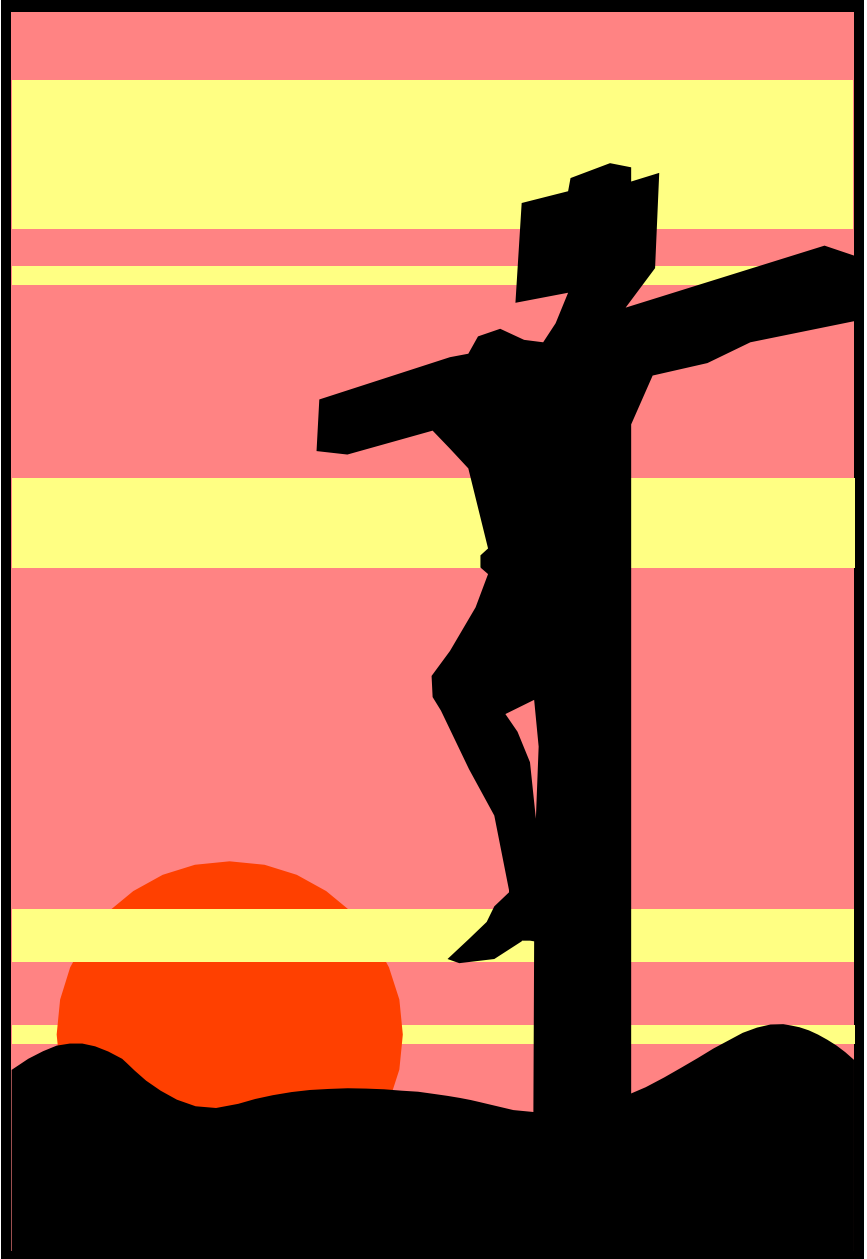


“ Finished.”



Dr. Glenn Parkinson

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:28-30)

When Jesus knew that everything was completed, He asked for a drink, because He wanted to say something. He needed to moisten His mouth and clear His throat to articulate something so clearly that it would not be missed. And, although John doesn't mention it, the other gospel writers report that this last public statement was shouted out **loudly**. So loudly that its heavenly echo tore the Temple curtain in two, from top to bottom.

The one Greek word John used requires four English words to properly translate: "It has been finished". But perhaps we get a better sense of what Jesus said if we keep it just to one bold assertion, proclaimed with every last ounce of strength in our Savior's body: "Finished!" *Finished* in the sense of completed, accomplished. This may be the single most important word ever uttered on this planet. "*Finished*". A word with power to set off fireworks in heaven, send demonic spirits reeling in despair, and raise the dead on earth.

"Finished" – the word that tore the wraps off God's secret plan and secret weapon.

"Finished" – the word that tore the wraps off God's secret plan and secret weapon. The cross was God's secret weapon because, at the time, the Devil considered it his ultimate achievement. It has always been Satan's goal to demolish God's plan to reestablish His kingdom on earth.

His strategy was to bring down the wrath of God upon that very people whom God had chosen as His own. Satan has not the power or authority to destroy God's chosen people, but God has both the power and the authority. If the chosen people could be persuaded to reject - utterly reject, even **kill** those sent to bring salvation – surely God would react by destroying them Himself, and God's kingdom could never be restored in this world.

Satan had already succeeded in provoking the death of many of God's prophets. Now was his chance to have God's only beloved Son killed. The Devil had tried to provoke Jesus' death before – as early as His birth when Herod killed all the male infants in Bethlehem, and several times since. He had always failed ... until now.

And so, we read in Luke, *The Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking*

some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. (Luke 22:1-4)

The plan seemed to work perfectly. Even though Jesus secretly signaled to John that He knew who would betray Him, He let Judas leave. Then the Lord waited in Gethsemane, where Judas knew He would be, until the betrayer arrived with an armed guard. Jesus refused to defend Himself through a mock trial, and just stood by as the Roman governor predictably folded under political pressure.

All of Satan's plans and hopes seemed to come together, as Jesus was whipped, spat upon, stripped, and crucified as a sinner between two thieves. The cross was Satan's crowning achievement. There was no way God the Father could ignore what was happening. As the sun was darkened, it was obvious that this would be a day for God's wrath

Today, we find immeasurable grace in all of Jesus' words from the cross, but at the time, everything Jesus said could have been interpreted to reflect desolation, defeat and suffering. Feeble pleas for forgiveness that the Father would have to refuse. The pathetic attempt to provide for His mother, since He was doomed. The anguished cry of hopelessness from the Psalms. Right down to His croaking request for something to drink.

For six terrible hours Jesus hung in dishonor, while the fallen angels –called in the Bible “the rulers of this age” – cheered at their success. Waiting for the Son of God to die. Waiting for the wrath of God to fall, as fall it must,

And then, at the last possible moment, with His last scrap of energy, Jesus uttered something completely unexpected ... *Finished!*

If the meaning of the word registered on Satan's mind, it was too late.

If the meaning of that word registered on Satan's mind, it was too late. Perhaps he felt the way a mouse does in the instant between the springing of the trap and the end of hope. Before any thought or action could intervene, God ripped the Temple curtain to shreds ... the curtain that separated a holy God from fallen sinners, the curtain that Satan was determined to harden into an eternal wall. The curtain of the Temple was ripped apart!

What happened? What happened was that Christ had done something unthinkable!

Just as Satan hoped, the crucifixion became the single greatest act of human sin. The worst possible fruit of human rebellion. Just as Satan hoped, it did trigger an unlimited, no holds barred outpouring of God's wrath.

But while Satan had been waiting for the wrath to fall, it had been falling—on Jesus!

But while Satan had been waiting for the wrath to fall, it had been falling – not on Israel, not on the Romans, not on the world – but on Jesus! All this time, God's wrath had been pummeling, smashing, crushing and killing His own Son. Jesus had been hanging in the sinner's place, absorbing the wrath we deserved!

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. God made [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:19-21)

[Jesus] bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds [we] have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

This had been God's secret plan all along! A plan that had to remain secret until the last possible second. The Apostle Paul called it: *God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* (1 Corinthians 2:7-8)

“Wait! Stop! Stop the crucifixion!” If that is how Satan panicked, it was too late. Jesus was already breathing His last.

Satan had built a gallows, all right. But what died on that gallows was not the plan of salvation.

Satan had built a gallows, all right. But what died on that gallows was not the plan of salvation. What died that day was Satan's hopes to rule this world forever. Satan had accomplished God's plan, and guaranteed the success of Christ's new kingdom.

As the Apostle Paul said to the Colossians, *Christ ... disarmed the powers and authorities. He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.* (Colossians 2:10,15)

The demons wailed, the heavenly host cheered ... and mankind could hope when Jesus cried out, *Finished!*



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