

Tetelestai - It is Finished

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The Meaning of "Tetelestai"

The Greek word **tetelestai** is only found in two instances in the New Testament. They both occur when Jesus is on the cross. The first is: **Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."** (John 19:28, NIV) The second is **when he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished!" With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.** (John 19:30, NIV) Literally translated the Greek word **tetelestai** means just that: **It is finished.**

In New Testament times, the word **tetelestai** was also used on business documents or receipts. It meant that a bill had been paid in full. This was common business practice. Hence, the Apostle John's audience at the time immediately understood that Jesus had legally settled a matter and that a payment had been made in full. Jesus knew that he had finished everything. It was the last thing he said before he died. Implicitly, and understood by his audience, by using the legal term **tetelestai** Jesus said: "The matter has been legally settled," or "It has been paid in full." Of course, the person settling the matter and paying in full was Jesus himself.

The Price for Our Salvation

Isaiah 53 summarizes the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus:

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of dry ground. He has no stately form or majesty that we would look at him, nor an appearance that we would take pleasure in him. He was despised and abandoned by men, a man of great pain and familiar with sickness. And like one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised, and we had no regard for him. (Isaiah 53:1-3, NASB)

However, it was our sicknesses that he himself bore, and our pains that he carried. Yet we ourselves assumed that he had been afflicted, struck down by God and humiliated. But he was pierced for our offenses. He was crushed for our wrongdoings. The punishment for our well-being was laid upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5, NASB)

All of us, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way. But the Lord has caused the wrongdoing of us all to fall on him. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he

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was taken away. And as for his generation - who considered that he was cut off from the land of the living for the wrongdoing of my people, to whom the blow was due? And his grave was assigned with wicked men. Yet he was with a rich man in his death because **he had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in his mouth.** (Isaiah 53:6-9, NASB)

But the Lord desired to crush him, causing him grief. If he renders himself as a guilt offering, he will see his offspring. He will prolong his days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hand. As a result of the anguish of his soul, he will see it and be satisfied. By his knowledge, the righteous one, my servant, will justify the many - for he will bear their wrongdoings. Therefore, I will allot him a portion with the great. And he will divide the plunder with the strong because **he poured out his life unto death and was counted with wrongdoers. Yet he himself bore the sin of many and interceded for the wrongdoers.** (Isaiah 53:10-12, NASB)

Jesus's suffering is described in more detail in the following verses: I will pour out my indignation on you. **I will blow against you with the fire of my wrath and deliver you into the hands of brutal men who are skillful to destroy.** (Ezekiel 21:31, NKJV); Many were horrified at what happened to him. But everyone who saw him was even more horrified because **he suffered until he no longer looked human.** (Isaiah 52:14, CEV); **I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.** My heart is like wax. It has melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd¹, and my tongue clings to my jaws. **You have brought me to the dust of death.** (Psalm 22:14-15)

Surely the Romans were **brutal men skillful to destroy** (Ezekiel 21:31). Scourging was one of the most savage punishments given by the Roman government. They had developed a special weapon and a specific method to scourge their prisoners.

The scourge used to whip their prisoners was the Roman flagrum or flagellum. It was a short whip made of three or more leather straps. A weight was knitted at the end of the straps and embedded with metal, nails, and sharp bone pieces. Sometimes the straps had hooks at the end. The flagrum was then called "scorpion". Roman scourging quickly pulled the flesh from the body and left the skin hanging like ribbons. It exposed a bloody mass of muscle and bone, sometimes even the internal organs if the scourging was especially severe. The purpose of the flagrum was to beat a person to the point of death.

Professionally trained soldiers performed the scourging with the flagrum. It was a two-

1) A potsherd is a piece of ceramic from pottery, often found on an archaeological site.

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man job. They stripped their victim naked and tied or shackled him to a column or between two columns. The two soldiers would stand on each side and alternate hits. Their method of scourging was to start with the upper torso, beat down the back, down the chest, up the back of the legs above the knees, and then up the arms. They beat the victim continuously. According to Jewish law, a victim could not be beaten more than 40 times ([Deuteronomy 25:3](#)). However, the Romans did not follow Jewish law. Scourging was not about how many lashes a victim received. It was about beating the person within a step of death and then backing off - however many lashes that would take. The purpose of this method of torture was to intensify and prolong suffering. Historians write that sometimes the victims would die during the scourging. They scourged Jesus so severely that he was not able to carry his own cross ([Luke 23:26-27](#)). When the Roman torturers were done with him, Jesus did not look like a human being anymore ([Isaiah 52:14](#)).

Once Jesus was nailed on his cross, the Roman soldiers pulled the cross up. [Psalm 22:14](#) accurately describes that his bones were out of joint. When the cross with the person was dropped into the prepared hole in the ground, the force of the impact often dislocated the victim's joints. If that did not happen, the strain of pulling their body weight up on the nails dislocated their wrists, elbows, and shoulders within minutes. The person was internally torn apart.

Additionally, the crucifixion position with the arms forcefully stretched out made it extremely difficult to exhale and impossible to breathe in fully. Jesus needed to pull himself up on the nails in his hands and push down on the nail in his feet to allow his lungs more room to inhale and exhale. This was extremely painful due to his ripped open back and the wounds of the nails. The movement also pulled on the dislocated joints which caused intense body pain. Due to exhaustion, Jesus could not do this for an extended period. His crucified body was slowly suffocating to death.

Jesus's physical suffering is described as being [poured out like water \(Psalm 22:14\)](#). Like water being poured out of a glass until it is empty, Jesus had nothing left to give. He suffered until every ounce of his physical life was gone. He didn't just nicely die for us under sedation. He went through excruciating pain and utmost suffering to pay for our sins. It was so violent and bloody that many of us would not have wanted to watch it.

His suffering started in the Garden of Gethsemane when all of his disciples deserted him, continued in the courts of Pilate where he was almost flogged to death, and found its culmination on the cross. That was the price paid for our salvation. The degree of Jesus's suffering shows the severity of our sin and the value we have in God's eyes.

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How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. (Hebrews 2:3-4, NIV)

The Dimensions of the Cross

Since **we have now been justified by his blood**, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! (Romans 5:9, NIV); **But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** (Romans 5:8, NIV); You see, at just the right time, **when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.** (Romans 5:6, NIV); **God's love has been poured out into our hearts** through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Romans 5:5, NIV)

We will now discuss eight foundational truths about our salvation². We will start with Isaiah 53:5. But he (Jesus) was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. **The chastisement for our peace was upon him (Jesus), and by his stripes we are healed.** (NKJV) We will then examine how the cross affects our soul because our health and overall well-being hinge on the well-being of our soul. Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, **just as your soul prospers.** (3 John 2)

I. From Sin to Forgiveness

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

All men and women since Adam and Eve were born as sinners and have committed acts of sin. Not all have committed the same types of sins, but all sin has the same core. The fundamental guilt of human beings is to go their own way, to do their own thing. In short, they choose to live their life independent of God - in rebellion. They refuse God's rightful rulership over their lives. **All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned, everyone, to his own way.** And the Lord has laid on him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6); **All have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23, NIV)

Even though we are physically alive, we are spiritually dead until we are born again by the

2) The Exchange at the Cross, Derek Prince

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Spirit of God. As for you, **you were dead in your transgressions and sins** in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air; the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, **gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts**. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. (Ephesians 2:1-3); **The wages of sin is death**, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

God poured the wrath that we deserved on Jesus. He (Jesus) took the punishment that the righteousness of God required so we can be forgiven and have peace with God. **But he (Jesus) was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon him (Jesus)**, and by his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5, NKJV); Jesus has **anceled the certificate of debt** consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us. And **he (Jesus) has taken it out of the way**, having nailed it to the cross. (Colossians 2:14, NASB); He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed (transferred, NASB) us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom **we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins**. (Colossians 1:13-14, NKJV)

What is the consequence of our sins? It is spiritual death apart from the presence of God. **It is destined for people to die once, and after this comes judgment**. (Hebrews 9:27) If we do not bow our knees to Jesus, we will go to a place called hell when we die. However, we can go free, completely free, and have peace of mind here on earth. All we need to do to access the heavenly pardon is repent and believe in (turn to) Jesus: **Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out**, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. (Acts 3:19, NIV); **If we confess our sins**, he (Jesus) is faithful and righteous, so that **he will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness**. (1 John 1:9)

Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. **Repent and believe in the gospel**." (Mark 1:14-15) That means that the kingdom of God within, righteousness, peace, and joy, were then available for the first time. That had not been the case before because the blood of animals could never take away sins (Hebrews 10:4-10). It could only temporarily cover them until the next sin offering would be made for the sinner. And it could not change the sin nature of the person. With the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, our sins are literally nailed to the cross and wiped away.

The moment we repent and put our faith in Jesus for the first time is called the new

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birth. Jesus made it clear that we must be born again, "Most assuredly, I say to you: Unless one is born of water and the (Holy) Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the (Holy) Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you: **You must be born again.**" (John 3:5-7) The birth in the flesh is the natural birth. The birth from the spirit is the new spiritual birth. It is called a new birth because the person has already been born once in the natural.

How does a person become born again? **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved**³. (Romans 10:13); **If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** (Romans 10:9) It is that simple. We repent of our sins and call on God. He is more than willing to save us, for **the Son of Man has come to seek and to save⁴ that which was lost.**" (Luke 19:10)

The spiritual experience of forgiveness is naturally followed by genuine peace and joy in the soul of the believer: **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ** (Romans 5:1, NKJV). That is truly good news!

2. From Death to Life

Jesus tasted spiritual death for us when he became sin on the cross. **But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor - because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.** (Hebrews 2:9, NIV); **And having been perfected, he (Jesus) became the author of eternal salvation** to all who obey Him. (Hebrews 5:9, NKJV)

Before we came to Christ, we were spiritually dead in our sins: **And you were dead in your offenses and sins** in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, **indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind**, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest. (Ephesians 2:1-3)

But Jesus died so that we would have life and have it more abundantly. **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not**

3) save = sozo (STRONGS G4982): to **save**, i.e. **deliver** or protect, **heal**, **preserve**, save (self), do well, be (make) whole.

4) save = sozo (STRONGS G4982)

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perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16, NIV); For the wages of sin is death, but **the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.** (Romans 6:23, NASB); The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. **I came so that they would have life and have it abundantly.** (John 10:10, NASB)

The entrance into this eternal life is the new birth which happens through repentance and faith in Jesus. The moment we repent and believe in Jesus, we are transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light (born again spiritually). **For he (God) has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son** he loves (Jesus), in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

3. From Sinner to Saint

God made Jesus the sin offering once and for all. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him (Jesus). He has put him (Jesus) to grief. When you **make his soul an offering for sin**, he (Jesus) shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. (Isaiah 53:10, NKJV)

This is why **2 Corinthians 5:21** states that **he (God the Father) made him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him (Jesus).** Jesus was spiritually made sin for us. He did not just take our manifold acts of sin (although he did). He became our sin nature so that we would become the righteousness of God in him. **While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** (Romans 5:8) The born-again Christian is not a sinner anymore. He or she has become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. We have received a new nature, the nature of Christ.

You are not "a sinner saved by grace". You were a sinner, and you have been saved by grace. You are now the righteousness of God (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). Scripture makes it clear that we are a royal priesthood (**1 Peter 2:9**). That means that we have been transformed from sinners to kings and priests. The very sin nature you were born with has been put to death on the cross. While you had a wicked heart, a spiritual heart transplant has taken place. You have received a new heart. That is one of the pillars of the New Covenant. **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.** (Ezekiel 36:26)

Not only have we become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, we have also already been perfected forever: **For by one offering he (Jesus) has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.** (Hebrews 10:14) This verse shows the duality of our sanctification: Legally, our sanctification is done. Jesus has perfected every believer forever by his one

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offering on the cross. At the same time, our partaking of this obtained sanctification is progressive. We are being sanctified daily.

This means that when we pray for a particular area of our life to be sanctified, we stand on the full and final sanctification that Jesus has purchased for us on the cross. We do not pray as if we needed to obtain it. We pray as if it were ours already - because it is! We only need to take a hold of it. You can pray like this, "Jesus, I thank you that you have already obtained my total sanctification. I take it now to overcome my selfishness/worldliness/pride/lust/greed/gluttony/lying/masturbation/porn addiction etc. I receive my victory now. Thank you, Lord."

Pray in faith, and you will receive it because you have prayed according to the will of God: **But let him ask in faith, with no doubting**, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:6-8); Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:24-25)

4. From Shame & Guilt to Glory

Jesus suffered and endured shame so that we might share his glory: ... looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him **endured the cross, despising the shame**, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2); For it was fitting for him (God), for whom are all things and by whom are all things, **in bringing many sons to glory**, to perfect the originator of their salvation (Jesus) **through sufferings**. (Hebrews 2:10, NASB)

Jesus endured ultimate shame on the cross. Not only was he publicly made a curse, but he was stripped of everything he had including his clothes. Some scholars expound that Jesus was completely naked when he hung on the cross. Whether that is correct or not, Jesus was stripped of everything that pertains to the basic dignity of a human being. He was also so bruised that he did not look like a human being anymore.

Then they crucified him (Jesus) and divided his garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. (Matthew 27:35, NKJV); Many were horrified at what happened to him. But everyone who saw him was even more horrified because he suffered until he no longer looked human. (Isaiah 52:14, CEV)

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One of the deepest wounds human beings can have is guilt for what they did themselves or shame for what others did to them. Shame and guilt lock us into an internal prison because they prevent us from bringing things to the light so they can be healed. Shame will prevent us from confessing our sins to God. Even though **there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus** (Romans 8:1, NIV), we run away in shame as Adam did in the garden. Instead of running to God, who is the only one who can help us get rid of our sin and the resulting shame and guilt. Shame also keeps us from confessing our sins to one another. **Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed** (James 5:16).

Satan's strategy is to keep things in the dark because only what is exposed to the light can be redeemed. This is a trap. **He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.** (Proverbs 28:13); **We have renounced the things hidden because of shame**, not walking in trickery nor distorting the word of God, but by the open proclamation of the truth commending ourselves to every person's conscience in the sight of God. (2 Corinthians 4:2)

Jesus not only carried shame on our behalf. His blood sprinkles our hearts clean from an evil conscience of guilt: **Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let's approach God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.** (Hebrews 19:19-22)

Jesus forgives and removes our sins the second we genuinely repent. However, our conscience can still be tormented with guilt. The blood of Jesus also avails to cleanse us from an evil, tormenting conscience of past guilt. When the Holy Spirit brings the blood into effect on our conscience, we can receive peace and joy. Our past sins will be to us as waters that have flown away. They cannot torment us any longer. **Then, indeed, you could lift up your face without moral blemish**, and you would be firmly established and not fear. **For you would forget your trouble. Like waters that have passed by, you would remember it.** (Job 11:15-16, NASB)

Jesus makes us forget our shame. **They will forget their shame** and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid. (Ezekiel 39:26, NIV); Fear not, for **you will not be put to shame.** And **do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced.** But **you will forget the shame of your youth** and no longer remember the disgrace of your widowhood. (Isaiah 54:4, NASB).

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And Jesus goes even further than that! He turns our shame into joy, praise, fame, and a double portion (anointing):

Behold, I am going to deal at that time with all your oppressors. I will save those who limp and gather the scattered. **And I will turn their shame into praise and fame in all the earth.** (Zephaniah 3:19); **Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation, they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore, they will possess a double portion in their land. Everlasting joy will be theirs.** (Isaiah 61:7)

5. From Rejection to Acceptance

One of the deepest wounds a soul can have is rejection. When we reject someone, we deny this person the unconditional agape love of God and alienate him or her. Rejection makes a person feel inferior, unworthy, and unloved. Often this leads to an inability to express love on the side of the person who has experienced rejection. Rejection often leads to the fear of being rejected again in the future. The fear of rejection and the fear of man are tightly knit together. We fear men and what they can or will do to us because we do not want to experience rejection. Trying to avoid rejection often causes us to walk in the fear of man rather than the fear of God. Pleasing men is a sin. It is impossible to please God if we try to please people. It is also not genuine and never works. **Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.** (Galatians 1:10, NIV)

Jesus lived the ultimate rejection of the Father when he became sin on the cross. Because God cannot fellowship with sin, never did and never will, the Father withdrew his fellowship from the Son. Jesus had never been separated from his father. Jesus only said what the Father was saying, and he only did what the Father was doing (John 12:49; John 5:19). They were one. This was not possible anymore when he took the sin of mankind on himself.

Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, **there was darkness over all the land.** And about the ninth hour, **Jesus cried out with a loud voice,** saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" That is, **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ... And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.** Then, behold, **the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom;** and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split. (Matthew 27:45-46; 50-51)

The veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom - from heaven to earth. This physical

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veil separated the Holy Place, which the priests entered daily, from the Holy of Holies (Exodus 26:33). Only the high priest was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place once a year to bring specific offerings for Israel's sins. Entry into the Holy of Holies was allowed only for a ritually pure high priest. He had to bathe in water and wear special garments. That means that our life as ministers must clean. The high priest also had to kill a bull as a sin offering to make atonement for himself and his house before he could offer sacrifices for Israel. The day the high priest entered the Most Holy Place through the curtain was called the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:2; 12; 15), also known as Yom Kippur. Any other person who dared enter the Holy of Holies was put to death.

Then, the high priest had to kill a goat for the sins of the people. He sprinkled some of the blood on and in front of the Mercy Seat which was seen as the throne of God. Now Jesus was and is our great high priest not according to the law given to Moses (he was not a Levite) but after the order of Melchizedek. Jesus entered the Most Holy Place to bring one offering for sins that would perfect all saints at all ages forever. He gained access and opened the way for us. We are now a kingdom of priests - adopted as sons and accepted by the beloved, yes even accepted into the Most Holy Place, the presence and mercy of God.

God the Father has **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.** (Ephesians 1:5-6, NKJV) The Mercy Seat was seen as the throne of God. That is why Hebrews 4:16 states: **Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**

Jesus did not only endure the physical effects of crucifixion. His heart broke because he could not bear the rejection of the Father. It was not his physical heart that melted on the cross (Psalm 22:14). The spiritual separation from the Father made his heart turn to wax. Jesus could not bear the wrath the Father poured on him (Ezekiel 21:31). Immediately after his desperate realization and cry, Jesus gave up his spirit. When he died, he had paid for our rejection in full. The veil of the temple tore in two. We are accepted in the beloved, adopted as spiritual sons, and have free access to the heavenly Mercy Seat.

6. From Religion to Truth

And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable

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things such as silver or gold, but **with the precious blood of Christ**, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. (1 Peter 1:17-19)

The blood of Jesus has ransomed us from the futile ways inherited from our forefathers. Collins Dictionary defines the verb 'to ransom' as 'to obtain the release of a captive by paying the demanded price'. Jesus not only paid the price for the forgiveness of our sins, he also freed us from the false beliefs our forefathers may have held.

It is not disrespectful to our parents if we follow the truth God reveals to us. On the contrary. We must obey God rather than men⁵. If our parents adhered to a false religion such as Hinduism or Islam, we must come out of it. The same applies to departing from cults like the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Mormons. And even if our parents were genuine Christians but held singular false beliefs, we need to embrace the truth. That does not mean breaking the relationship with them. It does mean to separate from their false beliefs and to follow Jesus.

7. From Sickness to Healing

However, **it was our sicknesses that he (Jesus) himself bore, and our pains that he carried.** Yet we ourselves assumed that he (Jesus) had been afflicted, struck down by God and humiliated. But he was pierced for our offenses. He was crushed for our wrongdoings. The punishment for our well-being was laid upon him, and **by his (Jesus's) wounds we are healed.** (Isaiah 53:4-5, NASB)

On the cross, Jesus bore our sicknesses and carried our pains. He received brutal lashes with a Roman whip that ripped open his body. His blood flowed out of the wounds and spilled to the ground. The consequence is that by his wounds we have been healed. Jesus purchased our healing 2,000 years ago. It is past tense. Our appropriation of it is today.

Matthew quotes **Isaiah 53:4-5** when he confirms that Jesus fulfilled this Messianic prophecy - even before the cross (**Matthew 8:16-17**): **When evening had come, they brought to him (Jesus) many who were demon-possessed. And he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He (Jesus) himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses."** The Greek word for "healed" here is "therapeuo" (STRONGS G2323). It means to relieve disease, cure, and heal. **1 Peter 2:24** also refers back to Isaiah's prophecy.

5) But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge." (Acts 4:10)

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He himself (Jesus) bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - **by whose stripes you were healed.** The Greek word for "healed" here is "iaomai" (STRONGS G2390). It means to cure, heal, and make whole.

Healing did not end when Jesus died on the cross and rose again. Rather, Jesus predicted in John 14:12 (NET), **"I tell you the solemn truth: The person who believes in me will perform the miraculous deeds that I am doing."** Gifts of healing are one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12:9. The early church continued to move in the same healings Jesus performed. **At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people ... they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any of them. The people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together as well, bringing people who were sick or tormented with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.** (Acts 5:12; Acts 5:15-16)

Forgiveness of sins and healing are prophesied in the same verse (Isaiah 53:5). We must either accept or deny them both. The healing of all physical and mental diseases is part of what Jesus purchased for us on the cross. He paid for it by one of the most savage punishments the Roman Empire inflicted: scourging with the flagrum or the scorpion. **By his stripes we are healed.** (Isaiah 53:5)

8. From Curse to Blessing

Jesus was publicly made a curse on the cross because anyone who hangs on a tree becomes a curse (Deuteronomy 21:22-23). Every Jew knew that hanging on a tree was synonymous to being cursed. Jesus was made a curse for us so that we might receive the blessing of Abraham. **Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us** (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), **that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.** (Galatians 3:13-14)

What is the blessing of Abraham according to Galatians 3:14? It is the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith. What is that promise of the Holy Spirit? It is the promise God gave through the prophet Joel, namely that God would pour his spirit, the Holy Spirit, on all flesh: **I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. ... And also on my menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out my spirit in those days.** (Joel 2:28-29, NKJV) One consequence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is that men and women prophecy. Prophecy is a spoken utterance in the church for the edification of the church. **He who prophesies edifies the church.** (1

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Corinthians 14:4)

John the Baptist announced Jesus as the baptizer with the Holy Spirit and fire: "As for me, I baptize you with water; but one is coming who is mightier than I He (Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16) Jesus commanded his disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit: "**I am going to send you what my Father has promised.** But stay in the city until you have been clothed with power⁶ from on high." (Luke 24:49); "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for **the gift my Father promised**, which you have heard me speak about." (Acts 1:4)

That promise of the Holy Spirit first came on the men and women in the upper room at Pentecost. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:4) Peter makes it clear that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for all believers at all times in the future: "... you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.**" (Acts 2:38+39)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit has many vital functions in the believer. One of them is power for ministry: "**But you will receive power⁷ when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**" (Acts 1:8) The Greek word for power here is *dunamis* (STRONGS G1411). It means miraculous power, usually by implication a miracle itself, ability, abundance, meaning, might, mighty deed, worker of miracles, power, strength, violence, and mighty wonderful work.

The New Covenant is the covenant of the Holy Spirit. It is the covenant of the outpouring, indwelling, and ministry of the Holy Spirit. The anointing could be on saints under the Old Covenant, but the Holy Spirit could not live in them permanently. That only became possible when Jesus died for our sins. His death purchased the promise and the reality of the Holy Spirit for us: **He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.** (2 Corinthians 3:6, NIV); But I tell you the truth: **It is to your advantage that I am leaving. For if I do not leave, the helper (the Holy Spirit) will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you.** (John 16:7, NASB)

6) power = *dunamis* (STRONGS G1411): **miraculous power**, usually by implication **a miracle itself**, ability, abundance, meaning, might, mighty deed, worker of miracles, power, strength, violence, mighty wonderful work

7) power = *dunamis* (STRONGS G1411)

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God blessed Abraham in everything (Genesis 24:1; Genesis 12:2), foreshadowing the New Covenant. Jesus has purchased every spiritual blessing for us on the cross. **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.** (Ephesians 1:3-4) Just as the Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, he also blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. The Holy Spirit brings these blessings into effect in our lives. It is the anointing of the indwelling Holy Spirit that breaks the yoke (Isaiah 10:27) and brings life (John 6:63).

For a list of blessings, read Deuteronomy 28:1-14. For a list of curses, read Deuteronomy 28:15-68. Use this chapter to assess whether you are living under blessings or curses.

9. From Poverty to Abundance

Some people picture Jesus as a poor man, but the Bible states the opposite in 2 Corinthians 8:9. It says that Jesus was rich. However, he became poor for our sake on the cross, so that we may become rich. **For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.** (2 Corinthians 8:9)

To understand what being or becoming rich means, we need to examine the Scriptures. The Bible explains the Bible. Bible prosperity is not a life of indulgent luxury, but a life where all our needs are met and we have an overflow to give to those in need. That is exactly what we see during the three years of Jesus's ministry. Jesus always had all sufficiency in everything. On top of that, he had an abundance for every good deed, such as feeding the 4,000 and the 5,000 (plus the women and children) in the desert. When we look at the Scriptures, the same principle comes up again and again. God wants all our personal needs met, and he gives us an overflow to give to others:

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed. (2 Corinthians 9:8); Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be **enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion**, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. (2 Corinthians 9:10+11)

He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

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(Ephesians 4:28); But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and **not be in any need.** (1 Thessalonians 4:10-12)

The New Testament defines prosperity as having no lack of anything and money left over to give to others. Jesus had nothing left on the cross. He saw the Roman soldiers divide his possessions before he died. Another divine exchange took place: Jesus exhausted the poverty curse of **Deuteronomy 28:47-48** (hunger, thirst, nakedness, and dire poverty) so that we may have an abundance of all things and enough to give generously to others.

The Day of Atonement Fulfilled

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.** (Hebrews 9:22, NIV); **As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.** (Psalm 103:12)

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is the highest holy day of the Jewish people. **Leviticus chapter 16** details the instructions for the Day of Atonement⁸. Atonement had to be made once a year for the sins of the Israelites. Once atonement had been made, the Israelites were considered clean from all their sins (**Leviticus 16:30**).

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest Aaron had to come into the Holy Place with a bull and two male goats. Aaron had to kill the bull as a sin offering - make atonement - for himself and his house first. He then had to kill one goat as a sin offering for the people, take some of its blood, go into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle it over and in front of the Mercy Seat. This was to make atonement for the sins of the people of Israel.

He presented the other goat to the Lord alive and sent it into the wilderness. This second goat did not purchase the forgiveness of sins because there was no shedding of blood. Aaron had to **lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites - all their sins - and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness ... The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place.** (**Leviticus 16:21-22**) The sins of Israel were symbolically transferred to the second goat and carried away into the wilderness. The sin goat (with the sins of Israel) was never to return. It had the function of symbolically removing the

8) Atonement means reparation for an offense or injury. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

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sins of the Israelites.

The first and the second goat foreshadowed what Jesus accomplished on the cross. He fulfilled the Day of Atonement perfectly. He fulfilled the function of the first goat because he was the offering physically slaughtered on the cross. His blood was spiritually sprinkled over and before the Mercy Seat when the physical veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. He also fulfilled the function of the second goat. As John the Baptist announced, Jesus takes away our sins as if he sent them into the wilderness never to return. **Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)** We see both the forgiveness and the cleansing/removing of our sins again in **1 John 1:9. If we confess our sins, he (Jesus) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

However, **it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Hebrews 10:4)** What an intricate system of offerings under the Old Covenant could not achieve, Jesus accomplished on the cross. He voluntarily went through unsurpassed suffering to pay the penalty for our sins. His suffering on the cross inaugurated the New Covenant under which we live today. We can be forgiven, cleansed, and set free from all our sins. May we always be aware of the severity of sin and the immense love of God proven by the price Jesus paid to redeem us. Tetelestai. All glory to God.

All glory to Jesus.

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Appendix I Jesus was Scourged: The Roman Flagrum⁹

“But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought our peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5)

The Gospel writers didn't give much description to Jesus' scourging. A depiction was unnecessary because, throughout the Roman Empire, people understood the severity of this beating. Isaiah 52:14 suggests that the Romans beat Jesus so brutally that people were appalled to look at Him. His form did not look like that of a “son of man,” or human. A very literal translation reads, “So marred from the form of man was His aspect, that His appearance was not as that of a son of a man.” This might also explain why Jesus was not easily recognizable after His resurrection.

Jesus not only died for our sins but He suffered to save us. His love is so powerful that he endured not only death on the cross, not only a crown of thorns, but also one of the most savage punishments given by the Roman government. The purpose of the Roman flagrum was to beat a person to the point of death. It literally pulled the flesh from the body.

The Roman scourge, also called the “flagrum” or “flagellum” was a short whip made of three or more leather straps connected to a handle. From this word, we get our English word “fillet,” referring to a strip of boneless flesh or a slice of meat, which is a good description of what this weapon would do to a human body.

The leather straps were knotted with a weight at the end and embedded with metal, nails, and bone shards. Sharp fragments from the knucklebone of a sheep were often used. The flagrum would sometimes contain a hook at the end and was given the terrifying name “scorpion.” Scourging would quickly remove the flesh, leaving skin hanging like ribbons, and would expose a bloody mass of muscle and bone, sometimes even exposing the internal organs.

The fragrum was a powerful weapon of torture and a brutal punishment carried out by professionally trained soldiers where the victim would be stripped naked, tied or shackled to a sturdy column or between two columns. Two soldiers, one standing on each side, would alternate hits, beating the victim continuously. According to Jewish law, you could

9) Article copied verbatim from ThreeThirty Ministries.

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not beat someone more than 40 times, so the Jews always stopped at 39 lest they miscount and accidentally sin against God. The Romans, however, had no such law. This punishment was not so much about the number of lashes as it was about beating the person within “a step” of death and then backing off.

Concerning the Romans flagrum, the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea recounts in vivid, horrible detail a scene of scourging. He says, “For they say that the bystanders were struck with amazement when they saw them lacerated with scourges even to the innermost veins and arteries, so that the hidden inward parts of the body, both their bowels and their members, were exposed to view” (Ecclesiastical History, Book 4, chapter 15).

The ends of the flagrum were short which gave the soldiers more control over the cuts. Long ends would risk the chance of severing the arteries in the neck and rendering a quick death. The purpose of this torture was to prolong suffering. Sometimes, if they intended for the person to die, they would first dip the scourge in goat blood to cause infection to create a slow and painful death. The point was to beat a person and leave them alive, although historians wrote that sometimes those who were sentenced with this punishment did die. The victims were left to live the rest of their lives scared and disfigured and would be a walking billboard saying, “Don’t mess with the Romans. If you defy the Romans, this is what they do to you.”

Roman soldiers were trained to begin with the upper torso. They would beat down the back, down the chest, up the back of the legs above the knees and up the arms. Sometimes more than one kind of whip was used on the legs and arms but the flagrum beat the body. The weighted ends of this weapon would tenderize muscle and would strike with a concussive force that could bruise internal organs. Against the chest, especially with the arms raised, this beating could cause a contusion of the heart, sometimes predisposing the heart to rupture if the beating was followed by crucifixion.

Blood loss during a scourging was severe. Sometimes the victim lost consciousness from extreme blood loss, and although the soldiers aimed their cuts, archaeologists have found the remains of scourge victims who had ends hit them both in the face and on top of the skull. Josephus, a first century historian, noted that certain rebellious Jews were torn to pieces by the scourge before being crucified.

Jesus’ beating was so severe that He was unable to carry His cross. By the time Jesus was on His way to Golgotha, He would have been suffering from both blood loss and shock. His breathing was probably labored. His blood pressure would have dropped and His

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body was most likely shaking and trembling. His skin dangled like ribbons from His body. No wonder the women cried for Him.

He was also dehydrated, which is a by-product of severe blood loss. His tongue was probably beginning to swell as His body suffered from extreme trauma and exhaustion.

Jesus endured this torture. His blood was truly “poured” out for us as He was scourged. “He Himself brought our sins in His body up on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; by His wounds you were healed” (1 Peter 2:24).

This Easter let us not just remember that Jesus died for us but that He suffered for us. He bore in His body the full penalty for our sin, and the wrath of God was poured out on Him for us. He bore our sorrows and the punishment of our guilt fell on Him. He suffered spiritual death and separation from His Father. He became sin, as 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

May we never take for granted the sacrifice God gave to save us. And this Easter may we understand with fresh significance the two greatest words of all: Jesus Lives!

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Appendix 2 The Unsurpassed Suffering of Jesus on the Cross¹⁰

Jesus didn't just die for us. He experienced unsurpassed suffering and excruciating pain to save us. The Bible says: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death." Psalm 22:14-15

Jesus' physical pain is described as being "poured out like water." This is a reference to his complete exhaustion and the fullness of his sufferings. Like water being poured out and absorbed into the ground, there is nothing left. Nothing is held back. It is completely gone.

Having been scourged Jesus would have suffered from hypovolemia as the result of blood loss and probably shock as well. Roman scourgings were brutal, intended to beat a person to the door of death and back off. Hypovolemia, which is very similar to shock, happens when there isn't enough blood to fill the circulatory system. To compensate the body will constrict blood vessels, increase the heart rate and move blood away from the outer parts of the body to conserve blood flow to the vital organs. This can cause a paleness as blood moves away from the skin. Blood pressure drops and a person can experience sweating, fatigue, light-headedness and dehydration. As blood moves away from the extremities (the hands and feet), the body temperature drops because oxygen is not being fully delivered to all the tissues. As a result a person's body will shiver as a way of trying to stimulate more heat.

After Jesus was laid on the cross and nailed into position, the cross would have been raised. The jolt of the cross dropping into a hole would often dislocate joints and if it didn't, the strain of pulling the body weight up on the nails within minutes would have dislocated the wrists, the elbows and the shoulders. As the Psalmist wrote, "all my bones are out of joint" (Psalm 22:14).

The Psalmist continued by saying, "My heart is turned to wax." This phrase mostly likely doesn't refer to physical suffering but to His spiritual suffering. His physical heart did not melt but God poured out His wrath on Him. Ezekiel 21:31 speaks of God's wrath in this way: "I will pour out my indignation on you. I will blow on you with the fire of my wrath." This melting was the result of the intense wrath of God being poured out on His own

10) Article copied verbatim from ThreeThirty Ministries.

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Son as a substitute for us.

At this point on the cross, physically Jesus's heart would have been racing. Being stretched out on the cross with His arms stretched up and out caused the intercostal and pectoral muscles to be stretched. This would put pressure on muscles used for breathing, fixing the rib cage in a position that hindered the crucifixion victim from fully exhaling. Try this experiment: Stand up, take a deep breath and hold it for a second. Exhale and feel how your rib cage relaxes downward. This allows you to exhale out the carbon dioxide and to take in more oxygen. On the cross, however, the body position makes it extremely difficult to exhale and impossible to take in a full breath. Pulling up on the nails in the hands and pushing down on the nail in the feet allowed the lungs more room to inhale and exhale but breathing on the cross would have still been shallow. This may explain why Jesus made very short statements from the cross.

Without being able to fully exhale, carbon dioxide would begin to build up in the body. Breathing would become increasingly more difficult as time passed, causing a slow form of suffocation (asphyxiation) by hypoxia. The tissues in the body would not be receiving an adequate supply of oxygen. The lungs wouldn't be able to take in a full breath. In addition, the lungs would begin to fill with fluid, a condition called pulmonary edema. Although pulmonary edema can be caused by trauma and injury, the most common cause is heart failure, when the heart simply can't keep up with the demands of the body.

The victim's muscles, from loss of blood and lack of oxygen, would have undergone severe cramping and spasmodic contractions. The body would begin to experience acidosis, the build up of too many acids in the tissues and body fluids. The lack of oxygen would have also caused rapid breathing and even more stress on the heart as the body would try to pump blood faster to distribute more oxygen. This condition would have caused nausea, vomiting, headaches and dizziness. All of this describes the vicious cycle of the body as it slowly suffocates, which would often result in heart failure.

Often when the Romans crucified victims, especially if they wanted to prolong the suffering, they would attach a sedulum to the cross. The sedulum was a piece of wood that would act like a seat on which the victim could rest the weight of his body. With the arms stretched up and out, as shortness of breath increased, the victim could shift his body off of the sedulum to place all the weight on the feet. Pushing against the nail would help the breathing but eventually as the pain became unbearable in the legs and feet, the victim would slump his weight back onto the sedulum, pulling on his wrists and stretching the chest muscles. Pulling up on the nails would help the breathing but also cause

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excruciating pain by pulling on dislocated joints with your entire body weight supported by the nails. Eventually the victim would become exhausted. The arms would become paralyzed from the strain and being exhausted or slipping into unconsciousness, he would not be able to lift his body off the sedulum. In this position the respiration muscles essentially paralyzed and the victim would suffocate and die. (DePasquale, N. P. and G. E. Burch. 1963. "[Death by Crucifixion](#)." American Heart Journal 66: 434.)

The Psalmist continued, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd." This is yet another expression of the complete exhaustion of our Savior. He is compared to a broken piece of earthenware that has been baked in the sun for too long. It's all dried up.

"And my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth." Jesus is not just thirsty because He hasn't had anything to drink. The conditions described above would have completely dehydrated Him. His mouth is dry and His tongue is most likely swollen as His body would have reduced saliva production to try to conserve fluid. This kind of thirst is so powerful that the Psalmist describes death here in terms of dust: "...you lay me in the dust of death."

Overall, the unsurpassed suffering of Jesus on the cross was the price that had to be paid to save us. Jesus didn't just die for us. He suffered for us. He carried the full weight of our sin. He bore our punishment. He paid the debt of our death but He didn't stay dead. Three days later He rose from the dead and by His death and resurrection, only He can save us from our sin and give us the life that we were created to have.