

Sermon: John 19:30: "It is finished."

- A. What is the shortest verse in the Bible? John 11:35. The longest psalm? 119 The shortest psalm? 117. What are some of the most important verses?
1. John 3:16: "God so loved the world..."
 2. I Cor 15:20: "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."
 3. John 19:30: "It is finished." This includes both death and resurrection. The verb in Greek is in the present perfect tense which connotes something complete and which continues as a state of being.
- B. The cross is the last judgment
1. One event. Great victory over sin, death, and the devil.
 2. It is the Big Death over against the little death
When Luther preached the funeral sermon for his protector, Elector Duke John of Saxony, he talked about two kinds of death. He said there's the Big Death and the little death. The Big Death is the one Jesus died on Calvary. As it says in John 19:30: "It is finished." For those who are in Jesus Christ, the Last Judgment is over. Then there's the little death – not to be made light of, but to be seen in relationship and in proportion. That is summed up in John 11:25-26, where Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."
- C. What happens at the end? There is wrong-headed speculation among us.
1. Matt 25:31: Separating the sheep from the goats
 2. A common view: We die, then there is a space, a waiting, then judgment, then heaven or hell.
 3. John 5:25-29: There are two final judgments
 4. Rev 20:7-15: Judgment is a two-phase operation.
- D. In the first generation the end was expected soon. All four gospels state it happens **within this generation**.
1. Matt 10:23, 24:34: "before the Son of Man comes..."
 2. Mark 13:30: "This generation will not pass away before all these things take place"
 3. Luke 21:32: "This generation will not pass away..."
 4. John 5:25: "The time is coming and **is now** when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."
- E. **Nobody knows**. It comes "like a thief in the night."
1. Matt 24:36-44: "But of that day and hour no one knows....[24:43] but if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming..."
 2. Mark 13:32: "But of that day or that hour no one knows...."
 3. I Thessalonians 5:2: "the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."
 4. 2 Peter 3:10: "The day of the Lord....like a thief..."

5. Revelation 3:3, 16:15: "I will come like a thief...I am coming like a thief..."
- F. Why bother about all this? Because salvation is at stake.
1. In the seminary library you can find a 2" thick book documenting the almost endless number of religious movements from the first century to now that have been caught up in forecasting and speculating about the end.
 2. The danger of being side-tracked by speculating about the end.
 3. For 1900 years the warning has come about those who come and say, "Lo here, and lo there." Matt 24:23: "Then if any one says to you, 'Lo, here is the Christ! Or 'There he is!' do not believe it." Matt 24:26, 27: "So, if they say to you, 'Lo, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out; if they say, 'Lo, he is in the inner room,' do not believe it." Mk 13:21: "If anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look there he is!' do not believe it. Lk 17:23: "Many "will come saying 'Lo, there!' or 'Lo here!' Do not go, do not follow them."
 4. The temptation of speculating: I have POWER! I'm on the "in." It is tantalizing and intriguing to be on the inside. It is power.
 5. The *Left Behind* series. We are the insiders. We know what's going to happen.
 6. Like a detective, I can figure out the end times. Endless talk about being pre-mil, post-mil. ("I am a pro-millennial. If there is stance, then I am for it!")
 7. 2 Tim 4:3: "Itching ears"; Acts 17:19: "[They] spent their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new."
 8. Don't get side-tracked.
- G. What is the gospel?
1. 2 Cor 11:1-4, 14-15: "If someone comes and preaches another Jesus" "another Spirit," "a different gospel," 11:14 ff. "For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light..." Paul is defending himself. It is really about the gospel. Compare with Gal. 1:6-8: "
 2. The ten words: God in Christ died and rose for you and me.
 3. John 19:30: "It is finished." The Big Death and little death.
 4. Eph 1:4: From eternity we are chosen
 5. Daily we say: "Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul." ("When Peace, like a River")
 6. "Hold to Christ, and for the rest be totally uncommitted." (Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, p. 146.)
 7. Don't get side-tracked.