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*“ . . . the works were finished
from the foundation of the world”
(Hebrews 4:3).*

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THE FINISHED WORKS OF GOD

by Henry M. Morris *

The Work of Redemption

God, by definition, can never fail in what He undertakes to accomplish. As we approach another season in which most Christians place special emphasis on the death and resurrection of Christ, the Bible verse that always springs first to my own mind is His great victory cry on the cross: *“It is finished!”* (John 19:30).

Right at the beginning of His ministry, He told His mother: *“ . . . mine hour is not yet come”* (John 2:4). Later He told His brothers: *“My time is not yet full come”* (John 7:8). Whether or not He told them what He had come to do, or when He would do it, the record does not say.

Even before this, however, John the Baptist had introduced Him as *“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29), and this great purpose had guided His whole ministry. Finally, His hour did come, and He *“became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Philippians 2:8), bearing *“our sins in His own body on the tree”* (1 Peter 2:24).

There, during the awful three hours of supernatural darkness, the Father had to forsake Him (Matthew 27:46), because He had *“made Him to be sin for*

us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21). After enduring this unspeakable period of utter separation from God (which is the essence of hell itself), then He could finally shout *“with a loud voice”* (Luke 23:46), the great cry of triumph, *“It is finished!”*

The divine approval and acceptance of His substitutionary offering was signaled once and for all by His bodily resurrection on the third day following His burial.

Now, if Christ's wonderful work of paying for our forgiveness and salvation is finished, what is there left for us to do to implement it for ourselves personally?

There is *nothing* left for us to do! *“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 6:23). One does not receive a free gift by working for it, or by doing something more to be sure he gets it.

He can refuse to accept it, of course, if he does not want it. But if he considers the proffered gift to be desirable, and truly wants to have it, he must simply accept it gratefully, thanking the one providing it. *“In (Christ) we have*

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redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

We are saved, of course, entirely by God’s grace, plus nothing. We then, however, become *“His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).*

The Work of Creation

Long before the Lord Jesus undertook and then completed His heaven-sent work of redeeming lost sinners, He had completed another great work—that of creation. The first chapter of God’s written record tells us about His sequential creating and making of all things in six days, climaxed by the creation of the first man and woman, all of whose descendants He would later have to redeem if He were truly to accomplish His great purpose in creating them.

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made” (Genesis 2:1,2). Once it was finished, of course, there was no more creating to be done. Just like salvation, with the price fully paid, the creation was complete, with all the work of creating and making fully done. Just as a redeemed sinner can never augment the payment for his redemption, neither can some imaginary creative process called evolution augment the completed creation.

Furthermore, the completed creation was *“very good” (Genesis 1:31)*, with nothing bad or unfair or hurtful—certainly no “struggle for existence” or “survival of the fittest,” or any lack of anything needed by any of God’s created beings or systems. In analogous fashion, our finished salvation is *“so great salvation” (Hebrews 2:3)* and *“eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:12),*

fully meeting our need for forgiveness and endless life with God.

The creation is not “very good” at present, of course, for sin and death have entered the world and, therefore, Christ’s work of redemption had to be undertaken. Nevertheless, the creation, like salvation and redemption, is eternal.

Speaking of the stars and all the physical creation, the Bible says that *“He commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever” (Psalm 148:5,6).* There will, indeed, be drastic changes in the earth and heaven when sin and all its effects are purged out of it (II Peter 3:10), but then once again the creation will be very good, with *“no more death,”* and *“no more curse”* as nothing can ever again enter it that *“worketh abomination or maketh a lie” (Revelation 21:4;22:3;21:27).*

God is the Creator, not an “un-Creator,” and His works of both creation and redemption are eternal. *“Whatever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it” (Ecclesiastes 3:14).*

It is significant that, as far as creation is concerned, the most universal and certain law of science is the law of conservation of matter and energy. Energy can be changed in form (electrical energy to light energy, for example) and matter can be changed in state (solid to liquid, for example). Matter can even be changed into energy (e.g., nuclear fission) and energy into matter (thermonuclear fusion), but the totality of matter and energy can be neither augmented nor diminished. Energy (including matter) can be neither created nor destroyed.

At the end of the six days of creation, Christ the Creator (John 1:3,14) *“rested from all His work which God created and made” (Genesis 2:3),* and

He is now “*upholding all things by the word of His power*” (Hebrews 1:3). His present work is one of conservation as He is resting from His finished work of creation, as far as the physical world is concerned.

Our salvation is now also eternal and our life is everlasting because of Christ’s finished work on the cross. After He died and rose again, He could say: “*I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold I am alive for evermore*” (Revelation 1:18). Therefore, He could also promise concerning those who have accepted His gift of salvation: “*I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish. . . . I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live*” (John 10:28; 11:25).

The Finished Word of God

There is another very important finished work of God—vitaly important, in fact, because it is *this* work that tells us about God’s finished works of creation and redemption. I am referring, of course, to His work of revelation and inscripturation of that revelation in the written Word. This has given us all we need to know about His great purpose in creating and saving us for fellowship with Himself in the eternal ages to come.

That wonderful Word of God was “*forever . . . settled in heaven*” (Psalm 119:89) before the world began. Then God “*at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets*” (Hebrews 1:1). He revealed some to Moses, some to David, some to Isaiah, and some to all the other human writers of the Old Testament. All these Old Testament Scriptures were “*given by inspiration of God,*” or literally, “*God-breathed*” (II Timothy 3:16).

Then, when Christ came, He prom-

ised His chosen apostles that the Holy Spirit would “*teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*” (John 14:26), so that they could write the New Testament.

Finally, when the last of the apostles, John, completed his final book, Revelation, the inspired record was finished. It was still settled forever in Heaven, but now also had been sent to Earth.

This fact was firmly emphasized by Christ Himself in the final section of John’s prophecy, “*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book*” (Revelation 22:18,19).

Thus the Book of God is completed, just as the creation of God was finished and the salvation of God was accomplished once and for all when Christ died and rose again.

Therefore, there can be no such thing as origin of new kinds of plants or animals by evolution, no extra-Biblical “*Scriptures*” or “*prophecies*” that can be added to God’s Word, and no works of any kind (other than the “*work*” of believing on Christ and accepting His gift of eternal life) that can produce or add to our redemption and salvation.

The conclusion, as we contemplate the death and resurrection of Christ in these special days is: “*That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*” (I Corinthians 1:31). ❧

HOW COULD NOAH HAVE BUILT THE ARK ALL BY HIMSELF?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

Some have ridiculed the Flood story by insisting that the job of the Ark's construction was impossibly large. How could Noah have done it? Admittedly, we don't have all the details, but let's make some reasonable assumptions and see if the task is too great.

The Lord predicted that His judgment on the sinful civilization in the days of Noah would come in 120 years (Genesis 6:3). When He told Noah and instructed him to build the Ark (6:14-16) is unclear. But let's assume that Noah had the full 120 years warning.

Noah's three sons began to be born 100 years before the Flood (cf. 5:32 with 7:6) and within a few years were able to help. There may have been others to help as well, for grandfather Methuselah was alive during the entire construction period, dying the year of the Flood. There may have been others in a godly remnant of whom we know nothing. All we know now is that only eight people, Noah and his wife, their three sons, and their wives, constituted the faithful still living when the Flood finally came (7:13; II Peter 2:5). It may also have been that Noah hired construction workers to help. He must have been at least wealthy enough to abandon his livelihood during this period, but again we have no knowledge of these details.

Let's take the worst case scenario. Let's assume that only Noah and his three sons were available to help. Could they have done it all by themselves? To answer this we must first understand the magnitude of the job.

In Scripture we are only told the gross dimensions of the Ark—450 feet

long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high, assuming a cubit of 18" (6:15). We also know that the Ark had three decks (6:16). Thus the overall volume of the Ark was:

$$450 \times 75 \times 45 = 1.52 \times 10^6 \text{ ft.}^3$$

But a structure consists mostly of open space. Most houses are over 95% open, less for large ships. In our worst case scenario, let's assume that 20% of the Ark's volume was worked lumber that the four men had to gather, transport to the construction site, do the necessary shaping and install.

$$1.52 \times 10^6 \times .2 = .304 \times 10^6 \text{ ft.}^3$$

Remember, the Ark didn't have to win any beauty contests, or speed races, it just had to be strong and float. It probably more resembled a rough barn or stable in workmanship. The generations so soon after creation, living in an ideal environment with long life spans, were no doubt intelligent and capable. It hardly matters if the family were experienced in construction for within a year or so they would have been true professionals. An experienced crew of four could have installed, we assume, an average of 15 cubic feet of wood per day. If anything, this estimate seems low, but this is the worst case!

$$15 \text{ ft} \times 6 \text{ days} \times 52 \text{ wks} = 4,680 \text{ ft}^3/\text{year}$$

It's now easy to calculate how long it would have taken.

$$\frac{0.304 \times 10^6 \text{ ft.}^3}{4,680 \text{ ft}^3/\text{year}} = 65 \text{ years}$$

Sixty-five years under this worst case scenario! A big job, yes, but Noah was a faithful man, and accomplished the task. As we see, even simple calculations can enhance our faith in God's Word. 🏠



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