

The Christian Life: Sanctification

Did Jesus accomplish full salvation on the cross? Do I need to add anything?

By Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Jesus' words from the cross, "It is finished," tell us that sinners who believe on Him are not saved on the installment plan! The debt is "paid in full."

Redemption and Forgiveness

Through His suffering and death on the cross, Jesus Christ accomplished "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" —

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:3-7)

As Matthew Henry put it in his commentary on this passage, there is "no remission without redemption. It was by reason of sin that we were captivated, and we cannot be released from our captivity but by the remission of our sins. This redemption we have in Christ, and this remission through His blood. The guilt and the stain of sin could not be otherwise removed than by the blood of Jesus. All our spiritual blessings flow down to us in that stream."

God's Holy Law Satisfied

Redemption and forgiveness are possible because on the cross, Jesus satisfied the requirements of God's holy Law on sinners' behalf, dying the death we deserved. Jesus Himself said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). And the Apostle Paul under divine inspiration tell us that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4).

God's Wrath Propitiated, Sinners Justified and Saved from Wrath

Because Jesus was the one perfect sacrifice for sin, satisfying the Law completely, through His suffering and death He was able to propitiate — that is, appease — the wrath of God on sinners' behalf once and for all.

"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified [declared 'not guilty' before God] by faith apart from the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:21-28)

"And He Himself is the propitiation [the appeasement] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." (1 John 2:2)

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10)

"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Romans 5:9)

"Paid In Full"

Jesus words from the cross, "It is finished," (John 19:30) were not words of weakness or resignation. They were words of triumph. The phrase is a single word in the original text of the Bible — *tetelestai*, which means, "It is accomplished" or "It is complete." John says that Jesus uttered these words "knowing that all things were now accomplished" (verse 28). *Tetelestai* can also be translated, "Paid in full." Archaeologists have found many ancient business documents from the Greek and Roman world of that time, such as invoices and receipts for various kinds of things, and they are marked with this word, "*tetelestai*" — "paid in full."

Dear friends, considering the kinds of false teachings about salvation that are circulating even in Evangelical churches today, we need to get hold of this great fact once again. The Lord Jesus Christ did not go to the cross to make a down-payment for our redemption. He did not go to the cross to make a sacrifice that would be only partially sufficient, so that we could add our own righteousness to it, in order to stand on the Day of Judgment. We are not redeemed from our sins on the installment plan.

We cannot pay the debt! We have nothing to offer! And we don't need to pay the debt — not one tiny part of it! Jesus paid it all! "It is finished!"

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