

## THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION

In Romans 3, after Paul establishes that all people are sinners and guilty before God and have fallen far short of God's glory after bringing up justification and grace, the next key word is "redemption" (Romans 3:24). Understanding doctrine comes down to understanding words and redemption is one of those key words we must understand.

The doctrine of redemption is a critical part of the work of God in salvation and a key doctrinal word. This particular word has to do with the work of Jesus Christ on the cross in paying the price for sin.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said, "Redemption is an act of God by which He Himself pays as a ransom the price of human sin..." (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, p. 88). Dr. C. I. Scofield said, "Redemption means to deliver by paying a price" (*The Scofield Study Bible*, NASV, p. 1559).

When approaching the concept of redemption, we must realize that God alone is the one capable of paying a price that can satisfy the Holy demands of His violated character. What God does in redemption is make the complete payment necessary in order to purchase sinful people out of their sin condition and set them free.

Theologically, there are three aspects to redemption:

**Aspect #1** - Sinners must be redeemed from something—specifically sin.

**Aspect #2** - Sinners must be redeemed by something—specifically Christ's blood.

**Aspect #3** - Sinners must be redeemed to something—specifically complete freedom.

A good working definition of redemption is: **God, through Jesus Christ, makes the complete payment in order to purchase sinful people out of their bondage of sin and He sets them free.**

When Jesus Christ was given the name "Jesus" at the Godhead level, the significance of that name is redemptive because it meant that He would come to save people from their sins (Matt. 1:21; John 1:29; I Tim. 1:15).

When Jesus Christ uttered the words "it is finished" (John 19:30) on the cross, He did not mean that His life, service and ministries were coming to an end; He meant that He has finished the work necessary to save sinners. A key part of "the finished work of Christ" is redemption and redemption is specifically the sin-ward aspect of Christ's accomplished work on the cross.

In redemption, Christ Himself pays the ransom price for human sin which God's violated holiness demands and requires.

## 1) Redemption in the Old Testament

The Old Testament concept of redemption primarily has to do with the nation Israel. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the O.T., the concept of “redemption” does not seem to be used in a theological sense. The book of Exodus is the story of Israel’s redemption (Ex. 14:30; Is. 59:20).

There is a picture of the Kinsman redeemer in the book of Ruth. Under the O.T. law certain people, possessions and property could be redeemed by paying the redemptive price (Lev. 25:25, 47-48)

Now under the O.T. economy, one who could redeem had to meet four requirements:

- 1) He must be a Kinsman-Redeemer
- 2) He must be able to pay the price to redeem.
- 3) He had to be free from the calamity that had fallen on one to be redeemed.
- 4) He had to be willing to redeem.

In the book of Ruth, Boaz provides a perfect type of Christ in redemption.

## 2) Redemption in the New Testament

It is the New Testament that brings to our knowledge the full revelation of redemption as it connects to sin. Dr. Chafer said, “It is therefore to be observed that the doctrine of redemption as set forth by the terms used in the New Testament is a complete fulfillment of truth foreshadowed in the Old Testament” (Vol. 3, p. 90). But Dr. Ryrie accurately observed, “However, little direct association is evident in the Old Testament between redemption and sin” (*Basic Theology*, p. 290).

In the New Testament there are three important words that give us great insight into this doctrine:

### **Redemption Word #1** - Argorazo - αγοράζω

The basic meaning of this word is to frequent or to go to a marketplace or forum in order to buy or purchase something (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 7).

As this word relates to redemption and salvation, the word teaches:

- 1) Jesus Christ made the payment to be able to purchase and redeem sinners. II Pet. 2:1
- 2) Jesus Christ made the payment of His own blood to the Father. Rev. 5:9-10
- 3) Jesus Christ bought us with a price and we are responsible to glorify God by serving Christ. I Cor. 6:19-20; 7:22-23

(3)

**Redemption Word #2** - Exagorazo - εξαγοραζω

The stress of this word is not only on going to the marketplace in order to purchase something, but also taking what you purchase out of the marketplace. In other words, one purchases something at the marketplace in order to take it and purchase it for oneself (*Ibid.*, p. 158).

As this word relates to salvation and redemption, it clearly is used to refer to paying the price for the sinner and taking the sinner completely out of the condemnation marketplace of the law and out of the condemnation marketplace of sin (Gal. 3:13; 4:5).

So the primary emphasis of this word is to go to buy something and take it out of the market.

**Redemption Word #3** - Lutroo - λυτροω

The primary meaning of this word is to completely release and redeem and deliver by paying the ransom price (*Ibid.*, p. 273). The added idea that this word brings to redemption is not only does Christ's sacrifice make the necessary payment to purchase sinners out of their bondage of the law and sin, but also actually releases them and frees them from all sin and law condemnation.

This specific word was used in regard to Israel in Luke 24:21. It was the hope of the people that when Jesus Christ was here on earth, He would free Israel from her bondage to Rome and grant her the Kingdom for which she still anticipates.

When it comes to Grace Salvation, there are two critical points made by using this word:

- 1) I Peter 1:18-19 - We were not redeemed and set free by any money or religious way of life, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.
- 2) Titus 2:14 - We were redeemed and set free from every lawless, sinful deed by Jesus Christ's payment.

Dr. Chafer writes: "Redemption, in its fullest meaning, as represented by this word, is assurance that Christ has not merely transferred the sinner's bondage from one master to another; He has purchased the object in view that the ransomed one may be free" (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, pp. 89-90).

Dr. John Walvoord wrote, "The study of redemption in Christ in the New Testament reveal a clear teaching that Christ by act of substitution in His death on the cross paid the ransom price and redeemed the enslaved sinner from his sinful position before God. Christ's death constituted an act of purchase in which the sinner is removed from his former bondage in sin by payment of the ransom price. The act of redemption takes the purchased possession out of the market and effects his release. Scholars may reject the New Testament teaching if they will, but the revelation of redemption is written clearly in the Scriptures" (*Redemption*, p. 9).

(4)

When it comes to the matter of redeeming yourself and being free from sin, there are only two options:

**(Option #1)** - Try to free yourself by making your own payment to God.

**(Option #2)** - Let Jesus Christ free you by accepting the payment He made and by faith trust totally in Him.

Now any who desire to redeem himself from sin, must be willing to ask—what exactly am I going to pay to God to purchase myself out of my sin dilemma? We know from Scripture that one cannot be redeemed by money (I Pet. 1:18). We know that one cannot be redeemed by works (Rom. 3:27-28). We know that one cannot be redeemed by keeping the O.T. law (Gal. 2:16). We know that one cannot be redeemed by some religious code of a lifestyle (I Pet. 1:18-19).

So the question arises, what exactly can a sinner do to make a redemptive payment to God that He will accept? The answer is he can offer nothing. The complete redemptive payment was made by Jesus Christ and eternal life and freedom are found in Him (Gal. 5:13)