

The Meaning and Significance of ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ in John 19:30

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ABSTRACT

Before Jesus died on the cross He made seven statements which can be classified into words – forgiveness (Lk 23:34), salvation (Lk. 23:42, 43), anguish (Matt. 27:48), suffering (Jn. 19:28), victory (Jn 19:30), and commitment (Lk. 23:46). Mainline churches reflect on these words on Good Friday, as a way of commemorating the passion week of Jesus. But what do these texts actually mean? This study, using the exegetical method, finds out what Jesus means when He said τετέλεσται (It is finished) in John 19:30. The statement, “it is finished,” carries a sense of accomplishment and the work well done. Here is no weak admission of some ordeal but a triumphant assertion that the mission that was assigned has been consummated. This study recommends that it is an important statement that Jesus made on the cross, before His death and this mission encompass the material needs of humanity. Contemporary Christians should therefore desist from their excessive use of and over-reliance on prophylactics such as anointing oil, water and wrist bangles which has attracted relentless attacks and accusation from the general populace since what Christ has done on the cross does not need prophylactic symbol to make it efficacious and excellent but faith in Christ.

Key Words: John 19:30, seven words of the cross, τετέλεσται, it is finished, Good Friday

INTRODUCTION

On what is normally known as Good Friday in Mainline Churches, the day is spent commemorating the crucifixion and death and death of Jesus the Christ. In the morning the readings are based on the trial of Jesus as recorded by the Gospel writers. In the afternoon, between 2.00 pm and 3.00 p.m., there is another church service where the seven words of Jesus on the cross from the four gospels are read and reflected upon thematically - forgiveness (Lk 23:34), salvation (Lk. 23:42, 43), anguish (Matt. 27:48), suffering (Jn. 19:28), victory (Jn 19:30), and commitment (Lk. 23:46). This paper finds out what τετέλεσται translated “It is finished” means; and what lessons can be learnt from it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

J.C Ryle writes that “It is surely not too much to say, that of all the seven famous sayings of Christ on the cross, none is more remarkable than τετέλεσται.”¹ A.C Gaebelein adds “Never before and never after was ever spoken one word which contains and means so much. It is the shout of the mighty Victor. And who can measure the depths of this one word!”² A.W Pink writes that “Eternity will be needed to make manifest all that τετέλεσται contains.”³ Matthew Henry described τετέλεσται as a “comprehensive word and a comfortable one.”⁴ Charles Simeon adds that ‘since the foundation of the world there never was a single word uttered, in which such diversified and important matter was contained. Every word indeed that proceeded from our Saviour’s lips deserves the most attentive consideration: but τετέλεσται eclipses all. To do justice to it is beyond the ability of men or angels: its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, are absolutely unsearchable.’⁵

J. C Ryle says that, the precise meaning of this wondrous expression, τετέλεσται, is a point which the Holy Spirit has not thought good to reveal to us. There is a depth about it, we must all instinctively feel, which man has probably no line to fathom. Yet there is perhaps no irreverence in conjecturing the thoughts that were in our Lord's mind, when the word was spoken. The finishing of all the known and unknown sufferings which He came to endure, as our Substitute-- the finishing of the ceremonial law, which He came to wind up and fulfill, as the true Sacrifice for sin - the finishing of the many prophecies, which He came to accomplish - the finishing of the great work of man's redemption, which was now close at hand - all this, we need not doubt, our Lord had in view when He said, τετέλεσται.

F. F Bruce comments on the significance of τετέλεσται. He mentions that all scripture that was due to be accomplished in His passion had now been accomplished; the entire purpose for which the Father had sent the Son into the world was now assured of fulfillment, and since that purpose included the salvation of the world and the procuring of eternal life for all believers (John 13:14, 15, 16, 17), salvation and eternal life were henceforth freely available.⁶

METHODOLOGY

The study uses the exegetical method, which finds the meaning of the text in the world of the text. The essence is to determine its contextual, linguistic and socio-historical meaning so as to understand the overall hermeneutics of the passage.

The Greek Text of John 19:30

¹ <http://throughthebible.ca/tracks/43-John/43162/John19:16-37mp3>. (Accessed 7/4/2015).

² <http://bible.org/page.asp?page-id=2391> (Accessed 7/4/2015)

³ <http://www.gty.org/Resources/Transcripts/80-306> (Accessed 7/4/2015).

⁴ <http://classic.studying.org/com/guz/viw.cgi?> (Accessed 7/4/2015).

⁵ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 184.

⁶ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 184.

ὅτε οὖν ἔλαβεν τὸ ὄξος [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· τετέλεσται, καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα. [When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.]

BRIEF SURVEY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The fourth Gospel is a work of great literary artistry, full of dramatic irony and poetic beauty.⁷ It is widely agreed that the Gospel and the letters come from the pen of the same author. Not only is the Greek style very similar, but there are many striking theological phrases which are prominent in both. Examples are phrases such as, “Spirit of truth,” and “darkness,” “of the world,” “children of God,” “born of God,” “abiding in” Christ, “keeping his commandments,” “love,” “witness,” “life,” and “death.”

The traditional view is that the Gospel was written by John in his old age. This view goes back as far as Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons from 178 until his death in AD 195. Irenaeus claimed to have a direct link with John through Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna martyred in AD 156 at the age of eighty six.⁸ In a famous letter preserved by Eusebius, the church historian, Irenaeus tells a friend how, as a young man, he sat at Polycarp’s feet and heard him describes his conversations with John and the teaching he had received directly from the apostle. We can well imagine Polycarp at the age of twenty, listening to the apostle John, who would by then himself have been in his eighties, and there seems little reason to question Irenaeus’ claim.⁹ When Irenaeus asserts, therefore, that John wrote the Fourth Gospel, we must take his testimony seriously.

According to several ancient sources, the elderly John was living in Ephesus when the church leaders in Asia asked him to write this “spiritual Gospel” in order to refute, or argue against, a dangerous heresy (i.e., false teaching) that had started among the believers about the nature and person of Jesus Christ. People who followed this faulty teaching, led by a persuasive Jew named Cerinthus, were denying Jesus’ deity.¹⁰ Archaeology attests the authenticity of the authorship of the fourth gospel to John. For example, only in 1888 did the site of the pool of Bethesda become known (Jn 5:2), and excavation demonstrated that it contained five porticoes as described by John.¹¹

The purpose of the Gospel of John, stated in 20:31, was to record Jesus’ “signs” so that readers would come to believe in Him. Doubtlessly the author had other purposes as well. Morris has argued that John wrote against synagogue Judaism, or the Gnostics, or the followers of John Baptist. Some think John wrote to supplement the other Gospels. John’s Gospel has a clear evangelistic purpose (as do the other Gospels), so it is no accident that it has been greatly used in the history of the church for that purpose.

⁷ James D. G. Dunn, John W. Rogerson (eds.), *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2003), 1161.

⁸ Dunn and Rogerson, *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, 1161.

⁹ John Stott, *Men with a Message* (Grenville Palace: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 69.

¹⁰ Donald Stamp and J. Wesley Adams, *Fire Bible: Global Study Edition New International Version*, (Springfield, Life Publishers Internal, 2009), 1902.

¹¹ Daniel G. Reid, *The IVP Dictionary of the New Testament* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 458.

The key word in the Gospel of John is “believe” which occurs 98 times. We have seen that John in certain respects provides greater depth than do the Synoptic Gospels, but on relatively restricted topics. That is a major reason why his vocabulary is relatively small, with certain words and expressions occurring again and again. This repetition becomes an index of some of the things that are important to him. For instance, he uses the verb “to believe” 98 times; the “love” words 57 times; “world” 78 times, the “to send” 60 times, “Father” 137 times (mostly with reference to God). Whereas the first three Gospels major on describing events in the life of Christ, John emphasized the meaning of these events.¹² The writer possesses the unusual gift of clothing the profoundest ideas in language of childlike simplicity. His ideas are far deeper than St. Paul’s, but are much more simply expressed.¹³

THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT OF THE TEXT (JOHN 19:30)

V.28: The phrases preceding Jesus’ last request (his sixth word from the cross) show that he was consciously fulfilling the programme the Father had set for him. “Knowing that all was now completed” accords with the declaration in his prayer: “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do” (17:4). Unerringly and methodically Jesus carried out the commission the Father had assigned to him. To some extent this commission had been prescribed by OT prophecy. The phrase “I am thirsty” recalls Psalm 69:21: “They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.” Jesus’ loss of blood, his nervous tension, and his exposure to the weather had generated a raging thirst.¹⁴ The stress was upon His fulfilling Scripture (Ps. 69:21) to show that Jesus was truly the Promised Messiah, the One who fulfilled Scripture; Jesus’ mind was set on fulfilling the Scriptures of the promised Messiah; Jesus had come as the Promised Messiah to do the will of God, dying as the sacrifice for man.¹⁵

V.29: Wine Vinegar. The Greek word translated “wine” is *oxos*, a sour wine or vinegar. The English word “vinegar” is from the French *vin* (wine) and *aigre* (sour). Vinegar, or sour wine, is made when alcohol changes into vinegar by the formation of acetic acid.¹⁶ Such was given to relieve pain.¹⁷ Jesus did not take that wine because He wanted to die fully conscious. He did take a sip of this wine; one of the agonies of crucifixion was incredible thirst, added to the terrible pain.¹⁸ The paradox of the One who is the Water (Jn 4:14; 7:38-39) dying in thirst is striking. Putting the vinegar-soaked sponge on the end of a hyssop plant seems odd. John F.

¹² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, New Testament volume 1* (Eastbourne: Cook Communications Ministries, 2001), 284.

¹³ J. R. Dummelow, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 770.

¹⁴ Gaebelien, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 183.

¹⁵ Leadership Ministries Worldwide, *The Preacher’s Outline & Sermon Bible volume one: Matthew-John* (Chattanooga: Zondervan Bible publishers, 2000), 1753.

¹⁶ Donald Stamps, J. Wesley Adams, *Fire Bible: Global Study Edition* (Springfield: Life Publishers International, 1984), 1964.

¹⁷ Roger E. Dickson, *Dickson Teacher’s Bible*, (Kansas: Africa International Mission, 2011), 1304

¹⁸ Earl Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen, H. Wayne House, *New Illustrated Bible Commentary*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 1997), 1357.

Walvoord believes that, perhaps this detail points to Jesus dying as the true Lamb at Passover ceremonies (Ex 12:22).¹⁹

THE VARIOUS USES OF ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

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

(1) 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, Τετέλεσται Τετέλεσται "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" (1Pet 1:20, 2Ti 1:9).²⁰

(2) SERVANTS: A servant might have confidently said Τετέλεσται! when asked by his master if the work he had been assigned to do was complete. The servant would say, "Yes, master. I have finished the work." Jesus, the Suffering Servant, completed the work His Father had given Him. *It is finished!*²¹

(3) PRIESTS: A priest might have said Τετέλεσται! when he recognized an unblemished and acceptable sacrifice for God. The priest would announce to the person offering the sacrifice that the offering was acceptable according to the law of God. Our Great High Priest, Jesus the Lord, not only mediates for His people as a priest but He Himself was and is the perfect sacrifice hence Τετέλεσται!²² Jesus of course, is the perfect Lamb of God, without spot or blemish. The whole reason Jesus came to earth was to give his life in our place in order to pay the full penalty for our defiance toward God and His standards. By His death, He bridged the vast gap that existed between sinful humanity and a holy God. "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit" (1Pet 3:18).

(4) MERCHANTS: In ancient times when a promissory note was paid, the one holding the note wrote Τετέλεσται across it. A deed to property was not in effect until it was dated and signed, and when this was accomplished, the clerk wrote Τετέλεσται across the deed. When someone had a debt and it was paid off, the creditor would write Τετέλεσται on the certificate of debt signifying that it was "PAID IN FULL". 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 τετέλεσται "inscribed across each bill - "Paid in full"! When Christ gave Himself on

¹⁹ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, *The Knowledge Commentary* (Eastbourne: Cook Communication Ministries, 2000), 340.

²⁰ http://www.preceptaustin.org/tetelestai-paid_in_full.htm (accessed 22/6/15).

²¹ <https://carm.org/it-is-finished> (accessed 22/6/15).

²² <https://carm.org/it-is-finished> (accessed 22/6/15).

the Cross, He fulfilled all the righteous demands of the law and our "sin debt" was paid in full. The Old Testament 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. Τετέλεσται!". Wayne Grudem adds that "If Christ had not paid the full penalty, there would still be condemnation left for us. 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).²³

(5) SOLDIERS: A soldier might have said Τετέλεσται! as a battle cry toward a vanquished foe. The soldier would yell, "You are finished!" Jesus' cry on the cross was not a cry of despair or defeat. When Jesus cried with a loud voice, He was declaring victory of the enemy - Satan, sin, and death. *It is finished!*²⁴

(6) 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 Τετέλεσται. 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 Τετέλεσται.²⁵ He could rest in safety and security because the word Τετέλεσται 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 "Τετέλεσται" 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 "Τετέλεσται" 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 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) He paid the very last cent of the wages of our sin."²⁶

THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ IN JOHN 20:30

V.30: Τετέλεσται is third person singular, perfect passive indicative, of τελεω, meaning "to finish." It was used in the first and second centuries in the sense of "fulfilling" or "paying" a debt and often appeared in receipts. Jesus' statement τετέλεσται "It is finished" could be interpreted as "paid in full!"²⁷ Three words in English, one word in Greek – τετέλεσται! The greatest word

²³ http://www.preceptaustin.org/tetelestai-paid_in_full.htm (22/6/15).

²⁴ <https://carm.org/it-is-finished> (22/6/15).

²⁵ http://www.preceptaustin.org/tetelestai-paid_in_full.htm (22/6/15).

²⁶ http://www.preceptaustin.org/tetelestai-paid_in_full.htm (22/6/15).

²⁷ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 185.

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 *consummatum est* (It is consummated!)²⁸ Τετέλεσται is derived from *telos* (a goal achieved, a consummation, a result attained) and means to bring something to a successful end 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 *τετέλεσται* 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.²⁹ It was Jesus' next to last seven words on the Cross (Lk 23:34; Jn 19:36; Lk 23:42; Mt 27:46; Jn 19:28,30, Lk 23:46).

"It is finished," is one of Jesus' most important statements, is translated from the single Greek word *τετέλεσται*. The grammatical structure of the Greek word, perfect passive indicative, is very important. The perfect tense indicates that the progress of an action has been completed and the result of that action is ongoing and with full effect. That is to say, Jesus' mission to redeem sinners had reached its intended goal and that the benefits to the redeemed would last throughout eternity. The passive voice indicates that the subject of the sentence is being acted upon, and the indicative mood indicates a statement of fact or an actual occurrence from the writer's or speaker's perspective. While this may sound like more of a grammar lesson than most readers care for, this information is, again, very important to understanding the significance of Jesus' words.³⁰

Gaebelein emphasizes that the use of the perfect tense *Τετέλεσται* (It is finished) signifies full completion of Jesus' work and the establishment of a basis for faith. Nothing further is needed to be done. According to Gaebelein, Jesus' act was voluntary and confident, for he had discharged perfectly the Father's purpose and was leaving the scene of his human struggle. Gaebelein reiterated that the expression may be interpreted in various ways: as a cry of relief, because suffering is ending; as a cry of anguish, because his ministry has ended in failure; or as a shout of victory, because the purpose of God has triumphed in his death. The last of these seems to be the author's intent.

The final word says that "he bowed his head and gave up His spirit. The verb *κλίνας* ("bow," rest") used in the phrase *κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν* "bowed his head", appears also in Matthew 8:20 and Luke 9:58. The world afforded Jesus only a cross on which to lay his head.³¹ Wiersbe states that Jesus' death was voluntary: He willingly dismissed His Spirit (Jn 10:17-18). He "gave Himself" (Gal 2:20). He offered Himself as a ransom (Mk 10:45), as a sacrifice to God (Eph 5:2), and as propitiation for sin (1Jn 2:2). In Luke 9:31, His death is called a "decease," which in the Greek is "exodus," suggesting the Passover lamb and the deliverance from bondage. It will take eternity to reveal all that happened when Jesus Christ died on the cross.³²

²⁸ http://www.preceptaustin.org/john_1930_commentary.htm (accessed 6/3/2015).

²⁹ http://www.preceptaustin.org/john_1930_commentary.htm (accessed 6/3/2015).

³⁰ <http://www.logos.com/carm>. (Accessed 6/3/2015).

³¹ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 185.

³² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Eastbourne: Cook Communication Ministries, 1989), 384.

κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα. “He bowed his head and gave up His spirit” could also be translated “he laid his head to rest and dismissed his spirit.” Jesus retained consciousness and command of himself till the very end.³³ Vine says, “Not the helpless dropping of the head after death, but the deliberate putting of His head into a position of rest.”³⁴ That He gave up His spirit emphasizes the fact that His death was voluntary. He determined the time of His death. In full control of His faculties, He dismissed His spirit - an act no mere man could accomplish.³⁵

WHAT DID JESUS FINISH?

Jesus gives us the answer throughout the gospels, and the New Testament writers give us the answer throughout the epistles. Jesus Declared His Work Finished! Having identified the "it" (the work God the Father had given to 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!"

Again, 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.

According to Donald Stamp, the phrase τετέλεσται (It is finished) was not a cry of termination, but a shout of triumph, declaring the completion of Christ's work on the cross.³⁶ He further indicates that, this triumphant declaration was a signal that Jesus had (1) fulfilled his earthly mission given by the Father (John 18:37); (2) fulfilled Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah's suffering (Gen 3:15; Isa 53); (3) completed the work of spiritual rescue and restoration by providing the perfect sacrifice for sin (John 1:29; 1Cor 5:7); (4) secured the decisive victory over Satan and his network of demons (Col 2:15); (5) achieve the means of restoring God's relationship with his creation and sinful humanity (2Cor 5:18-19,21).³⁷ Donald in effect is saying that, nothing can be or needs to be added to Christ's work on the cross - and the results are ongoing.

³³ Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 185.

³⁴ W.E. Vine, *John: His Record of Christ* (London: Oliphants, 1957), 1565.

³⁵ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 1565.

³⁶ Donald Stamp and J. Wesley Adams, *Fire Bible: Global Study Edition New International Version*, (Springfield, Life Publishers Internal, 2009), 1964.

³⁷ Stamp and Adams, *Fire Bible: Global Study Edition New International Version*, 1964.

Matthew Henry identifies that what could be considered as τετέλεσται (it is finished), for the commandment of his Father concerning his suffering, the abolishing of ceremonial law, dissolution of the commandments contained in ordinance to make way for a better hope were all finished. He says further that Jesus' sufferings as well as his life were all finished. All these meant to complete the work of man's redemption.³⁸

J.C. Ryle ascertains that Jesus' expression of τετέλεσται meant He had finished the types and figures of the ceremonial law. He had at length offered up the perfect sacrifice, of which every Mosaic sacrifice was a type and symbol, and there remained no more need of offerings for sin. The old covenant was finished.³⁹ John Butler sums up Τετέλεσται that it speaks of:

- Suffering. Christ's suffering on earth for sin was finished. "What tongue or pen can describe the sufferings of the Savior?"
- Salvation on the cross. Salvation requires that there be a blood sacrifice for the sinners. The Old Testament had many sacrifices, but they never completed the job (He 10:11, 12, He 11:14). Calvary was the sacrifice that finished all sacrifices for sin which made salvation possible.
- Success over Satan. Satan had opposed Christ going to the cross and dying in the way heaven had planned. Satan had tried numerous times to stop Calvary's plan. But he failed and Christ conquered victoriously as Τετέλεσται signified.
- Service. Christ had completed His service, He completed the work assigned to Him (Jn 4:34, Jn 5:36, Jn 17:4). It is not how many projects we start that count but how many we finish.⁴⁰

A.W. Pink indicates that, τετέλεσται is a single word in the original Greek. It was the briefest and yet the fullest of His seven cross-utterances. Eternity will be needed to make manifest all that it contains. All things had been done which the law of God required; all things established which prophecy predicted; all things brought to pass which the types foreshadowed; all things accomplished which the Father had given Him to do; all things performed which were needed for our redemption. Nothing was left wanting. The costly ransom was given, the great conflict had been endured, and sin's wages had been paid, Divine justice satisfied. True, there was the committal of His spirit into the hands of the Father, which immediately followed His word here; there was His resurrection, ascension, and session on high, but these are the fruit and reward of that work which He completed. Nothing more remained for Him to do; nothing more awaited its fulfillment; His work on earth was consummated.⁴¹

CONCLUSION

One of the seven sayings of Jesus on the cross is "It is finished!" Jesus finished the work God sent him to do on earth, concerning the salvation of humanity. He paid fully, the price of our salvation. Τετέλεσται is the greatest word from the greatest man on the greatest day in all eternity that has changed the history and destiny of mankind. Jesus' cry of Τετέλεσται is a word of finality. He has finished all that needed to be done to secure our salvation which encompasses the material needs of humanity. Contemporary Christians should therefore desist from their excessive use of and over-reliance on prophylactics which has attracted relentless attacks and

³⁸ Matthew Henry et al., *The Bethany Parallel Commentary on the New Testament*, (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publisher, 1983), 676.

³⁹ <http://throughthebible.ca/tracks/43-John/43162/John19:16-37mp3>. (Accessed 7/4/2015).

⁴⁰ <http://www.wordsearchbible.com/com/catalog> (accessed 6/3/2015).

⁴¹ http://www.preceptaustin.org/john_1930_commentary.htm (accessed 5/1/2015).

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