternity Guaranteed

Finally, because the work of God the Son in the covenant of redemption is completed, the **eternity of God's people is guaranteed**.

- Nowhere does God's Word say that we who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for our eternal salvation "may" see the Lord - we "might" gain entrance to Heaven - we "probably" will be raised from the dead and given glorified bodies - or that "if we do good works we might be able to stand in the Judgment."
- Never does Scripture speak like this.
- Scripture speaks emphatically from beginning to end. It says that the eternity of God's people is **guaranteed because of the cross**. Thousands of years before Christ came, Job said this, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another."
- In Hebrews 12:2 the writer exhorts us to look "unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." **He is the author of our faith**. In the original the word is *archegon*, meaning the **initiator**. He is the One who made the plan of redemption as the Second Person of the Godhead.
- **He is now also the finisher of our faith**. In the original this word "finisher" is the noun form of that verbal shout of Christ from the cross - "It is finished."
- He is the *teleiotes*, the **One who has brought to perfect completion the faith of that great roll-call of saints in the preceding chapter of Hebrews**. They, "having obtained



a good testimony through faith, did not [in their lifetimes] receive the promise, God having provided something better for us [who would come after them], that they should not be made perfect [or complete, *teleiotosen*, another form of the same word] without us.

- Such is the **redeeming love of Christ for us**. In I John 4:17 we read that this love has been "**perfected**" in us. This word "**perfected**" is *teteleiotai* - yet another form of the same word that is translated, "It is finished."
- It is complete. It is perfected. **God's love has been perfected in us**, who believe on His Son. And because of this, I John 4:17 goes on to say, because "It is finished" - "we will have the right to boldness on the day of judgment." Because of the cross - because, "It is finished!" - we who are in Christ need not fear the judgment seat of Christ.

A Completed Work Yet Being Applied

As we noted in our first article, the book of Ephesians tells us that the covenant of redemption is a threefold covenant.

- **God the Father** covenanted to choose a people from every tribe and tongue and nation, to **redeem** them for Himself, so that they could be with Him in glory for all eternity.
- **God the Son**, secondly, covenanted to **voluntarily come into this world**, take on the body of a man, live the perfect life that fallen men cannot live, and **die the death that God's justice required**, to **redeem** men and women and boys and girls from their sins.
- **God the Holy Spirit**, thirdly, covenanted to **apply the saving work of Jesus Christ to God's people**, both those in ages past who looked forward to the cross, and those of the last 2,000 years and of the years yet to come before the Lord returns, we who look back on the cross.



- The first two parts of that threefold **covenant are complete. God the Father has chosen a people for Himself in eternity past. God the Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, has come into the world to live a life of perfect righteousness, a righteousness that could be imputed to us, poor fallen sinners who have no righteousness of our own.** And not only that, our sins have been imputed to Him, because He has made full and final atonement for them, on the cross. Truly, "It is finished!"
- **But the third part of the covenant of redemption is still, in our time, a work in progress.** That part of the covenant is just as sure of accomplishment as the other two, but it is a work that God is still doing. There is yet time for people to come to **God and be saved.** God the Holy Spirit is applying the work of Christ's **redemption by bringing men and women and boys and girls to saving faith in the Lord Jesus,** trusting in His finished work to deliver them from eternity in Hell.

WHAT DID JESUS FINISH?

Let's begin by identifying what the "IT" is. What did Jesus finished?

- "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to **fulfil them**" (Matthew 5:17).
- Jesus obeyed the Father by being the perfect **fulfilment of the Law of God** and the prophesies regarding the Messiah. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.
- "Do not think that I have come to **bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace,** but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household." (Matthew 10:34-36).
- "Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, **but rather division**" (Luke 12:51).



- Jesus did not come to preach a message of coexistence, tolerance, or ecumenism. Jesus made it clear that you are either **with the one true God or against Him.** Such truth was and is today the most divisive message the world has ever known. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.
- "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him" (John 5:43).
- "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own **will but the will of him who sent me**" (John 6:38).
- Jesus came in the name of the only true God and to perfectly do **His will.** Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.
- "If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, **believe the works,** that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (John 10:37-38).
- Jesus came to perfectly do the works of His Father so people could understand that **He and the Father were one** (John 10:30). Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.
- "I have come into the **world as light,** so that whoever believes in me may not **remain in darkness.** If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to **save the world.** The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day." (John 12:46-48).
- "Jesus said to him, 'I am the **way, and the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6).
- Jesus came as the **light of the world,** giving fallen **mankind** the opportunity to move from utter darkness into His marvellous light. He came to **save** people. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.



- "Then Pilate said to him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was **born and for this purpose I have come into the world**— to **bear witness to the truth**. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice'" (John 18:37).
- Jesus came as fully **God and fully Man to be the incarnation of the Truth of God**. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.
- "But now the **righteousness of God** has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the **justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus**" (Romans 3:21-26).
- "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one **who has the power of death**, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Hebrews 2:14-18).
- Jesus came to make **propitiation for our record of sin** against God. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.
- "For **while we were still weak**, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we **were still sinners, Christ**



- died for us**. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation" (Romans 5:6-11).
- Jesus came to make reconciliation between God and man possible. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.
- "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having **cleansed her by the washing of water with the word**, so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, **without spot or wrinkle** or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27).
- Jesus came to die for and to **purify His Bride**, the Church. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.
- "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he **humbled himself by becoming obedient** to the point of death, even **death on a cross**. Therefore God has **highly exalted him** and bestowed on him the name that is **above every name**, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every **tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11).
- Jesus came to **glorify His Father through His life, death, and resurrection**. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.
- "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw **near to the**



throne of grace, that we may **receive mercy** and **find grace** to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

JESUS CAME TO MAKE A WAY, THE ONLY WAY, FOR PEOPLE TO FIND MERCY, GRACE, AND HELP IN TIME OF NEED. JESUS, THE SYMPATHETIC SAVIOR, FINISHED THE WORK GIVEN TO HIM BY HIS FATHER.

JESUS DECLARED HIS WORK FINISHED!

Having identified the "it" (the work God the Father had given God the Son to accomplish on earth), let's take a look at what Jesus meant when he cried out that **He had finished the work**.

- What **Jesus** did through His perfect earthly existence, sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection fully **completed the work the Father** had given Him to do. Not only did He complete His salvific work, but His accomplishment is fully efficacious, today and will be forevermore. **There is nothing more to add--nothing more to be done by God, man, or religious institutions.** The undeniable, factual, historic, and eternal work of Jesus Christ has been completed--is **complete**--and will forever remain completed. "IT...IS...FINISHED!"

"It is finished!";

- Jesus finished the **work given to Him by His Father**, which culminated at the **cross**. At the cross, the gavel of the Supreme Judge of the Universe crashed upon His mighty bench when God the Father, pleased to crush His Son, **poured the full cup of His wrath against sin upon His innocent Son**.
- At the cross, the Great Exchange took place (2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:13-15). The **eternal debt owed for the sin of mankind was paid in full**. God the Father looked upon His perfect, precious, and priceless Son as if He had lived the filthy, detestable, sin-stained lives of fallen mankind. And, for those who repent and receive Jesus Christ



as their Lord and Savior, God the Father looks upon them as if they had **lived His Son's perfect, precious, and priceless life**.

- At the cross, God kept His promise to **crush Satan's head through the bruising of His Son**. The **power of sin and death was vanquished once and for all time**.
- Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross forever made man's work to appease God, to please God, and to be reconciled to God, impotent and blasphemous.
- The sin debt I owe to God was and is **paid in full** by my Lord and Savior, my Master and King, Jesus Christ, when He shed His innocent blood on the cross on my behalf! IT...IS...FINISHED!

USAGE OF TETELESTAI

There were several ways the word Tetelestai was used in Greco-Roman culture—all of them illustrative of Jesus' finished work on the cross.

SERVANTS

- Servant used TETELESTAI when reporting to their master, "I have COMPLETED (TETELESTAI) the work assigned to me".
- In another ancient secular Greek text we read of the example of a father sending his son on a mission. The son was not to return until he had performed the last act of the mission.
- When he did return from a successful mission, he used the word **TETELESTAI** to report to his father that he had accomplished the goal.
- As Jesus Himself testified "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to **ACCOMPLISH** (teleioo - also derived from telos = goal) His work. I glorified Thee on the earth, having **ACCOMPLISHED** (teleioo) the work which Thou hast given Me to



do. (And so He laid) down His life for His friends." (John 6:38, Mark 10:45, John 4:34, John 17:4, John 15:13)

PRIESTS

- Priests would examine animals for blemishes before they were **sacrificed**. If the lamb was faultless, perfect, and acceptable, the priest would say, "**TETELESTAI!**" **Jesus is the Lamb of God Who alone was "without sin"** (Heb 4:15, John 1:29, 1 Cor 5:7). As Peter testifies we "were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with **precious blood**, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." (1Peter 1:18-19)

ARTISTS

- Frank Boreham writes that "When the painter or the sculptor had put the last finishing touches to the vivid landscape or the marble bust, he would stand back a few feet to admire his masterpiece, and, seeing in it nothing that called for correction or improvement, would murmur fondly, 'Tetelestai!' 'Tetelestai!'" "IT IS FINISHED!" All the Old Testament "pictures" (types) of Messiah were fulfilled in Christ and were only a "**shadow of what is to come**; but the substance (reality) belongs to Christ." (Col 2:17). The death of Jesus on the Cross "**finished the picture**" of **redemption, a masterpiece which had been in the Father's heart "from before the foundation of the world"** (1 Peter 1:20, 2 Titus 1:9).

MERCHANTS

- In ancient times when a promissory note was paid, the one holding the note wrote "**TETELESTAI**" across it. A **deed to property** was not in effect until it was dated and signed, and when this was accomplished, the clerk wrote "**TETELESTAI**" across the deed. When someone had **a debt and it was paid off**, the creditor would write



"**TETELESTAI**" on the certificate of debt signifying that it was "**PAID IN FULL**". It is reported in several secondary sources that several years ago, archaeologists digging in Egypt uncovered the "office" of an ancient "CPA." In this office they found a stack of bills, with the Greek word "**tetelestai**" inscribed across each bill - "**Paid in full**"! (See next paragraph which gives historical support for the interpretation of tetelestai as "paid in full.")

- When Christ gave Himself on the Cross, **He fulfilled all the righteous demands of the law and our "sin debt" was PAID IN FULL**. The OT sacrifices covered sin but could never take sin away. Jesus accomplished what all of the old covenant sacrifices could not do. "In eternity the Son gave the Father a "promissory note" that He would pay the price for humanity's redemption (Heb 10:5-7). On Calvary the note was **PAID IN FULL. TETELESTAI!**" (H H Hobbs)
- As **Spurgeon** said "There is no **mortgage on the saints**."
- "**Wayne Grudem** adds that "If Christ had not paid the full penalty, there would still be **condemnation left for us**. But since he has paid the full penalty that is due to us, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1).
- **Documentation of Use of Tetelestai Meaning Paid in Full** - Some writers question whether **tetelestai** was ever used which the meaning "**paid in full**", stating that while this is frequently quoted as a fact, no original ancient sources are ever given. That is a fair critique, but I think there is Greek papyri evidence to support this common explanation as recorded in the following 1896 work by Grenfell and Hunt entitled **New classical fragments and other Greek and Latin**

PRISONERS

When a **Roman citizen was convicted of a crime**, he was thrown into prison.

- A "**Certificate of Debt**" listing all his crimes was nailed to his cell door so that anyone passing by could know what he had been accused of and the penalty assessed. When



the prisoner had served his sentence and was **released from bondage**, the indictment was taken down from the door and the judge who had put him in prison would sign the indictment and write across it the word **TETELESTAI**.

- The freed prisoner was then given this document and if questioned as to why he **was out of jail**, he could point to the indictment across which the judge had written **TETELESTAI**. He could rest in safety and security because the word TETELESTAI guaranteed his **deliverance and his liberty**.
- The **charges for those crimes could never again be brought against him**.
- He would never be a victim of "double jeopardy" (having to pay for the same crime twice).
- When Jesus cried "TETELESTAI" on the cross, He was saying that anyone who places his trust in **His sacrificial** death on their behalf, receives in essence a "certificate of debt" with the inscription of "tetelestai", indicating that all their "**crimes**" (**past, present and future**) **against God have been PAID FOR IN FULL!**
- In light of this truth, Paul could write that because our debt was PAID IN FULL by Jesus, God "**has forgiven you all your sins: Christ has utterly wiped out (Greek = completely obliterated)** the condemning evidence of broken laws and commandments which always hung over our heads, and has completely annulled it by nailing it over His own head on the Cross.
- And then having drawn the sting of all the powers ranged against us, He exposed them, shattered, empty and defeated, in His final glorious triumphant act!" (Col 2:14-15)
- Erwin Lutzer adds that "On the cross, the **justice of God was fully satisfied** when our heavenly Substitute paid the great price of ransom.
- As Spurgeon put it, we can stand with confidence despite the thunder of the law and the lightening flash of justice, "for we are safe beneath the cross." He paid the very last cent of the wages of our sin."



THE ARTIST HAD THE LAST WORD AS TO THE MEANING OF THE PAINTING—NOT THE ART CRITIC.

THE SERVANT KNEW IF THE WORK IN THE HOUSE HAD BEEN COMPLETED AND APPROVED BY THE MASTER—NOT THE STRANGER WHO ENTERED THE HOUSE.

THE JUDGE DETERMINED THE SENTENCE, IT'S EXECUTION, AND IT'S SATISFACTION—NOT THE CONVICTED CRIMINAL.

THE PRIEST DETERMINED IF ONE'S SACRIFICE WAS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD—NOT THE PENITENT. THE MERCHANT DETERMINED IF A DEBT WAS PAID—NOT THE DEBTOR.

THE VICTORIOUS WARRIOR DETERMINED THE FUTURE OF HIS COMBATANT—NOT THE DEFEATED ENEMY.

Jesus Christ is the Artisan, the Servant, the Judge, the Priest, the Merchant, and the Victor—

You are not. Your religion is not. Your intellect is not. Therefore, repent of any false ideologies that add works to Christ's finished work. Repent of any arrogant notions, through manmade philosophies of ministry, which would presume to finish the work that Christ has already finished.

Jesus said, "It is finished!" And He meant it.

IT...IS...FINISHED! It is finished, indeed. Thank You, Lord Jesus. Thank You.

Satan may accuse us of "high treason" against God (Rev 12:10), but now and forever "we have an **Advocate** (paraclete) with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous" (1 John 2:1-2) Who cries "**I object**" to every accusation of the Adversary, to which the Father says "**Objection Sustained!**" Yes, when we sin, we need to **confess and repent in order to enjoy fellowship with God** (1 John 1:9), but our eternal salvation is never in doubt or subject to "double jeopardy" because Christ has once and for all time cried "**TETELESTAI!**"

- Beloved child of God, if you have a sin regarding which you find it difficult to accept the Father's full forgiveness



- Let your mind dwell on the truth of "**TETELESTAI**," and then put that sin on God's ledger and write "**Paid in Full**" next to it!
- The truth inherent in the word **TETELESTAI** should **give every believer great assurance, comfort and peace that all of our sin debt, past, present and future, is PAID IN FULL and there remains no sacrifice to be paid!**
- There is nothing we must or even could contribute to the remission of our debt, except receive the "**free gift of eternal life**" by faith (Ro 6:23b). Jesus "having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God." (Heb 10:12).
- As the hymn writer E M Hall put it "Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow."

Andrew Murray

"Every day that our confidence grows fuller in Christ's FINISHED WORK must see our heart more entirely yielding itself like Him, a whole burnt offering in the service of God and His love."

Spurgeon

"The general religion of mankind is **"DO"** but the religion of a true Christian is **"DONE."** IT IS FINISHED is the believer's conquering word. INCARNATE LOVE has fulfilled His self-imposed task. Jesus, as the Substitute for sinners, was condemned to die, and He died that He might finish the work of our redemption. Your sins have sustained their death-blow, the robe of your righteousness has received its last thread (1 Cor 1:30, 2 Cor 5:21). It is done, complete, perfect. It needs no addition; it can NEVER suffer any diminution.

Oh, Christian, do lay hold of this precious thought. I may not be able to state it except in weak terms, but let not my weakness prevent your apprehending its glory and its preciousness. This thought is enough to make a man leap, though his legs were chained with irons, and to make him sing, though his mouth were gagged.



We are **PERFECTLY ACCEPTED** in Christ, and our justification is not partial (Rom 5:1, Rom 5:9, Rom 8:30). It does not go to a limited extent, but goes the whole way. Our unrighteousness is covered. From condemnation we are entirely and irrevocably free. 'Consummatum est. The work is done, redemption is accomplished; the salvation of My people is forever secured. Sin will never be mentioned against them anymore, forever. Oh, wondrous deed of Deity! Oh, mighty feat of love accomplished once for all!"

Spurgeon

"Christ has said, **"IT IS FINISHED!"** and we **must cease to work too** (Rom 4:3), not only with our hands but with our **souls—working no more for life, for that is given; working no more for justification**, for that is **concluded**; but to-day **RESTING** in Christ (Rom 4:5-6; Mat 11:28-30) for **"It is finished!"**

There is nothing for **God to do**. **"IT IS FINISHED."** There is nothing for **you to do**. **"IT IS FINISHED."** Christ need not **bleed**. **"IT IS FINISHED."** You need not **weep**. **"IT IS FINISHED."** God the Holy Spirit need not delay because of your unworthiness, nor need you delay because of your helplessness. **"IT IS FINISHED."** **Every stumbling block is rolled out of the road; every gate is opened. The bars of brass are broken, the gates of iron are burst asunder. "IT IS FINISHED."**

Come and welcome; come and welcome!."

NOW WE NEED TO WALK - IN OUR DAILY WALK (EPH 2:10)

- The only thing we can **"do"** is **BELIEVE!**
- The same way we got through the small gate and onto the narrow way (Mat 7:13-14-**note**), is the same way we are now to work for (in) Jesus -- by faith, motivated by love.
- As Paul exhorted the saints at Colossae who were being "tempted" by false teachers to veer off the narrow path of liberating grace and into the rut of futile legalism (Col 2:20-23-**note**), he also exhorts us - "As you therefore have **received** Christ Jesus the Lord, so **walk** in Him." (Col 2:6) **Walk** is in the **present imperative**, a command calling for this to be our lifestyle... continually!
- **BUT** be careful! To **"try" to do this in our own strength is doomed to failure.**



- The Good News (the Gospel) is that for every divine commandment, He also provides divine enablement.
- **How?** The **dunamis** (resurrection power) of the **indwelling Spirit** (Acts 1:8).
- Now we need to learn to lean on Him, continually jettisoning "self-reliance" and continually cultivating a "spirit" of "Spirit-dependence. Study also the two intimately related commands to continually "**Be filled** with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18) and to continually "**Walk** by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16-note).
- **Notice also how Paul was able to labor** [to point of exhaustion! = **kopiao**] and strive in agony [**agonizomai**] in Col 1:29 (noting that Paul uses **dunamis** to describe "His power"!)
- Now, back to Col 2:6 - How did we **receive** Him? **By faith**. How do we now daily **walk** in Him? **By faith!** How should we daily **work** for Him? **By faith! Remember...It is done!**

Tetelestai! - Finished!

IMPLICATIONS OF TETELESTAI

The implications of Jesus' words on the cross are eternally positive for those who **repent and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior--by the grace of God alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone**. However, the implications of Jesus' words on the cross are eternally negative for any organization or individual who seeks to add to, detract from, or replace not only Jesus' words on the cross, but also the work He accomplished to the glory of God the Father.

- Every man-made religion and each of their faithful adherents stand, right now, in the cross-hairs of God's wrath. "For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him" (John 3:34-36).



- Roman Catholicism denies the efficacy of Jesus' finished work on the cross through the practice and observance of the mass. During the mass, through the unbiblically magical art of transubstantiation (Jesus literally becoming the bread and the wine), **Jesus must sacrifice Himself again and again for sin**.
- Jehovah's Witnesses deny the efficacy of Jesus' finished work on the cross by **denying Christ died** on the cross and by insisting one must be a member of the Watchtower Society and **obey the Law of God** to receive their demonic brand of salvation.
- Mormonism denies the efficacy of Jesus' finished work on the cross by **adding their perceived righteousness and works to their ungodly salvation process**. According to 2 Nephi 25:23, in the Book of Mormon, salvation is by grace, plus works. "For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do."
- Islam denies the efficacy of Jesus' finished work on the cross by **seeing Jesus as nothing more than a prophet**, second to **their false prophet Muhammad**. They also believe it was Judas (a treacherous false convert), not Jesus, who died on the cross.
- **But the implications of Jesus' words on the cross extend beyond false religions.**
- Some churches deny the efficacy of Jesus' finished work on the cross **by spending time and resources wooing the unsaved to the "Christian Club" instead of calling them to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**.
- Some churches deny the efficacy of Jesus' finished work on the cross, diminishing the **gospel as the power of God for salvation, by insisting Jesus and the gospel need the help of man's innovation and perceived ability to make the gospel more palatable**. This is demonstrated through gimmicks, sales pitches, bait and switch tactics, and playing to the primal desires of health, wealth, prosperity, ease, comfort, and happiness without accountability.



- Some churches deny the efficacy of Jesus' finished work on the cross by teaching unbiblical mantras such as:
 - "Christians have to earn the right to share the gospel with someone."
 - "Unbelievers need to see Jesus in you before they will hear what you have to say."
 - "People need to hear more than 'Jesus can forgive your sins and give you eternal life.' They need help with the real problems they're facing today."
- Some churches deny the efficacy of Jesus' finished work on the cross by failing to distinguish **service, helps, and hospitality from evangelism**, which is the actual and literal presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are lost and bound for Hell.

And the list goes on...

WHEN JESUS SAID, "IT IS FINISHED," HE MEANT IT. HE ACTUALLY MEANT WHAT HE SAID: HE REALLY MEANT IT. FOR ANY GROUP OR ANY INDIVIDUAL TO ADD OR DETRACT FROM CHRIST'S WORDS OR FINISHED WORK, REGARDLESS OF THE RELIGIOUS STRIPES THEY WEAR, IS THE HEIGHT OF ARROGANCE AND THE DEPTH OF DEPRAVITY.

The dying word wherewith he breathed out his soul (John 19:30): When he had received the vinegar, as much of it as he thought fit, he said, It is finished; and, with that, bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

- What he said, and we may suppose him to say it with triumph and exultation, Tetelestai- It is finished, a comprehensive word, and a comfortable one.
- It is finished, that is, the malice and enmity of his persecutors had now done their worst; when he had received that last indignity in the vinegar they gave him, he said, "**This is the last**; I am now going out of their reach, where the wicked cease from troubling."
- It is finished, that is, the counsel and commandment of his Father concerning his sufferings were now fulfilled; it was a determinate counsel, and he took care to see every iota and title of it exactly answered, Acts 2:23. He had said, when he entered



upon his sufferings, Father, **thy will be done**; and now he saith with pleasure, **It is done**. It was his meat and drink to finish his work (Chron 4:34), and the meat and drink refreshed him, when they gave him gall and vinegar.

- It is finished, that is, all the types and **prophecies of the Old Testament**, which **pointed at the sufferings** of the **Messiah, were accomplished and answered**. He speaks as if, now that they had given him the vinegar, he could not bethink himself of any word in the Old Testament that was to be fulfilled between him and his death but it had its accomplishment; such as, his **being sold for thirty pieces of silver**, his **hands and feet being pierced**, his **garments divided**, etc.; and now that this is done. **It is finished**.
- It is finished, that is, the ceremonial law is abolished, and a period put to the obligation of it. The **substance is now come**, and all the **shadows are done away**. Just now the veil is rent, the wall of partition is taken down, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, Eph. 2:14, 15. The **Mosaic economy is dissolved**, to make way for a **better hope**.
- It is finished, that is, **sin is finished**, and an **end made of transgression**, by the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness. It seems to refer to Dan. 9:24. The Lamb of God was sacrificed to take away the sin of the world, and it is done, Heb. 9:26.
- It is finished, that is, his sufferings were now finished, both those of his soul and those of his body. The storm is over, the worst is past; all his pains and agonies are at an end, and he is just going to paradise, entering upon the joy set before him. Let all that suffer for Christ, and with Christ, comfort themselves with this, that yet a little while and they also shall say, It is finished.
- It is finished, that is, his life was now finished, he was just ready to breathe his last, and now he is no more in this world, ch. 17:11. This is like that of blessed Paul (2 Tim. 4:7), I have finished my course, my race is run, my glass is out, mene, mene-numbered and finished. This we must all come to shortly.



- It is finished, that is, the work of man's redemption and salvation is now completed, at least the hardest part of the undertaking is over; a full satisfaction is made to the justice of God, a fatal blow given to the power of Satan, a **fountain of grace opened** that shall ever flow, a **foundation of peace** and happiness laid that shall never fail. Christ had now gone through with his work, and finished it, ch. 17:4. For, as for God, his work is perfect; when I begin, saith he, I will also make an end. And, as in the purchase, so in the application of the redemption, he that has begun a good work will perform it; the mystery of God shall be finished.

AN INVITATION

Dear reader, if you have never received God's gift of eternal salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, I invite you to receive Christ. You stand condemned before God because of your unbelief. No matter how young or old you are this day, if you are without Christ you stand on the verge of eternal separation from God in Hell.

That is your position.

- You still bear the penalty for your sins.
- You are without hope of eternal life.
- You are lost.
- You need to be saved.
- But if you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and receive Him as your Savior, God will lift that burden which you cannot bear.
- God will pay the debt that you cannot pay.
- He will mark your account, "*tetelestai*" - "finished" - "paid in full." Paid in full by the blood of Jesus Christ.

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*"I am the Bright Morning Star -
Surely I come quickly"
Rev 22:16, 20*

