

**“It Is Finished”**  
(John 19:30)

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

“On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suffering and shame;  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

On that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,  
Has a wondrous attraction for me;  
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above,  
To bear it to dark Calvary.

So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross,  
Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
I will cling to the old rugged cross,  
And exchange it some day for a crown.”

We sing these words often but when singing them do we really contemplate the depth of their meaning? Do we really understand and remember what happened when Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary? Jesus gave us a supper to help us remember what He did for us when He suffered and died upon the cross (1 Corinthians 11:23-28). Maybe we need to refresh our thinking today. John 19:30 provides us with the truth of what took place when Jesus died on the cross. It is a *blessed noontday truth* that brings out the true reason for Christ’s death upon the cross and why we can be saved today.

John 19:30

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

Many people have heard how Jesus died upon a cross. They know the story of Christ’s death upon a cross. People wear crosses as jewelry and they have pictures of the cross in their homes. Most people can tell you that Christianity has always spoken of Jesus dying on a cross. Modern telecasts and movies are talking about the death of Jesus Christ today. There is big money behind the promotion

of Christ's death today. You would think everyone would know what really happened when Jesus died on the cross. However, most people are still trying to figure out who Jesus was and why Jesus Christ died on the cross. The pagan and unbelieving world of scholarship and scoundrels are still searching for the historical Jesus and the true reason for Christ's death. I've got news for you, I've found the true Jesus, and I know why He died upon the cross.

He told me why He died upon the cross when He said in John 19:30, "It is finished." This saying of Jesus Christ on the cross tells me what really took place when He died upon the cross. It gives to me the true reason for Christ's death upon the tree. This is what we want to share today.

A great many people view Christ's death as only a gory act of martyrdom. They view Christ as some kind of medieval hippie who was trying to promote a new sect or religion. They claim Jesus died in order to be one of the greatest examples of history and humility to future generations. I'm convinced that the majority of people in this world today do not know what really took place when Jesus died upon the cross.

I was talking to a man last year at our annual fair ministry. I shared with Him why Jesus died on the cross. He informed that he had never heard the reason why Jesus died on the cross. Dear friend, this man is not alone in never hearing about the true purpose of Christ's death.

Romans 10:14

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

Allow me to be a preacher for a few moments today and then you can go out this week and be a preacher to some poor lost soul who needs to be saved from hell and damnation.

In John 19:30 Jesus Himself tells us what took place when He died on the cross. In this verse we have a faithful Savior speaking about a finished work. Jesus tells us why He died upon the cross. He put it in

plain language so all the world could know and share what happened for generations to come. Jesus said, "It is finished."

Evidently it was customary to offer wine vinegar (sour wine) to the victims of crucifixion. Our Lord certainly knew what was doing. He was in full control as He obeyed the Father's will. He had earlier refused to drink the pain-deadening wine that was always offered to those about to be crucified (Matt. 27:34). However, in order to fulfill the Scriptures (Ps. 69:21), He said, "I thirst" so that He would be offered the sour wine and be able to cry out those last words of victory – "It is finished!" The drink of vinegar did not fully quench His thirst, but it did enable Him to utter that shout of triumph, in a loud voice, "It is finished!"

Jesus was enduring real physical suffering (Matt. 27:27-30), for He had a real human body. Jesus also felt the wrath of God and separation from God during those three hours of darkness (Matt. 27:45–49). Now Christ had experienced thirst (John 19:28). When you combine these three things together - darkness, thirst, and isolation, you have hell! My friend, Jesus bore our hell on the cross in every way. He suffered pain, significant thirst, and was separated from God the Father.

It's interesting that only John mentioned that the soldiers put the sponge soaked with wine vinegar on a branch of hyssop which they extended to Jesus. Hyssop was readily available since it grew out of many rocky crevices as a weed. The hyssop may give us a picture of how Jesus was the Lamb of God who was going to become the sacrifice that takes away the sin of the world. *Hyssop was linked to sacrificial blood.* You will remember that the Jews used hyssop to sprinkle the blood on their door-posts and lintels at Passover (Exod. 12:22; 1 Cor. 5:7). Now the final Lamb's blood would be shed that could actually remove the sin of the world.

My wife and I were vacationing in Florida not long ago. While I was driving I was thinking about what I might say for this message. I asked my wife to get out a piece of scratch paper and write down these three questions for these are the questions I want to ask while studying this verse. What was finished, why was it finished, and when was it finished?

## 1. What was finished?

In short, the work of redemption was finished. When Jesus spoke these words (“It is finished”) upon the cross, He was declaring that His redemptive work was complete. He had paid the necessary price (a penalty or judgment for sin) that we deserved (Rom. 3:23) and which God required (Rom. 6:23) in order to liberate us or set us free from sin’s penalty (hell) and sin’s power.

Galatians 3:13

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”

The Bible teaches that when Jesus died on the cross He provided redemption for us from the curse of the Law (Ten Commandments) which judged us as sinners and placed a penalty of doom and judgment over our heads which was hell. What Christ finished when He hung on the cross and died upon the tree was the work of our redemption or freedom from the dreadful curse of God’s wrath and judgment that was hanging over our lives.

“I will sing of my Redeemer,  
And His wondrous love to me;  
On the cruel cross He suffered,  
From the curse to set me free.”

The Bible teaches that when Jesus died on the cross the price of redemption was paid. Yes, the price of redemption has been paid. Let us never forget it. The entire story of redemption is not difficult to understand. Christ was judged (penalized) in our place and then died on the cross. Jesus Christ took the “wages of sin” (Rom. 6:23) or the payment that sin required, which was the penalty of “death” (Rom. 6:23), upon Himself. It was a death that involved separation from the Father’s presence, God’s divine wrath and “righteous judgment” (Rom. 2:5) for sin being poured out on Christ, as He experienced our judgment for sin. Jesus “bare our sins” (1 Pet. 2:24) or the punishment (the necessary wage or payment) that sin required when He died upon the cross. The Bible repeatedly says that “Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor. 15:3) and “Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8), and

“Christ also hath once suffered for sins” (1 Pet. 3:18) paying the required fine for sin that God demanded, which was death and judgment in hell (Rom. 5:12; 6:23; 8:2; James 1:15; Revelation 20:11-15).

Christ’s perfect payment for sin (1 Pet. 1:19; Heb. 9:14 – “without spot”) was the only payment for sin that could appease God’s righteous anger against sin (“the wrath of God” - John 3:36; Eph. 5:6) and vindicate His holiness (Hab. 1:13; Lev. 6:25; Exodus 26:33; Heb. 9:3, 8). God cannot overlook sin without judging it. Why? It’s because God could no longer maintain His character of holiness and righteousness without judging sin. He would cease being a holy God (Ex. 15:11; Lev. 11:44-45). No honest or fair judge would ever dismiss someone who is guilty. The same is true about God. Because God is holy He cannot dismiss sin and the sinner without proclaiming His judgment upon them. A payment and penalty for sin is absolutely necessary.

The payment (a penalty or judgment for sin) that Jesus Christ experienced on the cross becomes the satisfying sacrifice (“propitiation”) that God can accept for sin and the sinner (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). Christ’s payment for sin is the only sacrifice that can bring the believing sinner into God’s presence (“that he might bring us to God” - 1 Pet. 3:18; John 14:6).

Think of it this way. Christ’s death upon the cross was the wage or payment that we deserved since we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23 – “all have sinned”). Christ’s substitutionary judgment for our sin and separation from God (experiencing sin’s penalty in our place) was the necessary wage, fine, payment, or price that Jesus had to endure in order to set us free (redeem our souls) from sin’s penalty which was hell (Gal. 3:13), sin’s bondage (Titus 2:14), and Satan’s strongholds (Col. 2:15). Christ died as you, for you, in your place, paying the necessary payment for sin, so you could be redeemed from sin’s penalty and go free! God loved us and gave His only Son (John 3:16) to pay the necessary fine for sin, which was a penalty of judgment that involved experiencing God’s separation, justice, wrath, anger, and full punishment against sin. Jesus bore the full penalty or judgment for our sins so we don’t have to bear the penalty and perish in hell (“should not perish” – John 3:16). Jesus was condemned in our

place so we don't have to experience condemnation or the dreadful sentence of punishment and judgment in hell ("not condemned" – John 3:18 and "no condemnation" – Rom. 8:1 and "shall not come into condemnation" – John 5:24). Jesus was condemned in our place so we don't have to be tried and punished before God as sinners who have broken His holy requirements and laws (1 John 3:4). This is how God demonstrated His love toward the world of lost mankind (Rom. 5:8; John 3:16). He gave His only son to bare the dreadful payment and penalty for our sin so we could escape hell and judgment forever ("they shall never perish" – John 10:28).

Jesus paid the terrible penalty for sin when He experienced God's divine wrath, anger, and judgment against sin, when He was separated from the Father's presence, and when He finally died upon the cross. Jesus "poured out his soul unto death" and "bare the sin of many" and "made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12) who deserved to die the sinner's death. This was the necessary price that God required to secure redemption or liberty for lost mankind.

It was a fearful and dreadful price that had to be paid (Luke 22:42). Jesus was willing to suffer shame, terrible physical pain, and intense agony (Matt. 27:28-35; Ps. 22:15-18 – "they pierced my hands and my feet") in connection with His death for sinners. The payment for sin, which was the mandatory penalty of judgment that God required, consisted of shame, severe suffering, and the severing of Christ's own life. Untold physical suffering and agony was part of the dreadful curse that Jesus took upon Himself (Gal. 3:10). Hell is suffering (Luke 16:24; Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; Rom. 2:5-6; Rev 20:15) and Jesus experienced our hell when dying for us upon the cross. Jesus was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isa. 53:7). He went through great humiliation and suffering as the "lamb of God" (John 1:29) in order to die the sinner's death and pay sin's penalty for the sinner.

"Wounded for me, wounded for me,  
There on the cross He was wounded for me;  
Gone my transgressions, and now I am free,  
All because Jesus was wounded for me."

Christ also suffered thirst on the cross (John 19:28). Thirst is part of the experience of hell as well (Luke 16:23-24). There is no water in

hell. In every way Jesus experienced the pangs of hell and suffering on our behalf as He hung upon the cross. He paid the penalty in full.

Jesus was also willing to be separated from the Father's presence (Matt. 27:46; Ps. 22:1). This was the worst suffering and mental anguish that Christ endured while hanging on the cross. Separation from God is hell (Rev. 20:14-15; 2 Thess. 1:9) and this is what Jesus experienced when hanging on the cross. Jesus was willing to suffer the sinner's hell and die the sinner's death (Rom. 5:7-8) while hanging upon the cross. He experienced the full impact of God's wrath and vengeance against sin. He experienced our hell (separation from God) and was judged in our place. It was a dreadful ordeal when Jesus was punished for all the sins of the world, or when He was made "an offering for sin" (Isa. 53:10). But what a glorious moment it was in salvation history when Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30) and died upon the cross. The moment of Christ's death was the promise of our redemption, release, and salvation. Jesus had paid the necessary redemption price (a penalty or judgment for sin) that we deserved (Rom. 3:23) and which God required (Rom. 6:23) in order to liberate us or set us free from sin's penalty (hell) and sin's power.

The whole idea of a substitutionary purchasing price is demonstrated by the Biblical word of redemption. Redemption is a related truth to substitution. The word redemption speaks of being released or set free through a payment or price. It is the liberation or freedom that we receive by the payment of a ransom.

Three key words bring out the Biblical story of our redemption.

1. Recompense - (agorazo - "to buy or purchase in the market")

Jesus purchased us in the slave market of sin. The word recompense means to make payment or give compensation for something. Jesus paid our fine in the slave market of sin in order to set us free from sin's penalty and power.

This word (agorazo) appears in many Bible verses. I'll mention just a few.

1 Corinthians 6:20

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

1 Corinthians 7:23

“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.”

Revelation 5:9

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

This first word for redemption suggests that we were all living in the spiritual slave market of sin and were sold under the bondage of sin in our unsaved or unregenerate state. We were “sold under sin” (Rom. 7:14) without any hope of escape from sin’s bondage and the devil’s power (Eph. 2:1-3; Heb. 2:15; John 8:34-36) and sin’s judgment which was hell (John 3:18-19; Rom. 3:19; Gal. 3:10). We were shackled to sin and sure to die in the dungeon of despair and doom. But then Jesus came! And what did He do? He died on the cross to purchase us or pay the necessary price to free us from the slave market of sin and death (agorazo - “to buy or purchase in the market”). This means that Jesus died for us while we were still in the slave market, while we were still in shackles and chains, under the power of sin and Satan, and when we were doomed to die the sinner’s death and go to hell. Jesus died for us “while we were yet sinners” (Rom. 5:8). Jesus came into the market to purchase us. He saw us there. His heart was moved. He pitied us and paid the necessary price to free us from our awful plight!

“Redeemed how I live to proclaim it,  
Redeemed by the blood of the lamb!”  
Redeemed through His infinite mercy.  
His child am forever I am!”

We are never again for sale!

## 2. Removal (exagorazo - "to buy out of the market")

Jesus removed us from the slave market of sin. Jesus not only bought us while we were yet sinners in the slave market of sin; He also redeemed us or purchased us in order to remove us from this slave market of sin forever. This word appears in various verses.

### Galatians 3:13

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

### Galatians 4:4-5

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

We spoke of this in our introduction. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law which was a sentence of judgment and doom over our lives. The law finds us guilty (Rom. 3:19) and sends its verdict upon our lives – "Guilty!" We are condemned to die the sinner's death under the sentence of the law but Jesus came to set us free from this condemning sentence.

These verses and the entire story of redemption tell the never ending story of how Jesus paid a purchasing price to God the Father, which was His own blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19), to set us free and remove us from the curse of the law. The Bible teaches that Christ redeemed or purchased believers in order to remove them from the curse of the law (the judgment of hell) and the bondage of sin (slavery to sin's power). He bought us to remove us from our sinful position and condition forever. What a redemption this is!

"Sing, oh, sing of my Redeemer,  
With His blood He purchased me.  
On the cross He sealed my pardon,  
Paid the debt and made me free."

Believers have been purchased while living in the slave market (agarazo) and they are then removed from the slave market

(exagorazo) altogether to live free and experience redemption from the penalty of sin and the power of sin and Satan. When Jesus died on the cross He paid the necessary purchasing price that could set us free forever from sin's condemnation and power and from the clutches of the devil.

Glory hallelujah, Christ has set me free  
Glory hallelujah, A new life now I see!"

### 3. Ransom (lutroo - "to loose or set free by a ransom")

Jesus set us free when He ransomed us from the slave market of sin. This word (lutroo) appears in various verses throughout the Bible.

1 Peter 1:18-19

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Titus 2:14

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Another related word "apolutrosis" ("set free by paying of a price" or "a releasing effected by payment of ransom" is built upon this word "lutroo." It is seen in these verses:

Romans 3:24

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

1 Corinthians 1:30

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Colossians 1:14

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

The idea of a “price” is linked to our redemption. The Bible repeatedly says that we are “bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23) and speaks of “the redemption of the purchased possession” (Eph. 1:14). There can be no doubt about it. When Jesus died on the cross He paid the necessary purchasing price or ransom that God required to set us free from sin’s penalty and power. A ransom price was given to liberate us from our awful plight with sin and Satan (Col. 2:15; Luke 11:21-22).

It truly was finished!! We have a finished redemption. The words dealing with redemption establish the idea of being set free by payment of a ransom. The payment price for our freedom from sin’s judgment, sin’s power, and Satan’s strongholds was the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Christ’s blood sacrifice upon the cross provided a ransom price that would set us free! A ransom had to be paid for our redemption. Jesus paid for our release from sin’s condemnation and slavery and Satan’s power when He died upon the cross and shed His blood. Believers have been redeemed (ransomed) or set free by the precious blood of Christ. These words (“lutroo” and “apolutrosis”) speak of the glorious liberty and freedom that believers have through the finished work of Jesus Christ (Gal. 5:1). The death of Jesus Christ as our substitute has redeemed us or set us free from the judgment that our sins brought upon us and from the very bondage of those sins. This is true liberty. It’s liberty or freedom from the judgment of sin and very power of sin within our lives (John 8:36).

This means that when Jesus died upon the cross he saved each believer from the terrible consequences of their sins through His work of redemption. Jesus paid the necessary fine for the sin debt that we had before the Father. He accomplished this with His own perfect sacrifice upon the cross.

The blood of Jesus that was offered up to God is the actual purchasing price that God has accepted for your redemption (ransom) and mine. The thought of a ransom is used to describe the believer being purchased out of the slave market of sin and set free from sin’s penalty and bondage.

Jesus died upon the cross in order to pay the bill that you could not pay. He rendered up to God a perfect satisfying sacrifice that would free you from sin and became your replacement before God.

In ancient times a person was released from slavery by a ransom payment (Leviticus 25:47-55). Redemption was a contractual agreement, which existed in the slave culture. Within this agreement there was offered the potential for emancipation with individuals. Family members who would pay the ransom price could actually buy relatives out of their slavery. The kinsman redeemer or near kin\*\*could pay a price for the relative and release him from the slave condition that he was in (see Lev. 25:52).

We must remember that redemption always had a purchasing price connected to it. If we are going to have redemption, there must be a Redeemer who is willing to pay the purchasing price. \*\*\*Christ is our Kinsman Redeemer today that has paid the redemption price to God the Father in order to release us from sin's penalty and power. The purchasing price He paid to God was His own blood! Peter calls Christ's blood the "precious (costly or valuable) blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:19). Christ shed His sinless and substitutionary blood upon the cross in order to pay for the sin debt of judgment that we owed to God. Only Christ could pay the debt that would satisfy God with His perfect sacrifice. Only Christ could pay the debt that would ransom us.

The old saying is true:  
"Jesus came to pay a debt He didn't owe,  
Because we owed a debt we couldn't pay."

That's why Romans 3:24 says:  
"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

The picture is very clear. Jesus purchased our pardon and release from the tremendous sin debt we had before God. Jesus released us from the judicial debt of our sins before God. This means that through Christ's own substitutionary death, we can have all of our sins cancelled out before God, as well as the judgment that God had judicially and righteously sentenced us with because of these sins. We were all in the slave market of sin and condemnation without any

way to pay God back. But then Jesus came! And Jesus purchased us in the slave market of sin and took us out of the slave market of sin and damnation by becoming the substitutionary sacrifice upon the cross.

1 Timothy 2:6

“Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

The word for ransom (“antilutron”) means a redemption price, something that is given in exchange for another. Jesus gave His life in exchange for our life. Dear friend, the ransom price must be paid to avoid the divine punishment upon sin and the sinner.

As we have seen there was a ransom price paid to release slaves from the slave market. But there was also a ransom price, known as a “fine,” which someone must pay in court to avoid going to jail. Christ is the One who pays our “fine.” His own death becomes the actual “fine” that is paid to the Father to produce our redemption from sins judgment and sure damnation.

One of the old favorites is the story of the father and son who worked for months to build a toy sailboat. Every night when he came home from work the man and his boy would disappear into the garage for hours. It was a labor of love--love for each other and for the thing they were creating. The wooden hull was painted bright red and it was trimmed with gleaming white sails. When it was finished, they traveled to a nearby lake for the boat's trial run. Before launching it the father tied a string to its stern to keep it from sailing too far. The boat performed beautifully, but before long a motorboat crossing the lake cut the string, and the sailboat drifted out of sight on the large lake. Attempts to find it were fruitless, and both father and son wept over its loss.

A few weeks later as the boy was walking home from school he passed his favorite toy store and was amazed to see a toy sailboat in the window--his sailboat! He ran inside to claim the boat, telling the proprietor about his experience on the lake. The storeowner explained that he had found the boat while on a fishing trip. "You may be its maker," he said, "but as a finder I am its legal owner. You may have it back--for fifty dollars." The boy was stunned at how much it

would cost him to regain his boat, but since it was so precious to him he quickly set about earning the money to buy it back. Months later he joyfully walked into the toy store and handed the owner fifty dollars in exchange for his sailboat. It was the happiest day of his life. As he left the store he held the boat up to the sunlight. Its colors gleamed as though newly painted. "I made you, but I lost you," he said. "Now I've bought you back."

This is the story of redemption. God created or made us but then He lost us in the sin of Adam. But now He has bought us back by the redeeming blood sacrifice of His own Son. Now we are His and His forever! This is this whole story of our redemption. Jesus has come to free us from sin's power, sure damnation, and Satan's evil clutches.

James Montgomery Boice said:

"What makes the death of Christ so unique and marks it out as the focal point of history is that it accomplished precisely what needed to be accomplished for man's redemption and salvation."

We deserved to die for sin but Christ died for us. We were under the just wrath of God by reason of our transgressions but Christ bore that wrath in our place. We were sold under sin but Christ bought our freedom (died to set us free from sin's power and penalty) by paying sin's price which was death, hell, and God's justice.

When Jesus said, "It is finished" He was saying that our redemption was complete. He had paid the necessary price that could free us or redeem us from sin's bondage and penalty which was hell. Jesus was saying that the work of redemption was finished! He had paid the only price or penalty and the final price and penalty that could release the sinner from sin's judgment and slavery.

## **2. Why was it finished?**

Why was redemption finished or complete when Jesus died upon the cross? It's because Jesus had paid the necessary ransom or payment that God demanded for redemption. Jesus had paid the penalty in full and released us from our obligation of judgment. Therefore, God's redemptive plan was finished. When the necessary price was made to free the sinner from the slave market, when the

necessary fine or penalty was paid to set us free, there could be no more payment. The fine was paid in full by the death of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that Jesus had born the curse or penalty of the law to release us from our obligation of payment or judgment for our sins.

Colossians 2:14 says:

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way (the sentence of judgment against us), nailing it to his cross.”

Why was it finished? It's finished because Jesus paid the necessary fine to redeem us and took away the criminal charge or sentence of death that was against us.

“Death and the curse were in that cup,  
O Christ, 'twas full for Thee;  
But Thou hast drained the last dark dregs,  
'Tis empty now for me.”

The words "It is finished" as they appear in our Bibles are just one word in the original language (“*tetelestai*”). Elsewhere in the Gospels we are told that Jesus uttered a loud cry just before his death (Matt. 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46). But John gives us the details of what Jesus said. The sixth word or saying that Jesus spoke from the cross was the single Greek word *tetelestai* which means, “It is finished.” Papyri receipts for taxes have been recovered with the word *tetelestai* written across them, meaning “paid in full.”

This word on Jesus' lips was significant. When He said, “It is finished” (not “I am finished”), He meant His redemptive work was completed. This is because He had been made sin for people (2 Cor. 5:21) and had suffered the penalty of God's justice which sin deserved.

The word *tetelestai* is unfamiliar to us, but it was used by various people in everyday life in those days. Back in Bible times when someone paid off their bill in the marketplace they would run through the streets shouting "*tetelestai, tetelestai*" may debt is paid in full. A servant would use it when reporting to his or her master, “I have completed the work assigned to me” (see John 17:4). This expression was also used by the merchant. He would say that “The debt is paid

in full!” Also, when a priest would examine an animal sacrifice and find it faultless, this word would apply – it is complete and perfect. In a similar way, when Jesus died on the cross Christ’s work of redemption was completed. It was finished. It was perfect. It was a done deal! Jesus had died to redeem mankind and bring mankind back to God through His death. When Jesus gave Himself on the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for the righteous demands of a holy law. He died, experienced the sinner’s death, and paid our debt in full.

When an artist completed a picture, or a writer a manuscript, he or she might say, “It is finished!” Dear friend, the death of Jesus on the cross “completes the picture” that God had been painting, the story of redemption, which He had been writing for centuries. All through the centuries millions of animal sacrifices were offered but the work of redemption (redeeming man from the penalty of sin) could never be accomplished or finished until the final sacrifice (Jesus Christ) would come, die upon the cross, and pay the actual penalty for sin. Because of the cross, we understand the ceremonies and prophecies in the Old Testament. God had been painting the necessary picture of redemption by blood through all the animal sacrifices. These sacrifices were painting a beautiful picture on a canvas that could not be completed until Christ actually came and finished the pictured. This is because the Old Testament sacrifices could never take away sins; their blood only *covered* sin.

Hebrews 10:4

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

How can an animal redeem a man from sin’s penalty and power? This is impossible. Animals cannot save mankind. However, the prophetic pictures that they were painting, mainly Christ and His death on the cross, could save a man forever. The Scriptures are very clear on this matter.

Hebrews 10:14

“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

The animal sacrifices were only telling the story of redemption. They were only painting a picture of redemption. However, when Jesus Christ died on the cross, the Lamb of God shed His blood once, and that blood would *take away* the sins of the world (John 1:29; Heb. 9:24–28) and provide actual redemption for mankind forever (Rom. 3:25-26). When Jesus said, “It is finished” every pictorial truth and prophetic type was fulfilled that related to redemption. It truly was finished. The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 was finished. The pictures of Christ in the Tabernacle were finished. The priestly ministry was finished. In the Old Testament Tabernacle there were no chairs because the priest works was never finished. But Jesus sat down in Heaven (Heb. 1:3) since He finished His work on the cross. The presentation of animal sacrifices was now fulfilled and finished. It was all done since our redemption was finalized.

There was once a rather eccentric evangelist named Alexander Wooten, who was approached by a flippant young man who asked, “What must I do to be saved?” “It’s too late!” Wooten replied, and went about his work. The young man became alarmed. “Do you mean that it’s too late for me to be saved?” he asked. “Is there nothing I can do?” “It’s too late!” said Wooten. “It’s already been done!”

You see, since Jesus Christ has already died and finished the work there is nothing else to do. In His report to the Father Jesus said, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4). Yes, on the cross Jesus cried, “It is finished.” Nothing could be added to what Christ had done. He redeemed man and rescued man from the very pit of hell and the power of Satan.

When Jesus said on the cross that it was finished, He was saying that there is nothing else that you can pay to God in order to satisfy God’s wrath against sin and His justice and holiness.
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The veil in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom following the words of Jesus upon the cross (“It is finished”).

Matthew 27:51

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

The inner sanctuary of the temple was exposed indicating the way into God's presence had been opened through Christ's finished work upon the cross. Mankind could now be fully and finally accepted in the presence of a holy God (Rom. 3:25; 5:10; Heb. 1:3; 4:14; 7:25) since Christ paid the necessary price for sin providing forgiveness and acquittal before God.

This cross and the finished work of Christ is the focal point of all history.

“There was no other good enough  
To pay the price of sin;  
He only could unlock the gate  
Of heav'n and let us in.  
O dearly, dearly has He loved!  
And we must love Him too,  
And trust in His redeeming blood.”

It is finished! It's done! Nothing can be added to what Christ has done! The full penalty has been paid. The ransom price has been accepted. If the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is not enough to redeem and save our souls from hell then nothing we can do could ever save us. Let me ask you something. How can you add anything to something that is finished! How can you add something to Christ's finished or accomplished redemption? You can't finish it by your good works, baptism, catechism, or church attendance. You certainly can't finish it by taking the Roman Catholic mass. The mass is the continual sacrifice of Christ. Mass means that Jesus' death is never finished. In the mass Christ's death is recreated over and over again. Mass is a mockery of the finished work of Christ on the cross. You can tell that to the pope the next time you go to the Vatican.

Hebrews 10:12

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

It is finished! Thank God today for the finished work of the Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary! I want to say something today. If Jesus Christ had not finished the redemptive work of salvation on the cross we would all be finished! We would all die the sinner's death and go

to hell. Jesus did not make the down payment on the cross and expect us to keep up the installments. Jesus finished the work by paying the full amount to release us or redeem us from sin's penalty and Satan's power. In other words, Jesus paid the full penalty for your sin and mine and there is nothing else we can do to redeem ourselves. Salvation is not based on some kind of installment program. Roman Catholicism teaches that a person must eat bread and drink wine (mass) on a regular basis to receive graces for forgiveness and redemption. This is not redemption – it's works (Eph. 2:8-9). Salvation is not based on any kind of installment program that is dependent upon what man does. Salvation is based on a finished plan of redemption through the finished work of Christ. Jesus died once; He shed His blood once, and completed His work once. There is nothing else to do. The death of Jesus Christ cannot be reenacted or reworked in any ritualistic and mystical way. It is finished!

It may be that you have wondered into this building today and don't believe in hell. Well, that doesn't make any difference to me, but it will make a difference to you, when you die and go there! There is a hell just as sure as there is a heaven.

It is finished! Jesus finished it so we don't have to be finished and judged in hell someday. Jesus had finished His work of providing redemption and it presently stands finished. Nothing more is needed or needs to be done. This finished work of Jesus Christ is the basis for our salvation.

2 Corinthians 5:21

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

It is finished! There is a note of relief in this word. The agony is over, the terrible ordeal is finished, and the work of redemption is completed. John does not record those mysterious three hours when the sun hid its face and a strange darkness covered the whole land, when Jesus uttered that haunting cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But it was during those dark hours that Jesus bore the weight of the sin of the world and its punishment. But now it is over. The foundation of our redemption has been laid. It is finished.

The debt has been paid. The delivering price has been given. God's divine wrath has been turned back. The sinner can now be brought near to God and fully accepted by Him. It is finished.

Philip P. Bliss wrote:

“Lifted up was He to die.  
It is finished was His cry.  
Now in heav'n exalted high  
Hallelujah, what a Savior.”

No cult or eastern religion can change the fact that the redemptive work of Jesus Christ is finished. Yes, it was on the cross that Jesus provided redemption and release for every sinner when He bore God's wrath and judgment for the very sins we committed.

“I should have been crucified,  
I should have suffered died.  
I should have hung on the cross in despair.  
But Jesus God's Son took my place.”

What a story of redeeming love! He bought me and rescued me from sin, Satan, and sure damnation. He bore your sin and judgment as the perfect sacrifice for sin so that you could walk out of the slave market of sin and go free.

“Upon a life I did no live,  
Upon a death I did no die,  
Another's life, Another's death,  
I stake my whole eternity!”

We have forgotten in our day that God must hate sin for He is a holy God. God must also judge sin because of His righteousness and holiness. So the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ was judged for our sins. He bore the penalty that our sins deserved and experienced the wrath and judgment of God upon the cross. This is why our redemption is finished! It's because Jesus paid the necessary fine or judgment to set us free.

1 Peter 2:24

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

1 Corinthians 15:3

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

These verses speak of substitution. God hates all sin and must punish it. Instead of God punishing us for our sin, He sent His own Son and punished Him for our sin. This is substitution. Christ bore the punishment for our sins. This is what substitution teaches. *Christ died in our place, in our stead, on behalf of us, for us, and instead of us! Jesus hung upon the cross and died for me, as me, instead of me, and because of me.* He bore our sins upon Himself and the very penalty or judgment for those sins which God required.

“I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agony and blood;  
He fixed His languid eyes on me,  
As near His cross I stood.  
Oh, can it be, upon a tree  
The Saviour died for me?  
My soul is thrilled,  
My heart is filled,  
To think He died for me!”

The sin question has been settled once and for all. Jesus paid the penalty for our sins so that you and I could go free, so we could be redeemed.

“Jesus paid it all  
All to Him I owe;  
Sin had left a crimson tide,  
He washed it white as snow.”

### 3. When was it finished?

This is our final question for this study. When was our redemption secured? When was the redeeming work finished or completed? The answer to this question is simple. It was completed when Jesus Christ died on the cross and spoke those final words, "It is finished." Just prior to Christ's death He cried out, "It is finished." As soon as Christ spoke these words He died and the work of our redemption was complete. It was done.

"Dying for me, dying for me,  
There on the cross He was dying for me;  
Now in His death my redemption I see,  
All because Jesus was dying for me."

It is finished, it stands finished, and it always will be finished! **The ransom has been paid, the rescue has been made, and the rejoicing can now be made.**

Isaiah 51:11

Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

This is the joy of redemption! Are you rejoicing in your wonderful redemption today? Do you have a song since your soul has been set free?

"I have a song I love to sing,  
Since I have been redeemed,  
Of my Redeemer, Savior, King,  
Since I have been redeemed.

Since I have been redeemed,  
Since I have been redeemed,  
I will glory in His name;  
Since I have been redeemed,  
I will glory in my Savior's name."

Dear friend, you can experience this wonderful redemption by expressing simple faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. The redemption price to free us from sin's penalty (hell) and sin's power has been made. However, you must be willing to personally believe in Jesus Christ to be your Redeemer and Savior from hell.

Acts 16:31

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Belief or faith in Christ is not passive. It is active. Belief in Christ means that you are willing to transfer all of your faith to Jesus Christ. It means that you must move your will and choose Christ to become your personal Redeemer. You must accept His finished work and make it your own. It means you are willing to commit your faith to Christ alone so that He might become your personal Redeemer and Savior. Are you ready to believe in Christ and His saving work? Are you ready to take that step of faith and allow Christ to redeem you? Jesus said in John 6:37, "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Will you come to the Redeemer today and let Him redeem you? Do you want to be redeemed?

Christ's death as God's sacrificial Lamb (John 1:29) paid the redemptive price for the sins of all people (1 Tim. 2:6 – "a ransom for all") so God could forgive all those who respond in faith to Christ's redemptive provision (Rom. 3:22-24). Are you ready to respond in faith to Christ's redemptive work and ask Him to redeem you from hell?

There was a man who was selling figurines of the cross and jewelry with cross figures. As he peddled the crosses in the streets he was crying out these words: "Crosses, crosses, who will buy my cheap crosses." Dear friend, may I remind you that the cross of Jesus Christ was not cheap. The cross was not cheap for it was on the cross that Jesus Christ died as our Redeemer. He died paying the necessary find to free us from sin's penalty, Satan's power, and sure damnation. He completed the work of redemption on the cross when He cried, "It is finished." What a Redeemer. Is He your Redeemer?

Those of who know Christ as Redeemer can sing these closing words:

“E'er since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme  
And shall be till I die.”