

Redemption

1 Peter 1:3-20

The return of a victorious general to the city of Rome transformed the politically correct atmosphere of the city into a festive occasion. When a Roman general had been victorious over an enemy, he returned to Rome at the head of a great triumphal procession. He led back in triumph not only the forces that had served under him, but he also brought back the spoils of the conquered land as well as a large number of captives. **All these formed the great triumphal procession.** When the news of the victory reached the city of Rome, preparations would be made for the conqueror's return, for it was a time in which the glory won by the conqueror was heaped on his head. He rode into the city to be received by the nobles and the dignitaries in a manner becoming his victory.

This was a time to which the wealthy looked forward, for they could buy from the spoils of conquest the treasures that would adorn their homes. It was a time anticipated by the slave owners who desired to enlarge the number of his slaves, for after the captives had been led in the triumphal procession, they would be taken to the slave market and there, one by one, would be put on a slave block where they might be examined and tested by prospective buyers, and then purchased to be bought into a life of bondage and servitude.

It was this concept of slaves in a slave market that was uppermost in the minds of the Apostles as they spoke of the great work of the Lord Jesus as a Redeemer and the work of redemption that He had provided for sinners. The Word of God looks on men who are in sin as bond-slaves. It looks on them as being under a master who has conquered and subdued them, and who can deliver them over to even greater bondage. **The Scripture views the sinner as without any will of his own, destined to serve sin and to be a bond-slave to Satan, to do whatsoever Satan demands.** Christ has come into that slave market in order that He might purchase those who are in sin's chains, so that He might set them free. Therefore, we need to get a glimpse, not only the Redeemer but also at the redemption He has provided. And we will never learn to appreciate the truth of redemption until we understand our condition in sin, our need for redemption, the cost of redemption, and the deliverance that has been afforded us by the Redeemer.

1 Peter 1:18-19 says, “Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” The word Peter uses here that is translated “redeemed,” is a word that emphasizes an *act*, and means “the act of setting free, the act of liberating.” **Therefore, this word does not actually refer to the price of redemption, or the need of redemption, or does it signify the destiny of the redeemed.** Rather, it emphasizes that a purchase was *necessary*, and a purchase has been *accomplished*. The Bible teaches that God owns the world and all that is within creation. **Because God is the Creator, all that came into being by the world of His power is rightly His.** We are His by creation; therefore we are answerable to Him as creatures of the Creator. But when God would bring many sons into glory, that we should be found to the praise of the glory of His grace, God did *not* bring into glory by *creating* us, but rather by *purchasing* us for Himself that we might be doubly His: by *creation*, and His by a *purchased* redemption.

This *act* of purchasing is amplified for us in Revelation 5:9, “...they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation...” The word that John uses here for “redeemed” is a word that literally means “to go shopping” or “to go into the market-place to purchase.” **Therefore, John emphasizes the method by which this act was accomplished.** God has bought us from the market place of sin with His own blood. So John is emphasizing not only the *act* of purchase, but also the fact of the purchase *price*.

Notice once more Peter’s statement in 1 Peter 1:18 where he speaks about the price of redemption, “...you were not redeemed with corruptible things...” **And the corruptible things he mentions are silver and gold. Silver and gold are corruptible and are corrupted because they are under the curse.** Genesis 3:17 tells us that when Adam sinned, God cursed the ground on which he had walked. God said to Adam, “...cursed is the ground for thy sake...” or “because of your sin.” **All that the ground contained, then, was under the curse of God.** God cursed the silver and gold, and an accursed thing could never be used to pay a satisfactory redemption price to God. So, Peter says that when we were redeemed, we were *not* redeemed with that which was corruptible because it was corrupted, namely, silver and gold; but that we were redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.” **The Lamb whose blood was the purchase price was uncorruptible and uncorrupted.** In other words, Peter is contrasting corruptible silver with uncorruptible blood, corrupted gold with an

uncorrupted Son of God. And Peter and John agreed that when God purchased us the purchasing price was none other than the blood of God's own Son.

Paul says this in Galatians 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from (out of) the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." **In the original text Paul chose a compound word, and it is the same word that John used in Revelation 5:9 "to purchase" but Paul added the preposition "out of."** This compound word means, "to purchase out of so that it can never return." **Therefore, Paul emphasizes the result of the redemption, the result of the purchase paid for by the blood of Christ.** When we were purchased out from the curse of the law and bondage to sin we were purchased out so completely and effectively that we can never be returned to that slave market again. You see, if a person purchased a slave from the slave market, and decided that because of this health, attitude, or behavior, he did not want to keep him, he would just take him back down to the slave market and put him back on the selling block and sell him to a new owner.

Paul is simply saying that when Christ bought us with His precious blood, that price was so high that no one else could afford to buy us back again. In fact, Jesus put it this way in John 10:28-30, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand, I and my Father are one." Christ is emphasizing the security that belongs to the child of God is because we have been purchased by the Father to be given, as a love gift, to the Son; and because of the Son's love and respect for the Father, this love gift (you and me) can never be taken from Him.

There is another word that Paul uses in Romans 3:24 concerning redemption, when he says, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." **In the original text the word translated "redemption" differs from the other three words that we have referred to.** This word has in view the *destiny* of the one who has been redeemed; it emphasizes the thoroughness and the completeness of the redemption. We have been redeemed through and through; we have been thoroughly redeemed by God. And Paul affirms in Romans 3:24 that we have been justified freely by His grace by the *through-and-through* redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

Paul adds this in Romans 8:23, "...not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body." **The body as well**

as the soul has been redeemed from the curse and from slavery to sin. While we live in an unredeemed body now, God has promised that our redemption *will be* through and through, and our redemption includes the redemption of this body. It is the future prospect that belongs to the child of God.

In 1 Corinthians 1:30 Paul, speaking of Christ, says that Christ of God “is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” **Paul is anticipating the completeness of our redemption when we shall be translated into Christ’s likeness – body, soul, and spirit made like Him.** In Ephesians 1:14 Paul reminds us that the Holy Spirit is the “earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

In this last group of references, Paul is emphasizing something that is future. Previously, Paul, John and Peter have emphasized that which is our *past* experience. **There has been a purchase. This purchase was by the payment of a price, and the price was blood.** This purchase has freed us from the slave market once and for all, and we can never be returned to it. But this purchase has put a glorious prospect before us, the prospect of the redemption of the body, the prospect of the redemption of the total person in the likeness of Jesus Christ, because God’s work of redemption will not stop short of completion.

As we examine this great truth, we see the care that God, in His infinite wisdom, has taken that we, who were in the slave market to be auctioned off, should be purchased, not because we were of any value to the Purchaser, but because the Purchaser delighted to purchase, that He might set us free. We are amazed at the grace of God that has brought us freedom. We praise God, as Paul praised God, that there is liberty in Christ, and that we can stand fast in that liberty with Christ Who has made us free. **But that liberty that belongs to the children of God always rests on redemption.** It rests on the payment of a price in order that the Purchaser might set us free. As long as we were in the slave market of sin, as long as we were under bondage and slavery to Satan, God had no right to touch the one who belonged to another. **God would not go arbitrarily into the household of Satan to set us free.** God could not set us free until first of all we have become His property, until first of all we have, by our own free will, accepted the price that He has paid for our freedom.

If we are to have redemption, there must be a Redeemer. In the Old Testament, God painted us a graphic picture of His preparing the way for the coming Redeemer. **That picture was that of kinsmen-redeemer.** **If an Israelite was sold into bondage or delivered himself into slavery because of indebtedness, provision was made by which one that was kin to the slave had the right and the responsibility to pay the price in order that his kinsman might be delivered from bondage.** But there were certain stipulations laid down as to who could be the redeemer.

First, it was necessary that the one who did the work of redeeming the slave be the kinsman of the slave. Just because someone was moved with compassion when he saw the plight of a slave did not allow him to redeem him. **The right of redemption was reserved for a kinsman.** **You will recall that when Ruth was to be delivered into bondage, it was the right of Boaz to deliver her because he was a kinsman.** If Jesus Christ is to be a Redeemer for men He must be related to men, or He is not eligible to become their Redeemer. **The writer of Hebrews, aware of this requirement from the Old Testament, shows us how Christ met this condition so that He could be a Redeemer, as seen in Hebrews 2:14-15, “...as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”** **Then the writer continues by showing us that Christ did not identify Himself with angels, for if He were an angel He would not be eligible to redeem men.** But Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, through the virgin birth took upon Himself full and complete humanity in order that He, as the Son of man, related to men by a human birth, might be their representative and their kinsman-Redeemer. **Jesus Christ was related to men – “He became flesh” for the work of redemption.**

Second, it was necessary for the redeemer to have a redemption price to pay to set the slave free. In other words, he must be able to redeem. **The nearest kinsman of Ruth was unable to redeem, and Boaz came forward to be the kinsman-redeemer, not only because he was related, but also because he had an ability that the prior kinsman did not have: he had the substance by which he might redeem.** **If Christ is to become a redeemer for men, He must have a satisfactory redemption price.** **We find this challenge in Acts 20:28, “Take heed...unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”** **His blood was His purchase price.** **The blood that was offered for our redemption was not blood of man alone, for it would have had finite**

and limited worth, but it was the blood of the eternal Son of God who had become flesh. **It was blood of infinite value.**

The third requirement of the kinsman-redeemer was that he must be willing to redeem. The one who was the nearest kinsman to Ruth was not willing to assume responsibility for Ruth after he had redeemed her. Therefore, he must forego his right as a kinsman-redeemer. Boaz was not only related, not only able, but he was willing to redeem.

We follow our Lord into the Garden of Gethsemane and we listen as He poured out His heart to God in prayer and cried, "...if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). **We recognize that He was signifying He was not only able but also willing.** It is testified of Him in Hebrews 10:7, "I come...to do thy will..."

If Christ had been an unwilling sacrifice, God would have perpetrated the greatest crime ever committed in the history of the universe. But if Christ was a willing sacrifice, the cross of Christ stands as the greatest demonstration of submission and obedience to the will of God that the world has ever seen. **He was willing to redeem.**

And last of all, it was necessary that the redeemer should not himself need the redemption that he purposes to provide for another. That is, no slave could redeem another slave, for if a man were in bondage to another he was in no position to redeem someone else. **Why?** Because his need was as great as any other slave.

Therefore, if Christ was to redeem men from the slave market of sin, He must be without sin himself. That is why it is significant that Hebrews 4:15 says, "...we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 2:22-24 that Christ "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth rightouesly; who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed." **The Word of God presents the truth that Jesus Christ was an acceptable Redeemer for the human race, for sin had not laid its finger upon Him.** **Therefore, He was the perfect kinsman-redeemer for lost humanity.**