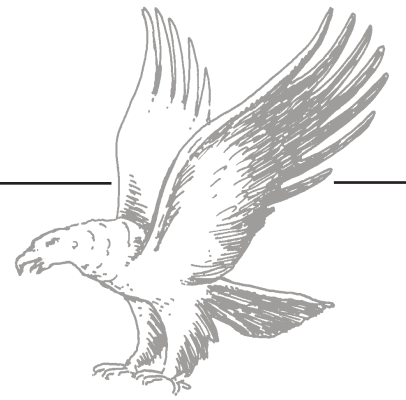


# Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."  
Isaiah 40:31*



March 12, 2017

## "It Is Finished"

The dying words of Jesus on the cross reveal, not a despair born of failure, but a satisfaction born of success. Where men saw shame and defeat, Jesus saw victory.

*"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (Jn. 19:30).*



Thus ended the most remarkable life any human has ever lived. Jesus' teachings, His character, His compassion for the downtrodden, His measured attacks on the hypocrisy of His day—all of this left an indelible mark on history, a legacy that billions still honor today. But at that moment, it all seemed to come to a gruesome end on a Roman cross. "It is finished" sounds like the anguished cry of a man who has tried and failed to reach an objective—like "it's over," or "I'm done for," or "this is it." His grand delusion was finished.

In fact, that's exactly what Jesus' death looked like to His disciples. "We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel" (Lk. 24:21). That hope was crushed by an execution so brutal, so thorough in its disgrace, that there was no possibility of recovery.

But when Jesus uttered those words in the moments before He died, He had

an entirely different perspective on what was happening. "It is finished" is a single Greek word (*tetelestai*), meaning "completed" or "accomplished." The word was often written on receipts to indicate that a bill had been paid in full. The Message Bible renders it, "It's done . . . complete." Jesus was not lamenting a life cut short too soon; He was celebrating a mission accomplished. Think of the mountain climber who takes on a difficult peak, and when he reaches the top shouts, "I did it!" In the same manner, Jesus knew He had fulfilled the task His Father had sent Him to perform. So in the moments before He died, He exclaimed, "It is finished! I did it!"

What was that mission that Jesus completed? First, He fulfilled the Mosaic Law. For the rest of us, the Old Law was a curse, a dead-weight that could only condemn, never save (Gal. 3:10-12; Rom. 3:20). The problem was not the character of the Law, but the character of the people trying to keep it. We all failed, and continue to fail. Jesus was the only human being who lived His entire life under the strict Law of God,

and kept it perfectly. And in doing so, He earned God's reward on His own merits, no grace required. That perfection rendered Him the perfect candidate as a sacrifice for others who had earned only God's wrath.

Second, Jesus fulfilled all the old prophecies concerning the coming of a Messiah who would bring a blessing upon all the earth. Mankind for ages had longed for a Savior, someone who would rescue us from our folly and usher in peace and tranquility. In His perfect life, vicarious death, and glorious resurrection, Jesus wrapped up all the loose ends of a divine plan that had been unfolding for ages.

Finally, Jesus paid the bill for humanity's sins. The path out of our long nightmare was opened, and we were given hope of a better life to come, a hope that we do not deserve and cannot earn.

Jesus' life may have been simple and His death gruesome, but there was nothing incomplete or disappointing in it. He finished what He set out to do, and we are the beneficiaries of His work.

— David King