

John 19:30  
Good Friday  
April 2, 2010  
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Traditionally and down the long corridors of time, those seven speaking of our Lord there on Calvary's Cross have been called 'The Seven Last Words.' Truth be told, with the exception of only two, they might better be referred to as 'The Seven Last Sentences.' For, in the original Greek, only two are individual words. The one, you have already heard and meditated on; "I THIRST." And the other one follows right on its heels and is our text this night: "IT IS FINISHED."

Yes, in English – three words; but in the original Greek – just one word; and it is pronounced...TETELESTAI. Try saying it, because you are going to need it – TETELESTAI! Tetelestai: it's a puzzle!

TETELESTAI: IT'S A PUZZLE!

I. As to whom spoken

II. Spoken to two very important people

I call that word, TETELESTAI, a puzzle because we don't seem to know to whom Jesus spoke that word. The other six, you know, don't you? FATHER, FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO...VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, TODAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE...WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON; SON, BEHOLD THY MOTHER...MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?...I THIRST...FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT.

But now comes TETELESTAI; IT IS FINISHED. And, seemingly, we have little, if any, indication as to whom it is addressed; to whom was Jesus speaking when He cried out – victoriously – IT IS FINISHED...TETELESTAI?

I would submit to you that our Lord spoke that Word, that IT IS FINISHED, that TETELESTAI to two very important people; two very important people in His eyes. And they are..... But I am getting ahead of myself. First, let me show you how I came to that conclusion: namely, that this TETELESTAI was spoken by Christ to two very important people, important in His estimation.

Perhaps, Christ was doing and saying what He had joined the other two Persons of the Godhead in doing and saying way back there in the Garden of Eden. You are well aware of the inerrant account of the creation of the world as it is infallibly recorded in the opening chapter of Genesis. You know how, in just 5 days, God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, took "nothingness" and wound up creating everything: light, darkness, sun, moon, stars, dry land, oceans, lakes, rivers, trees, flowers, animals, fish (especially trout)...nothingness to everythingness and just in 5 days and all by the power of His Word, the power of His "Thus saith the Lord."

But on that eventful 6<sup>th</sup> day, God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, break their pattern. They do something rather relatively unique; something the Holy and Blessed Trinity have not done thus far in the creation of the world. Just before God's creation of man, the Holy Trinity stops and takes counsel with each other. Listen to them: THEN GOD SAID, "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, IN OUR LIKENESS AND LET THEM RULE OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA AND THE BIRDS OF THE AIR, OVER THE LIVESTOCK, OVER ALL THE EARTH, AND OVER ALL THE CREATURES THAT MOVE ALONG THE GROUND."

Let that wash over you a minute or two. Nowhere else in this sacred account of creation are we told that the Holy Trinity paused and took counsel with each other: not before creating the sun nor the moon nor the ocean or the land masses. Only when standing on the threshold of creating man does God pause and take counsel with Himself. Next time you are feeling a bit down and depressed, read that 30<sup>th</sup> verse in Genesis 1. See how highly God thought of man, of you. Next time someone – a boss, a teacher, a spouse, a classmate, tells you that you are useless and worthless, reach for that 30<sup>th</sup> verse of Genesis 1 and read how highly God thought of man, of you. Next time the supposedly learned world of science wants you to buy into the blasphemous nonsense that we are but a point along the 'evolutionary process,' see how highly God thought of man, of you. For to what amoeba, to what alligator, to what ape did God ever take counsel before proceeding? And, I hope you didn't gloss over the holy and divine blueprint that God's counsel produced!...IN OUR IMAGE, IN OUR LIKENESS...Man, not only created *after* the Holy Trinity takes counsel with Itself but, man, created in God's image, in God's likeness. Man, created in total holiness; as is God, so was man.

But we know from Holy Scripture what our first parents did to and with that image, that likeness, that total holiness. They listened to and acted upon that hellish hiss of Satan: YEA, HATH GOD SAID? And from Eden to Platte Woods, it is Satan's goal to take believers and make doubters out of them! When he sees you at home reading God's Word and sharing it in family devotions, Satan whispers: YEA, HATH GOD SAID? When Satan sees you sitting here and listening

attentively to the proclamations of your pastors, Satan hisses: YEA, HATH GOD SAID? When you lay a loved one to rest and then return to his or her grave and hear your Christ say: I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE AND WHOEVER BELIEVETH IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE, watch it, because Satan knows how to visit cemeteries too, with his hellish: YEA, HATH GOD SAID?

You know, Adam and Eve could have kept that image, that likeness, that total holiness! All they had to do and say was: THUS SAITH THE LORD. You know something else? When that whisper from hell assaults your ear and invades your mind and life, it can be silenced by you – THUS SAITH THE LORD!

So then, when that TETELESTAI was spoken from the cross, was the Trinity taking counsel together and still again? Was our Christ talking with the Father? Telling the Father that John 3:16 was now fulfilled? GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. Father, says the Son, TETELESTAI...IT IS FINISHED...as are all of the other prophecies, predictions and promises made about the Messiah throughout the Scriptures.

Or was the Lamb of God talking with Himself? TETELESTAI – IT IS FINISHED! What? As you have learned from your Catechism, the State of Humiliation. That time in Christ's life when, though still fully and completely God, He chose not to use His God-powers but refrained so that He could be our perfect substitute. Was He reminding Himself that humiliation was now TETELESTAI and the State of Exultation was just dawning? First that victorious descent into hell to announce the smashing of hell's kingdom and Satan's power; then the glories of 3 days from now – HE IS NOT HERE! HE IS RISEN!; and then just 40 days after that His coronation in the Ascension!

Or was it Christ speaking with and to the Holy Ghost when He proclaimed TETELESTAI – IT IS FINISHED! You and I know and freely confess that I CANNOT BY MY OWN REASON OR STRENGTH BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, MY LORD, OR COME TO HIM; BUT THE HOLY GHOST HAS CALLED ME BY THE GOSPEL, ENLIGHTENED ME WITH HIS GIFTS, SANCTIFIED AND KEPT ME IN THE TRUE FAITH. It was just last night that we remembered how our Christ rounded out and completed the trio of those gifts of the Holy Ghost. It was on Maundy Thursday that Christ instituted His Holy Supper; the third of the three Means of Grace: Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, and Holy Scripture. The very, and only, means by which sinners are brought to repentance, given entrance to the faith and then kept in the faith. Was that TETELESTAI signaling to the Holy Ghost to now employ these means to gather, enlighten, and sanctify?

Admittedly, all of this is rather pious thinking and nice and really solid theological speculation. But you and I want, need more. We want, need that solid and unbending THUS SAITH THE LORD when answering the question of 'to whom did Christ speak this TETELESTAI?' And I told you that He spoke that word to two very important people. Here is the first one: possibly this evening, maybe sometime tomorrow but certainly before this Holy Weekend concludes, you will meet that person, that one very important person to Jesus. He/She will be that person who still doesn't know Jesus Christ as you do. He/She will tell you that they don't know...that they are trying to live a good life...that they sure hope so when it comes to getting into heaven. They will tell you that when you ask them – and ask them you shall – and when they tell you all that, then you speak to them this all-encompassing TELELESTAI. IT IS FINISHED...finished those doubts, those 'not-knowing' and those 'hope-so.'

But I said that His TETELESTAI is spoken to two very important people – very important to Him. So who is the other one? YOU!! He speaks His TETELESTAI to you this evening for your personal confidence and comfort. As a parish-family and throughout this Solemn Season of Lent you have heard these seven Last Words of our Christ. Now, with His TETELESTAI ringing in our hearts, ears and souls, I want you to hear His 'on-going,' not 'last' Words to you and for the rest of your life: I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD...COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT ARE WEARY AND HEAVY LADEN AND I WILL GIVE THEE REST...CALL UPON ME IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE AND I WILL DELIVER THEE...CAST YOUR BURDENS UPON ME AND I WILL SUSTAIN THEE...I HAVE YOU IN THE HOLLOW OF MY HAND FROM WHICH NO ONE SHALL PLUCK THEE OUT...NOTHING SHALL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD...and, personally my favorite...SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE GIVEN THEE.

So we have sung...ON CHRIST, THE SOLID ROCK, I STAND...and this sacred night, that SOLID ROCK, has a name: TETELESTAI. To which we, standing on it, shout our Amen and Alleluia.

Amen!