

THE GOLGOTHA TESTAMENT

DJ OLSON

Outside the walls of ancient Jerusalem stood Golgotha (also known as Calvary), the Place of the Skull. A barren, stony ridge with holes hewn from the rock where men were hoisted upon crosses and forced upright into the stone. A place of hopelessness, a stark reminder of mortality. Yet it was here that the wickedness of the world met its most remarkable defeat.

On that day, two thousand years ago, as Christ hung upon the cross, Golgotha became the stage for a victory far greater than any earthly triumph. There, in the shadows of the city walls, one Man bore the weight of the world's sin, and the earth itself stood witness.

The Scriptures testify to the depth of His suffering. As the prophet Isaiah declared seven centuries before, "*His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness*" (Isaiah 52:14, NIV).

Yet in the midst of those terrible hours, He spoke words that changed the course of history and created a new covenant between God and man. They were not cries of defeat, but the enduring words of the Son of God. Words that revealed true victory. The death of Christ on that rough and blood-stained tree, which to the world looked like the end of a failed cause, became the very means by which sin was conquered, death undone, and eternal hope secured for all who believe.

Unlike those early disciples, we are granted the privilege of knowing the whole account, complete and unbroken from beginning to end. But even still, we do not see everything clearly. Much of eternity remains veiled; we sense its nearness, we catch glimpses and shadows, but our grasp remains partial and our understanding is dimmed.

Faith, then, remains our steadfast anchor. It is not because of what our eyes see, but by faith in the One who has spoken, who has promised, and whose word will not fail. We do not believe because we perceive all, but because we know Him and in His hands is the destiny of all things.

Before we hear His words from the cross, let us walk with Him along the path that led to that dreadful place, Golgotha, where the destiny of the world was sealed by God's love and grace.

The Garden of Gethsemane

In the quiet shadow of olive trees, Jesus withdrew to pray, His heart heavy with the weight of what was to come. He fell upon His face, beseeching the Father: "*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt*" (Matthew 26:39, KJV).

Despite being told to watch, His disciples slept, unable to grasp

the gravity of the moment. Sweat fell from Him like drops of blood, a testimony to His anguish and resolve: *“And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground”* (Luke 22:44, NKJV). In obedience and love, He rose, accepting the path that would lead to the cross.

Judas and the Kiss

Judas approached with a band of soldiers, identifying Jesus with a kiss: *“Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.’ Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him.”* (Matthew 26:48-49, NKJV).

In that moment of betrayal, Peter drew his sword and attacked the soldiers but Jesus intervened to prevent further harm: *“And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him”* (Luke 22:50-51, KJV).

Even Judas, stricken with remorse, sought to undo his treachery, but the path to the cross could not be turned aside.

Pilate and Jesus

Before the Roman governor, Jesus stood. Silent and unyielding amid a fury of accusations: *“And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest”* (Matthew 27:11, KJV).

Though the chief priests and elders clamored loudly, Jesus’ silence was thunderous: *“But when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing”* (Matthew 27:12, KJV).

At the feast, custom dictated one prisoner would be released. Pilate offered the crowd a choice: Barabbas, a notorious criminal, or Jesus, the innocent Christ: *“And at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people one prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas”* (Matthew 27:15-16, KJV).

Pilate’s wife, troubled by a dream, sent a word of warning: *“Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him”* (Matthew 27:19, KJV).

Yet the crowd was not deterred: *“But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ They said, ‘Barabbas!’”* (Matthew 27:20-21, NKJV). Pilate, seeking justice, asked: *“Why, what evil hath he done?”* (Matthew 27:23).

Pilate washed his hands before the multitude: *“I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it”* (Matthew 27:24, KJV). The crowd replied: *“His blood be on us, and on our children”* (Matthew 27:25, KJV). So Jesus was scourged and sent to the cross. Barabbas, the notorious murderer, was set free.

The Soldiers’ Mockery

The soldiers spat upon Jesus, struck Him, and mocked Him with cruel laughter. They clothed Him in a robe of scorn and pressed a crown of thorns upon His brow: *“And they platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail,*

King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him” (Matthew 27:29-31, KJV).

The King on the Cross

Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear the cross: *“And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross”* (Mark 15:21, KJV).

At Golgotha, bitter wine mingled with gall was offered, but Jesus refused: *“They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink”* (Matthew 27:34, KJV). The vinegar itself was a common, low grade sour wine, but when mixed with this bitter element it functioned as a crude pain dulling drink. Jesus tastes it but refuses to drink, indicating a deliberate choice to endure the suffering fully.

Nails were driven through His hands and feet. His garments were divided and cast by lot, fulfilling the words of Scripture: *“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture”* (Psalm 22:18, KJV; John 19:23-24).

Above Him, a sign proclaimed: *“JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS”* (John 19:19, KJV).

Two criminals hung beside Him. One mocked, but the other believed and to that penitent thief He gave the promise of paradise: *“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise”* (Luke 23:42-43, KJV).

The crowd taunted Him: *“If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross”* (Matthew 27:40, KJV).

The Turning Point of History

After Christ died, darkness fell from noon till three: *“And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour”* (Mark 15:33, KJV). In Jewish timekeeping, the sixth hour is about noon and the ninth hour about 3 p.m.

The temple veil tore, the earth trembled, and rocks were split: *“Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split”* (Matthew 27:51, NKJV).

Saints rose from the grave: *“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many”* (Matthew 27:52, NKJV).

The centurion and those around him were suddenly convinced of who Jesus was: *“So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’”* (Matthew 27:54, NKJV).

Let us now consider together the final words spoken by Christ from the cross. These words, spoken in suffering yet with clarity and purpose, draw together all that has led to this moment and reveal forgiveness, fulfillment, trust, and victory as He completes His work.

The Testament Of Golgotha

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34, NKJV).

His first words from the cross were not a cry for relief, not a protest of innocence but a prayer for the forgiveness of others. Even in the grip of agony, His thoughts were not of Himself, but of us. He gazed on those who had driven the nails, who mocked and reviled Him, yet His divine love did not demand justice, but grace.

When Jesus teaches the disciples to pray, He immediately follows the prayer with this reminder. *“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”* (Matthew 6:14-15, NKJV). He then embodied those words on the cross when he prayed, *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”*

No guilt can be so heavy, no past so dark, that the first words from Calvary cannot cover it. Forgiveness spoken in suffering is a mercy made all the more powerful, all the more complete.

“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43, NKJV).

Jesus speaks words of hope to a man weighed down by a lifetime of failure and crime. To the thief who confessed his guilt and turned in faith, the Lord offers not condemnation, but the promise of eternity. Though the thief’s mortal life remained and he died on the cross, his faith rewarded him with life everlasting.

This is a declaration that no past is beyond redemption, no sin beyond pardon, when met with repentance and trust.

“Woman, behold thy son!” and “Behold thy mother!” (John 19:26–27, KJV).

Amid His own suffering, Jesus turns His gaze not inward, but outward, attending to the needs of those He loved. With these words, He entrusts the care of His mother to His beloved disciple.

This act speaks to a greater truth: even in the midst of agony, love commands attention; duty calls forth sacrifice. It is a solemn reminder that the bonds of human care endure beyond death, and that in Christ’s kingdom, we are called to bear one another’s burdens, to carry one another’s hopes.

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46 KJV).

This is not the cry of a man merely suffering but of Christ shouldering the unfathomable weight of the world’s sin.

Jesus was fully human and experienced the depth of abandonment and suffering. In that moment, He bore the full separation from God that sin causes. Spiritually, God was not abandoning the Son but the separation was necessary for Jesus to fulfill His role as the sin-bearer for humanity. *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”* (2 Corinthians 5:21, NKJV).

This is the voice of prophecy fulfilled, a purpose pursued through suffering. In these words, we witness the meeting of the divine and the broken. The hour when the price of salvation was measured and fully paid.

“I thirst” (John 19:28) — Fully Human

The words here reach back to Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well in John 4, revealing a striking contrast and an even greater fulfillment.

In John 4:7, Jesus begins the conversation with the Samaritan woman by saying, *“Give me to drink.”* His physical thirst becomes the doorway to a deeper truth: the soul’s longing for eternal life. He tells her in John 4:14, *“Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.”* Jesus presents Himself as the source of living water, able to satisfy the soul forever.

Now, on the cross, Jesus says, “I thirst.” It is not merely physical agony, it is the echo of spiritual desolation. He who once offered the water of life now suffers thirst, emptied and forsaken, bearing the full weight of sin.

- At the well, Jesus offers to quench the thirst of the soul.
- On the cross, He endures thirst Himself, so we never have to.

This offers an incredibly vivid glimpse of His true humanity: He endured pain, He bled, He thirsted. The words “I thirst” remind us that Jesus did not hover above suffering, He entered into it. This was no shadow of reality, God became man and endured everything for us.

“It is finished” (John 19:30) — Fully God

This marks the completion of the work of salvation. With this declaration, the debt of sin is paid, death is defeated, and God’s plan of redemption is fulfilled. Nothing more needs to be added; Christ’s atonement was perfect, complete, and final. This statement comes from the one person of Christ, who is both fully God and fully man, proclaiming that the divine mission entrusted to Him was perfectly accomplished.

He fulfilled the eternal plan of salvation set before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8), and His sacrifice is sufficient for all sin for all time (Hebrews 10:12-14). By declaring, *“It is finished,”* He spoke with divine authority, sealing the work of redemption. As the Son of Man, He lived in perfect obedience under the Law (Galatians 4:4), enduring suffering, temptation, and death without sin (Hebrews 4:15). In His humanity, He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows (Isaiah 53:4-6), completing the human side of His mission.

Christ’s words on the cross are a declaration that all prophetic requirements were fulfilled.

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

In these final words, the Savior places His trust entirely in the hands of the Father. With calm and resolute faith, He surrenders His life, yielding to death, but unyielding in purpose. He did not fall into death; He stepped into it, not as a victim overtaken, but as a Son obedient to the very end. This was no collapse, no cry of defeat, but the deliberate yielding of a life wholly given. It is the ultimate act of obedience, surrender and faith, and a demonstration of perfect confidence in His loving Father, who would raise Him from the dead.

From the prayer of forgiveness for those who harmed Him, to the promise of paradise given to a repentant thief and from the tender

care for His mother to the cry of forsakenness that bore our sin, each word speaks of a purpose greater than pain.

The declaration of thirst, the solemn announcement that “It is finished,” and the final surrender into the Father’s hands, all proclaim the completion of a journey that conquers death and opens the door to eternal life.

The Triumph Of Calvary

Underpinning it all was prayer, the lifeline to the Father that sustained the Son in His darkest hours. From Gethsemane to Calvary, Jesus’ communion with God was the source of His strength and the resolve to fulfill the redemptive plan. His prayers were not merely pleas but acts of obedience and trust, shaping the very path to victory.

For those who believe, the cross is not an end, it is the beginning of a new covenant, a new creation, and the promise of everlasting life. The crucifixion of Jesus stands as the solemn fulfillment of prophecies spoken centuries before His birth, realized through the steadfast prayers and obedience of God’s own Son. He calls us to be people of prayer, for just as prophecy reached its fulfillment on Calvary, so too shall the promises of His return and the gift of eternal life be realized through the prayers of the faithful.

The resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate declaration of hope and renewal. Death could not hold Him; the grave could not contain Him. In rising from the dead, Christ reveals that God’s power transcends all fear, overcomes every failure, triumphs over every sorrow, and stretches far beyond human understanding. The resurrection proves that life conquers death, light dispels darkness, and God’s love endures unshakably. For those who believe, it is not merely a historical event, it is a living reality.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

Christ rose from the grave, speaking beyond His disciples to every generation: repent and receive forgiveness. Walk in the light of God’s kingdom, bear witness, and carry His truth to the ends of the earth.

In Him, Scripture is fulfilled, hope is revealed, and death is defeated. The grave could not hold Him, and His message of salvation continues until all have heard.

We are called to readiness under the covenant sealed by His blood, shaped by the cross, once a symbol of death but now the sign of salvation and hope. Strengthened in endurance, we press on until our lives reflect Jesus Christ alone.

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20, NKJV).

The Church stands at the threshold of history, called to proclaim the crucified Savior in steadfast unity. We live in joyful hope of His return, awaiting the day when we will dwell forever in the splendor of God’s eternal Kingdom: *“Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20, KJV).*

“Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!’ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: ‘Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!’” (Revelation 5:11-13, NKJV). †

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Headquarters:
802 Airport Road
North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 934
North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Telephone:
(306) 445-2733

Email:
info@globalmissionsinc.org

Online:
www.globalmissionsinc.org

Traveling Ministry Contact List:
www.globalmissionsinc.org/about

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