

It Is Finished
John 19:17-42
August 25th, 2026

1. He was _____. (19:17-22)
2. Scripture was _____. (19:23-30)
3. His death was _____. (19:31-37)
4. His body was _____. (19:38-42)
5. Applying the Word (Romans 5:8-11)
 - a. God demonstrated His own _____ for us. (Rom. 5:8)
 - b. Jesus died for us while we were yet _____. (Rom. 5:8)
 - c. We have been _____ by His blood. (Rom. 5:9)
 - d. We have been _____ to God. (Rom. 5:10-11)

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on John 19:17-42

1. What was it that made crucifixion a particularly horrific way to execute people?
2. Why did the chief priests object to the language written by Pilate on the cross? (v. 21) Given the previous interactions, why do you think Pilate refused to change it?
3. What are the different ways that John points to the fulfillment of scripture in this section? (see 19:24, 28, 36-37)
4. What do we learn about Jesus from how he cares for his mother from the cross (19:25-27)? Why does Jesus do this?
5. When Jesus says, "It is finished!" what is He referring to? **What** is finished? What is the relevance for us that it is finished? What are some ways that Christians might forget that "it is finished" and live as if it is not really finished?
6. Read Psalm 22, a psalm that prophesies the suffering of the Messiah. What key connections and fulfillments do you see between Psalm 22 and John's account of Jesus' crucifixion?
7. Review Romans 5:8-11. What was accomplished by the death of Jesus?

Note: Some questions are partially adapted from *Knowing the Bible: John* by Crossway

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Big idea: Jesus' brutal death on the cross fulfilled scripture and completed satisfied our sin debt.

Intro

Some moments we spend months or years preparing for before they finally arrive, and yet when they day comes it still carries with it a deep emotional weight – maybe even more so because we have been preparing for it and anticipating it for so long.

You spent weeks getting ready for the first day back at school, and then the alarm rings on the first day to wake you up.

You spent months preparing for your wedding day, and then you're standing at the end of the aisle.

You spent 18 years preparing to launch your child out into the world, and then they have the nerve to actually go.

John has been preparing us for the death of Jesus for 19 chapters.

1:11 He came to his own and they did not receive him

1:29 behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world

2:19 – destroy this temple, and I will raise it up – speaking of his body

5:18 They began seeking to kill Him for healing on the sabbath and calling God His father

7:1 He went to a different region because they were seeking to kill him

7:33 for a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me

8:20 no one seized him because His hour had not yet come

8:59 they picked up stones to throw at him, but he hid himself and went out of the temple

10:11 I am the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep

The preparation for this moment precedes the gospel of John though.

Genesis prepared the way by stories like Abraham and Isaac, and the ram who died as a substitute.

Exodus prepared us for a Passover lamb who would die in place of the first born.

Leviticus described the detailed sacrificial system before a holy God

Isaiah described the suffering servant who would die like a lamb

Zechariah predicted a Messiah who would be pierced

Psalms put the words in his mouth – My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

And now it is here.

Erwin Lutzer, "The cross is the hinge on which the door of history swings; it is the hub that holds the spokes of God's purposes together."

This passage describes the facts, the narrative of the crucifixion of Jesus.

1. He was **crucified** (19:17-22)

a. He carried His own cross (v. 17)

- i. Plutarch, a Roman philosopher around the time of Jesus, wrote that each criminal as part of his punishment carries his cross on his back.
 - ii. It was the cross-member, the horizontal bar.
 - iii. The heavy weight would have been agonizing on a back and shoulders already whipped and bloody.
 - iv. The journey from the point of condemnation to the point of crucifixion was public so onlookers could watch the condemned men walk to their death.
 - v. Isaac carrying the wood for his own interrupted sacrifice might have been a foreshadow of this.
- b. They went to the Place of a Skull, maybe named because it resembled a skull or simply because it was a common place for executions.
 - i. The Latin word is calvaria, which is where we get our word Calvary.
- c. The language in v. 18 is brief – they crucified Him.
 - i. What was that process?
 - ii. He carried the cross beam to the location. The vertical piece was already set in the ground.
 - iii. Carson, “The victim was then made to lie on his back on the ground, where his arms were stretched out and either tied or nailed to the patibulum. The cross-member was then hoisted up, along with the victim, and fastened to the vertical beam. The victim’s feet were tied or nailed to the upright... It was so brutal no roman citizen could be crucified without the sanction of the emperor. Stripped naked and beaten to pulpy weakness, the victim could hang in the hot sun for hours, even days. To breathe, it was necessary to push with the legs and pull with the arms to keep the chest cavity open and functioning. Terrible muscle spasm wracked the entire body; but since collapse meant asphyxiation, the strain went on and on.”
 - iv. But notice that the sparse detail focuses not on the physical pain and misery and gruesome nature of crucifixion, but on what it accomplished and how it fulfilled prophecy.
 - v. But it is still necessary for us removed by 20 centuries from crucifixion to accurately understand what happened.
- d. A criminals crimes were listed on the cross, so Jesus was listed as the King of the Jews.
 - i. Three languages reflects the make up of the people – Hebrew/Aramaic was the language of the common people/Jews in Judea, Latin was the official language, Greek was the common language of communication for the whole empire.
 - ii. The protested but Pilate stuck with it, maybe an act of revenge or frustration for how they pushed him.
 - iii. Unwittingly communicating truth.

2. Scripture was **fulfilled** (19:23-30)

- a. The Roman soldiers carrying out the execution had a right to his clothing by custom.
 - i. His sandals, turban, belt, and robe could have been handed out but they gambled for his tunic to avoid cutting it.
 - ii. They did not know they were fulfilling scripture, but they fulfilled Psalm 22:18.

- iii. Some say, well they just did this because the prophecy said they should. They were intentionally fulfilling it so that isn't really fulfillment.
 - 1. RC Sproul: John does not say that the Roman soldiers got together and said, "We should gamble for His garments because it says in the Jewish Scriptures that someone is going to cast lots for His clothes and we want to make sure that the Scriptures are fulfilled down to the last detail." No, this is John's editorial comment, pointing out that the soldiers, when they went through this act of gambling for the garments of the Christ, unknowingly and involuntarily were fulfilling the precise details of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the death of the Messiah. John is zealous to help his reader understand that what happened on the cross was not an accident of history, but it came to pass through the invisible hand of a sovereign Providence. (John, 367)
- iv. Likewise with the stabbing rather than breaking bones in vv. 36-37
- b. He cared for His mother even in suffering. (vv. 25ff)
 - i. We have a tendency in suffering to do the opposite, to pull inward. It's understandable but it isn't the example of Jesus and it isn't actually best for us.
- c. Knowing that all things had been accomplished (v. 28)
 - i. He had obeyed, suffered, fulfilled scripture
 - ii. His thirst reflected His true humanity in this moment.
- d. It is finished!
 - i. What was finished?
 - 1. Not "I am finished" but "IT is finished."
 - 2. The word that He uses is *tetelestai* and it means to accomplish something, complete something, bring it to an end.
 - 3. A servant who completed a task, an artist who finished a painting, a merchant who paid off a debt
 - ii. God's law was fulfilled in His perfect life culminating in a perfect, costly obedience to the cross.
 - 1. Philippians 2 – obedient to the point of death
 - 2. The cup of God's wrath was drained, completely satisfied in Jesus' own sacrifice.
 - iii. Jesus said in the garden as He prayed in anticipation of the cross –
 - 1. **Matthew 26:39** And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."
 - 2. Imagine a pitcher of water in my hand, pouring, pouring, pouring – until it was completely empty. And then I held it over your head – would you fear getting wet? No, the pitcher is empty. There is nothing left to douse you with.
 - 3. Christian, so it is with the anger of God towards you because of your sin.
 - 4. There is nothing left for you if Jesus took the wrath that should be poured out on you.
 - iv. That's why Romans 8:1 can say there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

1. HB Charles put it this way – When you trust the blood and righteousness of Christ, “tetelestai” is stamped over every sin in your life.

- a. Abortion. Paid in full!
- b. Adultery. Paid in full!
- c. Bribery. Paid it full!
- d. Disobedience. Paid in full!
- e. Unjustified divorce. Paid in full!
- f. Embezzlement. Paid in full!
- g. Sex outside of marriage. Paid in full!
- h. Murder. Paid in full!
- i. Pride. Paid in full!

2. If I left your sin out, add it to the list. Then write “tetelestai” over it. It is paid in full by the finished work of Christ.

v. The message of the cross is not “do...do...do” but it is “done.” Finished.

- 1. In Matthew 1:21 at the beginning of Jesus’ earthly life, Mary was told by the angel to name her son Jesus, because he will save His people from their sins.
- 2. He was born to die. He died to save. Mission accomplished. It is finished.

e. He bowed His head and gave up His spirit – He died.

i. And that death was confirmed.

3. His death was **confirmed** (19:31-37)

- a. It was the day of preparation – preparation for the Sabbath – Friday – and they didn’t want those bodies up there on the Sabbath, especially a Sabbath associated with the Passover (a high day).
 - i. Again we see religious piety – we can’t desecrate the Sabbath day! – even while unjustly killing an innocent man.
 - 1. But even more, killing the very Son of God, their Messiah-King who came to His own but His own did not receive Him.
- b. Breaking the legs would hasten death through the trauma, loss of blood, but even more through asphyxiation because the person would no longer be able to lift themselves up to breath.
- c. But Jesus was already dead.
 - i. These were professional executioners. They knew their job. They were acquainted with death.
 - ii. They confirmed it by stabbing him side with a spear. The blood and water that came out confirmed He was already dead.
 - iii. Different medical explanations suggested – chest trauma traps fluid around the lungs, etc.
 - iv. The point is that it confirmed He was really dead. He didn’t squirm when they stabbed Him. He was gone.
- d. Even this fulfilled scripture.
 - i. Exodus 12:46 about the Passover lamb, possibly psalm 34:20

ii. Zech. 12:10 about the Messiah king, pierced by the nation of Israel.

4. His body was **buried** (19:38-42)

a. More historical details to confirm the reality that He was really dead and they know where they buried Him.

i. Why was this necessary?

ii. Then as now people might say,

1. “Maybe He didn’t really die. He just passed out.”

2. “Maybe they went to the wrong tomb and just thought it was empty.”

iii. John answers those questions in advance.

b. Joseph of Arimathea

i. Member of the Sanhedrin – mark 15:43

ii. Rich – matt 27:57

iii. Looking for the kingdom of God luke 23:51

iv. A secret disciple

1. There may be more true disciples of Jesus than we realize, they are just still young in the faith and ruled by fear, and yet true discipleship shows up eventually, like Joseph who identified Himself with Jesus in this moment at risk to himself.

c. Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night in John 3, now showing up again.

d. They wrapped him in about 100 pounds of spices to cover the decay – fragrant resin and powder – wrapping him in tight linen wrappings.

i. More evidence that he was really dead.

ii. Death has always been a certainty throughout history, but it was much more up close back then.

iii. They wrapped and buried their own dead with their own hands. It wasn’t handed over to professionals.

iv. They knew what a cold body beginning to grow stiff would feel like. They would have known if he was alive.

5. Applying the Word (Romans 5:8-11)

This is the “what.” Now we ask, “so what?”

a. God demonstrated His own **love** for us (Romans 5:8)

i. Romans 5:8 ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

b. Jesus died for us while we were yet **sinners**. (Romans 5:8)

c. We have been **justified** by His blood. (Romans 5:9)

d. We have been **reconciled** to God. (Romans 5:10-11)

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Romans 5:8-11

a. God demonstrated His own love for us.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

b. Jesus died for us while we were yet sinners. (Romans 5:8)

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

c. We have been justified by His blood.

Romans 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath *of God* through Him.

d. We have been **reconciled** to God.

Romans 5:10-11 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.