

## Connecting Minds

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31)

### The Gospel of John

#### Chapter 17:4

**"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."**

Verse 4 is a truly magnificent verse - "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do..." Let's begin by asking, "What is this work?" Several areas of work could be pointed to. We'll look at just a couple. First, it His incarnation - Hebrews 2:16,17 says "In all things He had to be made like His brethren..." so that He may give aid to us. Second, in that same chapter, verse 14, we are told that "through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil..." Third, the most important work for us is His work in the atonement. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that Jesus became sin for us. He died our death and satisfied the wrath of God that burned against us.

Jesus says that this work was *given* to Him. It was given to Him because He was the only One who could finish the work. For many in our world, this may seem like a bold statement, even an arrogant statement. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes "You do not begin to understand the work that was given to the Lord Jesus Christ unless you are perfectly clear about the problem of sin."<sup>1</sup> Sin defiles. Sin pollutes. In the Old Testament the work of atonement was made by the High Priest only after he had cleansed himself. He needed to ceremonially (though only ceremonially) remove his own sin first before he could present the lamb of atonement for the people. But Jesus is different. He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners..." (Hebrews 7:26). He does not need to "offer up sacrifices for His own sins..." (verse 27). This is why the work was given to Him to make atonement.

But let's continue to think this through. Why could this work not be given to men? We might say, "What about Abraham? Wasn't he a great man, a friend of God?" But Abraham failed... he sinned against God when lying

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<sup>1</sup>The Assurance of Our Salvation, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, pg. 100

about his wife Sarah to pagan kings. So you say “Okay, what about David? He was a man after God’s own heart.” But David failed. He sinned in adultery with Bathsheba. “What about Isaiah who saw the great vision of God high and lifted up?” But didn’t Isaiah also say “Woe is me, for I am undone. I’m a great sinner and I’ve seen God?” No, none of these men can do the work given to Christ.

Then you ask “Why could this work not be given to angels? Angels have no sin.” The problem with giving the work to angels is that they could not identify with humanity. It is impossible for them to represent us before God. We must have Christ to do the work and Christ alone!

“I have finished the work...” Jesus tells us that the work of our redemption is finished. This is so important for us to understand - the work of our redemption is complete. We can add nothing to it. Our work of redemption is His. Some of us bounce back and forth in our assurance of salvation based on our successes and failures in dealing with sin. When we do this we are demonstrating that we do not really believe Jesus has finished the work. By trusting (or perhaps weakly trusting) in our works we show a lack of apprehension on this vital point of our faith. “It is finished” means “It is finished”.

Jesus has given His assessment of His mission on earth. And He says that through completing this mission He has brought glory to God on the earth. Bruce Milne writes “The honour of God is bound up not only with the enthusiastic commencement of a project but with the faithful completion of it.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus says “I have glorified You on the earth.”

## TableTalk

We need to ask ourselves another question: What is the work that we have been given to do? Read these verses: John 4:34,35 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

<sup>2</sup> The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of John, Bruce Milne, pg. 242