

If you were to picture in your mind the perfect king, you might picture a man sitting on a throne and wearing a golden crown on his head. You probably wouldn't picture a man on a cross. Today in John chapter 19 we see Jesus hanging on a cross with a sign above his head that says "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." And even though that is not what we would at first imagine the perfect king to look like today we see that

Jesus is the Perfect King

- I. He Fulfilled the Scripture
- II. He Finished His Mission

First, Jesus is the Perfect King. He Fulfilled the Scripture. Our passage says that **"Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS" (John 19:19)**. No matter what Pilate meant by this sign, it is the truth. Jesus is the King. In the Old Testament, God had promised to send a King to save his people. For example, Psalm 72 says, **"May he rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. For he will deliver the needy who cry out ... All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed" (Psalm 72:8, 12a, 17b)**. Nobody thought that when the king came he would look like this. But commentators point out that actually the Old Testament did predict that the coming King would suffer.¹ For example, Psalm 22 predicts with amazing detail the crucifixion of Christ. Jesus quotes the first verse of Psalm 22 on the cross **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1)**. And later in the Psalm it says, **"They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my garment" (Psalm 22:18)**. John tells us how that was fulfilled at the cross of Jesus. The soldiers took Jesus' clothes and divided them up among themselves. The long garment that he wore under his outer clothing was seamless. And so they said, **"Let's not tear it. Let's decide by lot who will get it."** This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled that said, **"They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."** (John 19:24) Jesus is the Perfect King. What happened to him fulfilled the Scripture.

But why did the coming King have to suffer? Well, ever since Adam and Eve fell into sin, we human beings die. And we can't save ourselves from it. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). We die and we can't save ourselves from it. But Jesus is the perfect King. He saved us from sin and death by taking our sin and death on himself. **"Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgatha). There they crucified him, and with him two others - one on each side, and Jesus in the middle" (John 19:17)**. Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross and everyone who believes in him has eternal life. Jesus is the Perfect King. He Fulfilled the Scripture. And, secondly, He finished his mission.

Now that Jesus' earthly life was drawing to a close, Jesus wanted to make sure that his mother was provided for. **"Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother'" (John 19:25-27a)**. Jesus here keeps the 4th commandment. **"Honor your father and mother."** Part of the 4th commandment is caring for your parents in their old age. Here Jesus makes sure that his mother will be provided for. He says to the apostle John, **"Here is your mother" (John 19:27a)**. **"And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home" (John 19:27)**.

¹ For example, D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) p. 575.

After narrating that wonderful thing that Jesus did for his mother, John goes on to narrate the end of Jesus' earthly life. He asked for a drink and then after he received the drink he said, **"It is finished" (John 19:30)**. What was finished? Certainly the Scriptures that spoke of Jesus' suffering were now fulfilled and complete. By saying, **"It is finished,"** Jesus was also saying that he had completed his mission. What was Jesus' mission? Well, towards the beginning of the Gospel of John, John the Baptist pointed at Jesus and said, **"Look, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)**. Jesus' mission was to make the sacrifice that takes away the sin of the world. And on the cross, Jesus accomplished that mission. When he wrote his first letter, the apostle John said, **"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 1:2)**.

Have you ever had a task that just never seems to be finished? Maybe it's the laundry or the dishes at home. Once you think you're done, there's always more to do. Well, if we had to atone for our own sins, it would be a never ending task. That's why it's a good thing that God did not give that task to us. God gave that task to Jesus. And Jesus completed that task on the cross.

Jesus has made atonement for all of your sins. Believe in what he has done. When a task is done, it's a great relief, isn't it? Trust in Jesus. Find relief and rest in his words, **"It is finished" (John 19:30)**.

The benefits of what Jesus has done, like forgiveness of sins and eternal life, are received by faith. And so God wants what Jesus has done to be proclaimed to all so that they can believe it and be saved. John emphasizes that many people read the sign that was on the cross. **"Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek" (John 19:20)**. That sign was well publicized. It was put in a place that was near the city and it was written in three different languages so that the maximum amount of people could read it. That reminds us that God wants what Jesus has done to be publicized far and wide so that more and more can believe it and be saved.

The chief priests and the teachers of the law did not want Jesus as their king. And so they went to Pilate and said, **"Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be King of the Jews" (John 19:21)**. Let's not reject Jesus as our King. Let's embrace him in faith. He is the perfect King. He made the sacrifice for all of our sins.

After Jesus said, **"It is finished" (John 19:30)**, it says **"he bowed his head and gave up his spirit" (John 19:30)**. This reminds us of the words that Luke records, **"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46)**. Jesus died trusting in his Father. He committed his spirit into God's hands. And when the time comes for us to die, we can also commit our spirit into our Father's hands. We can die trusting that because of what Jesus has done we will go to heaven and be raised from the dead on the last day, just like Jesus was raised Easter Sunday morning.

Jesus is the perfect King. He has fulfilled the Scripture and he has finished his mission. Trust in him and live in the peace of his words, **"It is finished."** Amen.