

43-17-03.wpd --A New Beginning
 Eastertide, the Cross, death, resurrection
 John 17:4
 Jesus finished the past and began the future.

INTRODUCTION:

--People get accustomed to the way things are, and *change it becomes difficult*. Some changes come slowly and happen to us before we realize it. I think the *physical problems* of aging are like this. Other changes are sudden, like the *loss of a loved one*, or moving to a *new location*, or an *acute illness*. Those are more noticeable and harder to adjust to. Some changes are *temporary* and others are *permanent*. The permanent ones mean that our former experience is over. *It is finished*, and new experience has begun.

--In His prayer in **John 17:4** (NKJV), Jesus said to God the Father, "*I have glorified You on the earth. I have **finished** the work which You have given Me to do.*" That prayer was in anticipation of what He would cry out with His dying breath on the Cross, "*It is finished!*" Those last words of Christ are about a *permanent change*. From that moment onward, some things people were accustomed to were now forever changed. It was *A New Beginning (title)*. What happened was that **HOM.idea**.

I. The Old Covenant Ended and the New Covenant Began

- A. The ritual law of the OT was God's special covenant with Israel that foreshadowed His coming New Covenant that would touch the whole world
1. God's permanent moral laws were also revealed in OT law [ie., the 10 Commandments], but the sacrificial system and the *external rituals or practices* only symbolized holiness and pointed to the need for a salvation that the law could not bring.
 2. The OT sacrificial system could not "take away" sins--Heb 10:1-4. The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (that is why they are called an *atonement* [covering])

- B. Jesus finished what the OT left undone- v.4 (NKJV), "*I have glorified You on the earth. I have **finished** the work which You have given Me to do.*"
1. John the Baptist, on seeing Jesus come to him for baptism, said (**John 1:29**), "Behold! The Lamb of God who **takes away** the sin of the world!" (This was unknown language to the Jews. A lamb could *atone for sin* [cover it up] or remind them of the first *Passover lamb*, whose blood caused the angel of death to *pass over* the Israelites homes in Egypt. This Lamb would *take away* sins.)
 2. On the Cross Jesus finished the OT and established the NT (right in the middle of the Passover meal, which predicted what His death would do, Jesus began a new meal, Holy Communion, which fulfilled the Passover and established His New Covenant--**Luke 22:19-20**. And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

TRANS: The Cross divides both *chronological* history and *salvation* history. **Jesus finished the past and began the future**. The OT is no longer the covenant of God with either Israel or the rest of the world. Things have changed.... permanently. Sinners come to God in only one way now, through His Son, who "entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption." (**Heb 9:12**). The Old Testament is finished; the New Testament has begun.

II. The Reign of Terror is Over and the Kingdom of Peace is Here

- A. When Jesus cried, "It is finished," He was announcing that the work He came to accomplish was completed, including the defeat of Satan-- **1 John 3:8**, He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. What was Satan's work?
1. To blind us from seeing reality God's way by opening our eyes to moral independence from God (Satan got humanity to swallow the lie that we should have the "knowledge of good and evil" on our own, the way he did, rather than learning right and wrong in a direct relationship with God.)
 2. Moral independence brought immediate spiritual separation from God (*spiritual death*). Humanity was banished from Eden [a paradise of "pleasure"] and from "the tree of life" into a fallen world

where the curse death and decay reigned over all creation.

B. The Cross marks the point at which God began to undo Satan's "reign of terror"--

1. At the Cross, Jesus bought back (redeemed) humanity's destiny, making a way for us to exit Satan's deceptive scheme and come back into a direct personal relationship with God-- Col 1:12-14 (NKJV) giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.
2. Part of Satan's "reign of terror" is our mortality, and in Christ's Cross and Resurrection that fear is **finished** for every believer-- Heb 2:14-15, Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (As the first eternally resurrected human, Christ's victory over death is every believer's victory.)
3. "Are we back to Eden yet?" No, but a renewed creation far more extravagant than the paradise of Eden awaits the Christian at Christ's 2nd Coming. AND in the meantime, through His Holy Spirit indwells us, and gives us back right now the best thing that Eden offered: God's presence-- John 14:23, Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

CONCLUSION:

--The clear message of the Eastertide season that Christ's Cross and Resurrection have brought a new beginning for humanity. **Jesus finished the past and began the future.** The effects of His resurrection start now for all who will accept Him as their Lord and Savior-- 2 Cor 5:17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!