

I. THE BIBLICAL TEACHINGS CONCERNING "REDEMPTION"

In order for us to understand the Biblical teaching concerning redemption it is necessary first of all for us to see a certain concept which is based upon New Testament customs. Dwight Pentecost has stated this concept as follows:

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's was heaped upon 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 owner 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 upon a slave block where they might be examined and tested by prospective buyers, and then purchased to be brought into a life of bondage and servitude (73).

This concept of slaves in a slave market is the way the Word of God speaks of the great work of redemption. It portrays sinners as being in bondage and servitude to a master who has conquered them and who can sell them into even greater bondage.

The Word of God portrays the Lord Jesus Christ as the great Redeemer who has come into the slave market and purchased those bound by sin's chains and in bondage to Satan in order that He might set them free.

Redemption may be defined therefore as an act of God by which those who believe in Christ are released from the bondage of sin and Satan's power and brought into the place of subservience to Christ. Two ideas are expressed in the believer's redemption. First, there is freedom through the payment of a ransom price. Secondly, there is the matter of ownership and changing of masters.

In order for us to rejoice in our redemption and to heap the praise upon our Redeemer which He so fittingly deserves it is necessary for us to consider what the Word of God teaching concerning redemption.

The Word of God teaches...

A. THAT THERE IS A UNIVERSAL NEED FOR SINNERS TO BE REDEEMED

1. Sinners need to be redeemed because they are all in servitude to Satan.
 - a. This means before a person is saved he is a bond-slave to the devil and he is doing according to his will (Eph. 2:2; I Jn. 5:19).
 - b. This means before a person is saved, Satan is his master and he is held in the bondage of sin.
2. Sinners need to be redeemed because they are all servants of sin (Rom. 6:16:22; 7:14).
 - a. This means before a person is saved he is enslaved to do wrong instead of righteousness (Rom. 6:20).
 - b. This means before a person is saved he can't help but do wrong because Satan and sin has dominion over him (Rom. 6:14). One of the evidences of those who have been redeemed is the power to abstain from former sins.

B. THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN PROVISIONS REQUIRED FOR SINNERS TO BE REDEEMED

1. This is illustrated in the O.T. custom of the kinsman redeemer. If an Israelite was sold into bondage or had sold himself into slavery to pay his debts a near kinsman had the right, as well as the responsibility, to pay the price to set his kinsman free.
 - a. According to this custom the redeemer first of all had to be the kinsman or related to the one in bondage. He alone had the right of redemption. Note that Boaz had this right because he was a kinsman (Ruth 2:1, 20; 3:2, 12,13; 4:1,3,6,8,14). For the Lord Jesus to be our redeemer He had to be related to men. This condition He met when He identified Himself with man and took on humanity through the virgin birth and became flesh (Jn 1:1,4; Heb. 2:14).
 - b. Notice secondly that the kinsman redeemer had to have the redemption price to pay to set his kinsman free. In other words he had to be able to redeem. In the account of Ruth, we see her nearest kinsman was not able to redeem her because he lacked substance. This is how we all stand as far as our ability is to redeem ourselves or someone else. Boaz could however redeem Ruth because he was able . Only the Son of God is able to redeem us because He alone has the price of redemption which will atone for sin and satisfy God's demands (Jn 10:18; Eph. 3:20).

c. A third requirement according to the custom of the kinsman redeemer stipulated that no slave could redeem another slave. If a man was in bondage his need was as great as any other slave. The Lord Jesus Christ met this condition as our redeemer because He Himself was without sin and He needed no redemption for Himself from sin's bondage so only He could be our redeemer (Jn. 19:4; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; I Pet. 2:22-24; I Jn. 3:5).

d. Finally the kinsman redeemer had to be willing to redeem. Ruth's nearest kinsman was not willing to redeem. Boaz was. Christ was not only related to redeem, able to redeem, and free to redeem but He was also willing to redeem us from sin's bondage. Note how He met this condition (Lk 22:42; Phil. 2:5,8; Heb. 10:7; 12:1,2).

2. All these provisions illustrated in the kinsman-redeemer are only fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

a. This means without Him there is no redemption for man (Jn. 14:6) for there is no one to redeem us.

b. The basis therefore upon which God can justify or declare us righteous freely by His grace is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24).

C. THAT THERE WAS A TREMENDOUS PRICE INVOLVED FOR SINNERS TO BE REDEEMED (I PET. 1:18,19).

1. Man could not be redeemed by the riches of this world because they were neither sufficient nor satisfactory with God because they could not atone for sin (Heb. 9:22).

2. Man could not be redeemed by any of Adam's fallen race because none could be a satisfactory offering or substitute because all are tainted with Adam's sin (Rom. 3:10,23) and in bondage themselves.

3. Man could only be redeemed by blood (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22) and it required the blood of the Son of God because He alone was the only sinless and satisfactory offering which God could accept (Heb. 9:12; 10:4; Isa. 53:11).

D. THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS OF DESCRIBING WHAT IT MEANS FOR SINNERS TO BE REDEEMED

1. First of all man's redemption is described by the word "Agordzo". This pictures Christ going to the slave market of sin where we were all bond slaves of Satan and laying down the purchase price to buy us (I Cor. 6:20; 7:23; II Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3,4). The price of redemption then was the blood of Christ. The emphasis in this word is on the price paid.

2. A second word "Exagorazo" is used to describe our redemption. It means to buy "out of" the market so that which was bought could not be returned or put on the auction block again. The word is used in Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5 and it speaks to us of security as belonging to Christ eternally. The emphasis in this word is the matter of ownership.

3. A third word "Lutroo" used of our redemption means "to loose" or "set free." It is used in Titus 2:4 and I Pet. 1:18, and it pictures our redemption as setting us free from the bondage of Satan and sin. In this word the emphasis is on our freedom in Christ.

4. Finally in Rom. 3:24 "Apolutrosis" is the word describing our redemption and it means "full" or "through and through." In other word it is complete. Nothing else is needed to complete it. Jesus paid it all and it was enough! The emphasis in this word is on the completeness of the purchase.

E. THAT THERE IS NO LIMIT IN THE PROVISION THAT WAS MADE FOR SINNERS TO BE REDEEMED

1. Some say Christ's shed blood was only for those elected to salvation. The Word of God says He gave Himself as ransom or payment for all (I Tim. 2:6).
2. Some say no provision was made for those who would not be saved. But the Bible says Christ's blood was payment even to ransom those who would deny Him (II Pet. 2:1).
3. For anyone to believe, that Christ only died on the cross for a handful of those elected, is to deny the Word of God and try to limit the love of God (Jn. 3:16), the grace of God, (Titus 2:11), the mercy of God (Rom. 11:32); the justice of God (Rom. 2:11), and the blood of Jesus Christ (I Jn. 2:2).

F. THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN RESULTS FOR SINNERS WHO HAVE BEEN REDEEMED

1. Believers are delivered from both the guilt and the penalty of the law (Gal. 3:13).
2. Believers are delivered from the obligation to keep the law (Gal. 3:24,25; 4:5; Rom. 6:14; 10:4).
3. Believers are delivered from the debt of sin (Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:13; Rev. 1:5). We owed a debt we could not pay. Christ paid a debt He did not owe for us.
4. Believers are delivered from the dominion of sin and Satan's authority (Rom. 6:7,18; 7:1-16; Gal. 3:13; 4:3,5; Col. 2:8-23).
5. Believers have been set free to become servants of Christ and to glorify Him through a life of good works (Titus 2:11-14; I Pet. 2:16).

