

I Thirst / It Is Finished
John 19:28-30
March 18, 2015
5th Wednesday in Lent

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."

The details of Jesus' last moments on the cross are very specific. They were written down by the Apostle John. John was at the foot of the cross and he saw up close the death of Jesus, and John records the details of those last moments.

"Jesus knew that it was all finished." Jesus knew it was all over. Jesus knew he was going to die any moment now.

"To fulfill the Scriptures." Throughout his earthly life, Jesus says and does everything to fulfill the Scriptures.

"I thirst." Jesus quotes Psalm 69:31: *"I thirst and they gave me vinegar to drink."* Jesus chose the exact words from Psalm 69, an obscure passage.

"A jar of wine vinegar was there." Jesus' quote from Psalm 69 was based in the fact that he was fully aware of his surroundings.

"They soaked a sponge in [in the vinegar], put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant." Showing a disrespect for his dignity, a dirty hyssop plant was used to carry the vinegar to his lips.

"They lifted it to Jesus' lips." No movie is required to see the soldiers holding that vinegar-soaked plant for Jesus to drink from.

"When he had received the drink." Jesus must have smelled the rancid vinegar before the bitterness of it crossed his parched lips and tongue.

Jesus said, "It is finished." His head slumped down in lifelessness.

So what does all this mean for us?

Jesus was fully aware of his surrounds and the things that were happening to him. Jesus felt the full force of physical pain. Since Jesus knows pain, God knows and understands physical pain. Jesus/God experienced the enormity of human pain; his back ripped open by a Roman whip, a crown of thorns forced down on his head; heavy spikes driven through his wrists and his feet; a thirst so deep he would drink vinegar.

God knows your physical pain when you are at the sickest point in your life. God became a real human being and felt physical pain and thereby also feels your physical pain.

When Jesus was on the cross, he said several things. He spoke a word of forgiveness when he asked his Father to forgive his enemies. He spoke a word of salvation when he told the thief he would be in paradise. He spoke a word of provision when he instructed John to care for his mother, Mary. He spoke a word of desertion when he asked his Father why he had forsaken him. He spoke a word of suffering when he said he was thirsty. And he spoke a word of finality when he said, “*It is finished*” (Jn 19:30).

It is finished. That’s the last thing Jesus said before he died on that cross. It is finished. But what was finished? We are going to look at three things that were finished when Jesus drew his last breath on that day we call Good Friday.

The prophecies of Scripture were finished. The Bible is true – every word, verse, and chapter are true. If one thing in the Bible is subject to doubt, then all of God’s Word is subject to doubt, and our faith amounts to nothing.

The entire life of Christ was a matter of proving Scripture true. Jesus fulfilled one prophecy after another concerning the coming Messiah. That’s how we know Jesus is the One promised from God. Listen to just a few of the prophecies that were carried out in Jesus’ life.

He was born to a virgin: *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel* (Is 7:14).

He would be a descendant of David: *When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever* (2 Sam 7:12-13).

He would be named before he was born: *She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins* (Mt 1:21).

He would be born in Bethlehem: *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times* (Micah 5:2).

He would have a forerunner: *“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty* (Mal 3:1).

He would heal the people: *Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows* (Is 53:4).

He would be despised and rejected by men: *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not* (Is 53:3).

He would be forsaken by his disciples: *“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!” declares the Lord Almighty. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered”* (Zech 13:7).

He would be numbered among the sinners: *Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors* (Is 53:12).

Soldiers would gamble for his garments: *They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing* (Ps 22:18).

When Jesus said, “It is finished,” all of the Scriptures, that pointed to the Messiah to come, were finished.

The words, “It is finished,” also brought an end to Christ’s suffering on this earth. Jesus’ life wasn’t an easy one. The Old Testament referred to Jesus as a *Man of Sorrows* (Is 53:3). That’s a very fitting title for someone who suffered so much at the hands of sinful men and Satan.

Jesus even suffered because of God’s will. As Scripture pointed out, it was God’s will that Jesus’ friends should desert him. It was God’s will that Jesus be despised and rejected by men. It was God’s will that Jesus was considered a common criminal.

Jesus’ entire life was a life of suffering. And, if that isn’t enough, Jesus lived his life in the shadow of the cross.

In his evening conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus spoke of his crucifixion: *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up* (Jn 3:14).

In answering James and John’s request for special places in the kingdom to come, Jesus replied: *Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”* (Mt 20:22).

After Peter’s bold claim that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah to come, Matthew writes: *From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed* (Mt 16:21).

Even on the mount of Transfiguration, the conversation with Moses and Elijah took on an ominous tone: *Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem* (Lk 9:30-31).

When Jesus said, "It is finished," it spelled an end to his earthly suffering and humiliation.

However, when Jesus said, "It is finished," the most important thing to be finished was his work of redemption. Those three words brought God's plan for our salvation full circle. The perfect life had been lived and the perfect sacrifice had been made.

The redemption that Christ finished on the cross wasn't a partial payment for sin. It was whole. It was complete. Nothing ever needs to be added to what our Savior has done for us. Our status before God is not improved by good works, by speaking in tongues, by belonging to a certain denomination, or any of the other things some people call necessary for salvation.

If you want the short answer for what was finished when Jesus said, "It is finished," that answer is this: Jesus finished the will of his Father on this earth. Jesus said: *I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me* (Jn 6:38). Jesus fulfilled his Father's purpose for his earthly life.

Jesus laid aside the glories of heaven and came to earth to be as human as we are to fulfill his Father's purpose.

Jesus carried out his ministry to fulfill his Father's purpose.

Jesus sweat drops of blood, wore a crown of thorns, and died on Calvary to fulfill his Father's purpose. And now the Father's purpose is finished.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost and now the lost can be found and saved. Jesus came to take away our sins and now our sins are removed from us as far as the east is from the west. Jesus came to bring us life at its fullest and we have that life – both now and for eternity.

The forgiveness of your sins and your everlasting life with God, our Father, was sealed when Jesus said, "It is finished."