

What is Atonement: It is Finished (John 19:30)

Jesus' crucifixion and death was in atonement for the sins of mankind. Atonement, what Jesus did to reconcile human beings with God has many aspects to it, and this lesson introduces you to one facet of the extent and depth of His work on the cross.

During His crucifixion, the last words of Jesus Christ were recorded, and only the apostle John records Jesus saying, "It is finished." "It is finished" is the translation of the Greek term "tetelestai."

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished (Greek: **tetelestai**)," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30, ESV)

While dying on the cross, what did Jesus finish? Was Jesus utterance of "tetelestai" referring to the work He accomplished in life, death or both?

1. What do you know about Jesus Christ? Why did Jesus come to earth?

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. (John 4:34, ESV)

For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:38-40, ESV)

2. John 17 is known as the High Priestly Prayer that occurs during the Last Supper and is Jesus' longest prayer recorded in the gospels. What do you observe of His accomplishments during His life? Breaking up the text into sections is a method that aids in observation.

1) When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, **2)** since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. **3)** And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. **4)** I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. **5)** And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

6) "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. **7)** Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. **8)** For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. **9)** I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. **10)** All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. **11)** And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

12) While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

13) But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. **14)** I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **15)** I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. **16)** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17)** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. **18)** As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. **19)** And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. **20)** “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, **21)** that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

22) The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, **23)** I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. **24)** Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. **25)** O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. **26)** I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

3. Grammatically, the Greek: “tetelestai” (“it is finished”), is the **perfect indicative mood** of the Greek verb “teleō,” which means “to bring to an end” or “to complete.”

The mood and tense of a verb indicates the attitude of the speaker and Jesus’ grammar reveals the following:

Perfect tense: the action was completed in the past with results continuing in the present. What work did Jesus finish that day in which the results are still in effect today?

Indicative mood: the act that took place or condition is an objective fact. What work did Jesus do that was historically true and real?

Furthermore, Jesus speaks in a passive voice, which indicates that He is receiving or subjected to an action without responding or initiating a response. What work did Jesus do in the passive sense?

Think about this grammatical structure and fill out this chart:

Jesus	Perfect Tense	Indicative Mood	Passive Voice?
Work in life	The New Testament endures today as the result of Jesus’ life on earth.	The New Testament is objective fact.	No, because Jesus was actively doing this work.
Work by death			

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Teacher Notes

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Encourage the student to mark up the text to enable good observation and comprehension. With His own words, Jesus reveals that He had a priority in doing His Father's work.

From his knowledge of Adam and Eve, the student should know that human beings have a natural tendency to disobey God's word and that the "wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). Sin is considered evil and God's judgment of it (sin of any kind) is death.

From the his knowledge of Jesus' crucifixion, the student should know that Jesus Christ died to pay the price for mankind's sin.

The priority of God's will was that His Son give His life as a ransom to pay the judicial penalty for sin and satisfy the wrath of His Father so that the children of Abraham will have eternal life. It is important to remind the student that the New Covenant is based on the Abrahamic Covenant.

2. John 17 is known as the High Priestly Prayer that occurs during the Last Supper and is Jesus' longest prayer recorded in the gospels. What do you observe of His accomplishments during His life? Breaking up the text into sections is a method that aids in observation.

1) When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, **2)** since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. **3)** And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. **4)** I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. **5)** And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

Encourage the student to keep in mind this technique of study as a possible method when studying the Bible.

1. Glorify God. The first accomplishment Jesus mentioned is glorifying God. Jesus wanted the world to know this quality of God that encompassed His greatness / authority and His moral perfection / beauty; it was a quality that human beings could recognize and respond in worship, praise, confess and petition.

The crucifixion would glorify Jesus, because Jesus' great goodness is demonstrated through His perfect obedience and unwavering passion to consummate atonement. God's all encompassing goodness demonstrates His glory for providing the means for His grace and forgiveness (John 17:1, 4-5).

6) "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. **7)** Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. **8)** For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. **9)** I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. **10)** All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. **11)** And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

Encourage the student to mark up the text – for example, circle key words. Encourage debate and exploration of this section of text.

2. Teach. Teach the eleven disciples who the one true God was so that they could have a relationship with Him. The Greek word for "know" describes an intimate personal relationship; eternal life is not simply an endless existence (John 17:3).

Teach the eleven disciples that He was sent by God and was the means for eternal life (John 17:2-3, 7-8). As Jesus was sent by God, the disciples were given to Him by God (John 17:2, 6, 9, 24).

Teach the eleven disciples the word of God (John 17:6-8). Jesus' life was the word of God and basis for the New Testament (John 1:1).

12) While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

3. Protect the early spiritual growth of the eleven disciples (John 17:12).

13) But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. **14)** I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **15)** I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. **16)** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17)** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. **18)** As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. **19)** And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. **20)** "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, **21)** that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

4. Sanctify and send all Believers out to the world to testify in the deity of Jesus and the means of eternal life (John 17:14-21).

Ask the student: what does "sanctify" mean? What sets you apart from non-Believers?

22) The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, **23)** I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. **24)** Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. **25)** O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. **26)** I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

5. Share God’s glory with Believers. God’s glory was God’s moral beauty and perfection of His character which was seen visibly in the life of Jesus Christ. This quality of God’s character is now shared by Jesus with Believers who are being transformed into God’s image (John 17:22-24).

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Completing his chart is to help the student deliberate and gain a deeper understanding of atonement and what Jesus meant by “it is finished.”

Work by death	The means for salvation is still available to all.	Jesus Christ did atone for the sins of human beings.	Yes. Jesus passively received God’s judgment for sin.
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Ask the student: what was the act that was completed in the past with results continuing in the present? The act was Jesus died paying the price for the sins of mankind and the result that continues in the present is that Jesus, the means of salvation, is still available for all.

Ask the student: what was act historically true and objective fact? Jesus was a historical figure and did die by crucifixion. His resurrection is recorded by the gospel writers and the course of their lives corroborates the reality of their testimony.

Ask the student: did Jesus passively receive some sort of action without responding or initiating a response? Yes. When Jesus died for the sins of mankind, He received the full judgment and wrath of His Father.

When Jesus speaks of "it is finished" at the very end of His life, He is referring to the work of atonement that is accomplished by His death. This is the whole point of Jesus Christ and the whole point of the New Covenant.