**“Jesus Finishes the Battle for Your Salvation”**

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John 19:28-42

 Lenten Midweek 6

**Behold** the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

**Behold** His hands and His side, and do not doubt, but believe.

**Behold** His last breath.

**We** come, tonight, to the end. Jesus announced it: “It is finished”. But what was He talking about, specifically? What **IS** He talking about? What’s finished? His life? Well, certainly, yet much the more. His suffering? Yes, but more yet. His work? Yes, **THAT was what Jesus referred to**. The cry, “It is finished” was **of triumph** … a **VICTORY** shout no matter how it may have **audibly** sounded through the shallowness of His breath.

**THE BATTLE TO SAVE SINNERS GOT FINISHED ON THE CROSS.**

**I**

To **understand what got finished**, we’ve got to go back to where everything began.

On the sixth day, God created Adam and Eve **in His own image and likeness**. Creation was “very Good” (that was “very Good”, or “tov” to use the Hebrew word that means perfect). God planted a garden perfect for His people to live in, giving to them every kind of fruit trees for food with but one exception. Of the “tree of the knowledge of good **and evil**” they were not to eat, but rather love God enough to tend to His warning. Everywhere were trees available for eating, yet one tree was for faith returned by a loving homage to the one whose word demanded that they not harm themselves. God attached at that tree this warning to be heeded out of His desire for their freedom, yet His Fatherly concern: “On the day that you would eat of this tree you’d surely die **knowing all of evil**”. Adam and Eve didn’t believe Him, so they ate upon the tempting offer of Satan. They took the fruit into their hands and bit and swallowed and rebelled against God, starting war between creation and the Creator. Enmity began between God and man.

Sin … corruption … death … and Satan Himself—these all took over the ruling status in Adam and Eve … to get inherited by all who’d follow by nature.

**II**

But the Lord wouldn’t have it all end that way. Even though deserving complete and eternal consequences which evil leads to, He intervened with **something quite astonishing**. The God who’s Just, perfect in Justice since Holy and able only to commune (Himself) with holiness, came down from Heaven and entered a fallen garden, finding first Adam and Eve hidden and embarrassed, then promising Deliverance and a reinstatement of a **communion (co-union) with Him in a way He’d make possible**.

“I will **put enmity, first, between Satan and the Seed of Eve, Jesus**. **He (Satan) would get** to crush That Seed’s heel, but in that crushing **Jesus would crush Satan’s head**. Immediately upon the “Fall”, God promised **the Gospel of Himself redeeming humanity**.

Standing in the garden Himself, God looked at the enmity between man and Himself and said, **“No”** to it. He wouldn’t leave things that way. He put the enmity we had with God and made it that Satan and one Human representative, so that people, again, could be at odds once redeemed and saved, adopted as children again of their Creator. He took up the battle. He fought and fought upon this earth. He fought for Adam and Eve and all their children. He became a Man (a woman’s Seed) so that Satan He’d allow to crush His heal. He, though, **would CRUSH HIS HEAD IN THE PROCESS**.

Adam and Eve would not be then, the only ones to die because they ate of the fruit of knowing evil. “Because you have eaten that fruit, God’s Son would die. **His dying**, however, was for **our rescue**. **His dying** would be, then, for **our salvation**.”

When Jesus voiced on the cross “It is finished”, it recalled all of that. Back when God declared war against sin and death and the devil, He’d **committed to the overthrow of evil** to rescue Adam, Eve, and all their children who’d **receive that death as “for them**”. What began in a garden passed through Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Judah. Through Moses communion with God (co-union) got again spoken of and prophets told of it to all generations through David until Bethlehem … the promised Seed (the Savior) was **born to die**.

**III**

God’s Son (Jesus) became flesh (the Seed of woman) to be offered as the necessary sacrifice capable of crushing Satan’s evil head. He announced **THAT** in Himself and God’s grace, **He gathered** people and told them He was the Deliver. **He talked regularly** with His Father and **offered to human eyes** signs and wonders. **He declared** that God’s Kingdom had arrived in Him. **He lived** perfectly (since He had to be the spotless Lamb for an appropriate slaughter under sin). **He was given over** by betrayal, arrest, and taken, beaten, mocked, accused, and convicted without defending Himself, stripped, lifted up, pierced, and hung-to-dangle till dead. All the world’s sins (from Adam and Eve to you and I) **He’d bore** baptized into us. He was “stricken and smitten, afflicted and forsaken, cursed and crushed for us and in our place … on our behalf … in our stead (as substitute for us). The curse that Adam and Eve and you and I are born into then invite into ourselves by partication was taken by Jesus who accepted all that we deserve in death so that we might be blessed with life even in death.

Now … “It is finished.”

**His suffering for our salvation**.

“It is finished.”

**His sorrow for our joy**.

“It is finished.”

**His death for our life. His death IS OUR LIFE**. **His death is our peace and our hope**. **It is our confidence even as our last hour draws nearer**.

**IV**

Johann Sabastian Bach (in his wonderfully crafted “St. John’s Passion” **music**), meditates in song on Jesus’ dying, especially on the moment when He dropped His head in death. Bach saw this as a what he called a “**silent nod**”. **Imagine that!** We sinners watching God’s Son (the King) express a last breath, marveling how this **IS** **salvation (our salvation) in the moment** Bach presents that, to this question (“could it be”) Jesus bowing His head and nods: “YES!”

“My beloved Savior, let me ask You”, (the music sings)

Since You have now been nailed to the cross

And You Yourself have said: “It is accomplished / finished,”

Have I been set free from death?

Through Your pain and death can I inherit the Kingdom of Heaven?

Is this the redemption of the whole world?

You can, Jesus, indeed not speak for anguish;

But you bow Your head

And **silently say: ‘YES!**’”

**Deliverance of You? Forgiveness of you? Salvation of you? God be praised, because “It is finished”. Amen!**