

Sermon Title: In Him We Have Redemption
Scripture Text: Eph. 1:7-10 (Ephesians #5)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 5-30-21

In the first service, we sang a very familiar hymn; you know it as well: "To God Be The Glory." I know that I've sung it countless times; I sang it on the very first Sunday that I was in church, after I came to know the Lord, and I thought, "That's really good!" I didn't have any idea what it meant, but this morning, the first line of the second verse jumped out to me: "O *perfect* redemption, the purchase of blood." Do you know where that came from? Our text for this morning. How wonderful it will be as we look at the Doctrine of Redemption.

We've been telling you that as we began the Book of Ephesians, the first major paragraph is Verses 3 through 14 in Chapter 1, and it is one long Greek sentence. It's just impossible by anybody sane to turn this into one English sentence, but our translation makes it into six; and you *can* make sense of the portions of it. We're going to take one of those this morning in one large bite.

Here's the theme of this section: Ephesians 1:3—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." (NASB-1995; and throughout, unless otherwise noted) So think of that verse as the trunk of the tree; and then, verses 4 through 14 are the branches and the leaves that fan out from that trunk. In other words, this is the expansion of "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

Verses 4 through 6, where we visited the last two Lord's Days, deal with Election; that's about the past, and that is mainly rooted in God the Father. Verses 7 through 10—our venue for this morning—deals with the Doctrine of Redemption; that talks primarily about the present—but not exclusively, as you'll see—and it, of course, is rooted in the Son. When we get to 11 through 14, that's going to deal with our inheritance; that talks about the future, and is very much related to the Holy Spirit. (cf. 2 Cor. 13:14)

We took the Doctrine of Election in two bites—Verses 4 through 6—and I trust that you will review those as you need to; we're not going to go back there today. But today, our study shifts from the emphasis of the choice of God the Father in eternity-past (cf. Jer. 31:3; Jn. 17:2; 2 Tim. 1:9) to the work of God the Son when He invaded history, and what His work has done for us (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:5).

The key word is "redemption," and we're going to look at it in six parts: The Meaning Of Redemption, The Person Of Redemption, The Price Of Redemption, The Result Of Redemption, The Source Of Redemption, and The Outcome Of Redemption.

Before we jump into the text, I want to talk a little bit about The Meaning Of Redemption itself; so I'll help define the concept, and then you'll see how it's specifically described in our text. To understand redemption, take your mind to the marketplace. And I don't mean Albertsons; think of a place like what is more common in other cultures: an open-air market, with all kinds of things for sale. If you were to deal with the First-Century concept of redemption, you'd have to think of a marketplace that included a slave market, where slaves were bought and sold like animals. To get a slave from the market, all you had to do was show up, choose the person, and pay the price.

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To describe this concept Biblically/theologically, I need to let you know that there are at least five New Testament words that relate to the concept of redemption. The first is the one that we get transliterated directly into English as the word *agora*. Where I grew up, there was a town on the fringes called "Agora"; and when I learned the Greek word, I thought, "Wow! Why did they name that place 'marketplace'?" Well, that's what the word means; it means "marketplace," and the verb form of it means: "to buy or sell in the marketplace"; it's the common word for everyday transactions.

If you hear it in our world, you usually hear not just the word "agora," you hear the word "phobia" attached to it; because what is "agoraphobia"? It's the fear of being in a place like a marketplace, where there's bedlam, where you're not in control; so it's someone who has a fear of that kind of public place and public exposure. Maybe that will help you remember what the word means.

Let me show you two places in the writings of the Apostle Paul where he uses this word; it'll help you to be ready for Ephesians 1. First Corinthians 6:20—"For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." "Bought with a price"—that's what the word means: *agorazō*. First Corinthians 7:23—"You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men." So both of those are saying: God *bought you*. You were formerly a slave to something else—you were "a slave to sin" (Jn. 8:34)—*now*, He is your Lord; you are *His* slave (Eph. 6:6). You have been set free from your bondage to sin to be able to serve the Lord of glory (Rom. 6:17-22).

There's another place that has an amazing use of this word: Second Peter Chapter 2, Verse 1—"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves." One of the characteristics of false teachers is to deny the lordship of Jesus Christ—that He is the Master, the One who is in control (Matt. 28:18; Rom. 10:9; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 5:9).

The second word for "redemption" is a strengthened form of that word that means "to buy up" or "to buy out of" or "to rescue from loss." This is the word that was used for purchasing a slave for the purpose of giving him or her freedom. Not surprisingly, it is used for our spiritual redemption.

The third word used in this theme of words means: "to release by paying a ransom"; it's related to the word that means "the ransom price." In the case of our redemption, you're going to see that the price is the death of Jesus Christ (Matt. 20:28).

The fourth word in this family is one that means: "the act of releasing someone by ransom." That, too, describes what Christ accomplished for us (Rev. 1:5).

The fifth word is an even stronger form, and *this* is the word used in Ephesians 1:7; it includes *all* of those ideas rolled together, *plus* the added thought of an *even greater* manifestation of our redemption *in the future* in God's presence.

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So I said redemption is the work of Christ in history, and we stand redeemed in Him now; *but*, there's a future aspect (Rom. 13:11; 1 Pet. 1:5). So, to steal some of our own thunder from a couple of weeks from now, if you look ahead to Ephesians 1:13-14—"You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." There is a future aspect of our redemption: when we're set free from what Paul calls "the body of this death" in Romans 7:24 (cf. Rom. 8:23).

Or, there's also Ephesians 4:30—"Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22)

So, the basic meaning of "redemption" is that you have been bought out of the slave market where you were a slave to sin; *and* now, as a redeemed one, you are guaranteed a future of freedom from sin in the presence of God. So that's The Meaning.

Now, let's move to our text and look at The Person Of Redemption: Ephesians 1:7—"In Him"—that's a Person; it refers back to "the Beloved" at the end of Verse 6—"In Him we have redemption through His blood"—it's connected to a Person (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Obviously, the Redeemer is Jesus Christ (Col. 1:13-14); our redemption is "in Him."

Notice, too, the innocent-looking little words: "we have." They look innocent enough, and they *are* innocent, but they emphasize an important truth: It's a present tense in Greek. I told you we're sealed for the *future* day of redemption; but also, in Christ now, *we have* this redemption—present tense, continual possession of redemption. So that's our key word for today: "redemption."

It's all wrapped up in Christ: Christ bought us out of slavery to sin (Col. 2:13-14) and made us free to live in Him (1 Thess. 5:10) and glorify God (Rom. 6:3-7; Gal. 2:20). Our "redemption" is "in Christ" (1 Cor. 1:30), and it is among the things called "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." This is a *huge* part of the solution to our sin problem. We have been redeemed—no longer a slave to sin.

Romans 3:23 and 24. When we present the Gospel, we love to read Romans 3:23; a lot of times, we don't read on to Verse 24. That passage says: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"—that's part of the Gospel, because the "good news" doesn't mean anything unless you know the "bad news" that it is *the answer to!* And the "bad news" is that we're all "alienated" from God because of our sin (Col. 1:21; cf. Is. 59:2). "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." Remember, as I said: "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places"—now, we're just branching out to see all of the *stuff* that is part of that collection of "every spiritual blessing."

Now you know The Meaning Of Redemption. Now you know the obvious Person Of Redemption: it's Jesus Christ. What about The Price Of Redemption? Back to Verse 7—"In Him we have redemption *through His blood*, the forgiveness of our trespasses."

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"Through His blood" tells us The Price Of Redemption. "Through" is the translation of a preposition that means: "the instrument by which something is accomplished." Redemption is accomplished "through His blood." Only through the "blood"—which refers to the death (e.g., Gen. 9:5-6; 1 Sam. 19:5; Ps. 72:14; Jer. 26:15; Ezek., 13:13)—only through the death of Jesus Christ is redemption accomplished (1 Pet. 3:18). His "blood" is a euphemism for His "death" (Col. 1:20, 22; cf. Heb. 9:14). It's crucial to understand what the New Testament means when it *so often* speaks *so highly* about "the blood of Christ" (1 Cor. 10:16; Eph. 2:13), or, "His blood" (Rom. 3:25; 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:5; cf. Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:12; 13:12; 1 Jn. 1:7).

Now, there is no reason to believe that the blood that flowed in Jesus's veins was different from what you and I know as blood—what flows in our veins. There is no reason to believe that His blood was chemically different than ours. I have heard some preachers say that every drop of Jesus's blood that was shed at the Cross was gathered up, and is in Heaven as a perpetual memorial. That's *not* what it's talking about! It's not "precious blood" in *that* sense (1 Pet. 1:19).

If Jesus was working in His earthly father Joseph's carpentry shop and He made a mistake and cut His finger and dripped blood on someone, that wouldn't *save them*, it wouldn't *heal* them, it wouldn't do anything except cause a stain. Now, you can have your lunch discussion over the question: "Would a perfectly sinless One ever *make a mistake* and cut His finger?" I don't know. Maybe His *dad* made a mistake and cut Jesus's finger. The illustration will work. The point is: It's *not the physical blood!*

The significance of the expression "the blood of Christ" is that it refers to His *death*. "Blood" is a Hebrew equivalent of the phrase "to shed blood," which is a way of describing death by violence, as opposed to a natural death (see Lev. 17:4; Num. 35:33; Deut. 19:10; 32:42; 1 Kings 2:5; Prov. 6:17; Ezek. 18:10; 22:27; Matt. 23:30, 35; Acts 22:20). Therefore, "redemption through His blood" means: redemption accomplished by His violent death, in which His blood was—if you will—spilled as a sacrifice. All of those Old Testament bloody sacrifices pictured over and over, and emphasized countless tens of thousands of times, that sin had to be atoned for by the giving of a life (Heb. 9:22).

There's a verse you need to know; remember this reference, and/or memorize this verse. It's in the Book of Leviticus; smack dab in the middle of all of those regulations about all of those sacrifices, Leviticus 17:11 says: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement." You would come to the priest; you would bring the animal for the sacrifice; the priest would kill the animal—slaughter the animal—and then, some of the blood would be "sprinkled on the altar" (Ex. 24:6)—that was the way of showing that *that blood covered your sin*; that was the picture of Christ in *every* blood sacrifice (Heb. 10:4; 1 Pet. 1:2). But *always*, the animal had to die (Heb. 9:22); you couldn't bring your perfect pet lamb and bring it to the priest and have him, like a diabetic does, prick his paw and get a drop of blood and put it on the altar, and then put a Band-Aid on the paw and wait for the next sacrifice. No, the animal had to be given, because it's "it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement" for sin.

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I don't know if they still use the slogan, but the Red Cross used to say: "Give life. Give blood." They probably had *no idea* what great theology they were stating, even if they didn't apply it anywhere near the right way. The price of your redemption was the death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:10; Heb. 2:9; 7:27; 10:10, 14). And because of who He is—the sinless God-Man who lived a perfect life (Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22)—His sacrificial death is *special* (Matt. 3:17); that's what gives meaning to the term "the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:19). So, in Ephesians 1:7—"In Him we have redemption *through His blood*, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." *Don't get weird about the actual blood* that flowed through Jesus's body! Be thankful for "His death" (Is. 53:9).

Oh, and by the way: You've heard the theme-song of the angels in Heaven, the one they *burst out with* when Jesus, the "Lamb" that was "slain" (Rev. 5:6)—remember, He comes up to God the Father, the One who sits "on the throne" (vs. 7), and He takes the scroll that contains all of the revelation of what is going to happen in the unfolding of the Day of the Lord; He takes that, and all of the angels burst out: "They sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation' " (Rev. 5:9). "You are worthy because You are the Redeemer."

So now you know The Meaning Of Redemption, The Person Of Redemption, The Price of Redemption. Now, look at The Result Of Redemption. There's a parallel statement to the word "redemption"; and when I say that, in this very complicated Greek sentence, it *is* an exact parallel: "redemption" which is "the forgiveness of our trespasses." Verse 7—"In Him we have redemption through His blood, *the forgiveness of our trespasses*, according to the riches of His grace."

"Trespasses" is one of about nine different words in the New Testament to describe sins. There are a lot of different ways of sinning; there are a lot of different ways of *describing* sin. The usual word for sin—like we saw in Romans 3:23—means: "to miss the mark," anything short of perfection (Matt. 5:48; Jas. 2:10). It's an archery term; if you miss the bullseye, that's a *hamartia*—that's a "sin." But *this one* describes sins as "falling to the side" or "stepping out of bounds"—another way of describing a sin.

"Forgiveness" comes from a Greek word that means: "to let go," "to send away," or, "to depart." So "forgiveness of sins" means "releasing or letting go of them *as if* they had not been committed." (e.g., Is. 44:22; Mic. 7:19; Rom. 4:7-8; 8:29, 33-34; Eph. 5:27; Heb. 8:12; Jude 24) There's a *wonderful* Old Testament illustration of this idea, also from the Book of Leviticus; this one from the events of the annual Day of Atonement—Yom Kippur, if you like to wax Hebrew about it: Leviticus Chapter 16, Verses 3 through 10. It's all in the context of all the things that the priests had to do to make sacrifices for themselves, for the utensils, for the altar, for the whole place that it was going to be offered. But it also describes two goats. Goat #1 is described in Leviticus Chapter 16, Verse 15—"Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil"—that's into the Holy of Holies—"and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull"—there was a bull offered before this, obviously—"and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat."

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Again: animal had to die, then the blood brought in and sprinkled on the altar, symbolically saying, "This is offered on behalf of all these people." Oh, and by the way, here's a little tidbit: That word "mercy seat" refers to the lid on top of the Ark of the Covenant, that gold-plated lid; and that "mercy seat" is called a *hilastērion* if you translate it into Greek. That's the New Testament word for "propitiation" (1 Jn. 2:2); that's the sacrifice which is offered, which satisfies the wrath of God (Rom. 3:25; 5:9). How is the wrath of God satisfied? The blood of the sacrifice is applied on behalf of the worshipper (Ex. 12:13; Rev. 1:5). So that's Goat #1—a picture of the death of Christ (1 Cor. 15:3).

Goat #2, down in Leviticus Chapter 16, Verses 20 through 22—*this* is a picture of *forgiveness*; and we have "redemption," which is "the forgiveness of our trespasses." Okay, here's Goat #2: Verse 20—"When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the *live* goat. Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness." This is one of the bit-players in the events of the Day of Atonement; his job was to stand there until Goat #2 was ready and all the sins are confessed, as the priest lays his hands to identify with that goat. "The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness." The guy had to take that goat far away, and abandon it.

Alright—what is that a picture of? Put it together: That's a picture of Christ's work on our behalf! He is the sin sacrifice by means of His death (Eph. 5:2), *and* He is the One who *separated our sins from us!* (Jn. 1:29; Rom. 11:27; 1 Jn. 3:5). Have you ever heard of the "scapegoat"? *That's what it is!* This is where that comes from—the one who *bears all of the sins* (Is. 53:11); you put all the *blame* on the scapegoat...And if you want to remember which one that is, he's the one that 'scaped out into the wilderness. I don't think that's what the etymology is, but you'll remember it that way.

And what *amazing* results come from this! Have you ever looked at Psalm 103, Verse 12? "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." What a *great* picture! If you start walking east—and swimming and boating, or whatever—you can go east for the rest of your life! Or, you could go *west* for the rest of your life! This doesn't work if you say "north" and "south," because if you start going north, when you go over a pole, you're headed south! If you start going south and you go under a pole, you're headed north. This is the *perfect* word picture, to say, "As far as the east is from the west"—well, *that's infinite!* That is the redemption that you have in Christ (Heb. 9:12)—*pictured* in the two goats on the Day of Atonement; fulfilled in what Christ did (cf. 1 Cor. 5:7; Col. 2:17).

So there's The Meaning, The Person, The Price, and The Result Of Redemption. Now, let's look at The Source Of Redemption. Verse 7 again, and this time into Verse 8—"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to *the riches of His grace* which He lavished on us." The Source Of Redemption is: "the riches of His grace."

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The phrase "according to"—that's significant because, think of a comparison: Imagine two very wealthy people. One gives you something "out of" his riches. The other one gives you something "*according to*" his riches—or, *proportionate* to his riches. Which would be more significant? Obviously, "according to." The pattern of the extent of the forgiveness of God is the *inexhaustible* storehouse of "the riches of His grace."

And yes, you probably know the definition of the word "grace." It means "unmerited favor." This is a case where the Sunday School lesson is actually correct; you can turn the word "grace" into an acronym for the saying: "God's Riches At Christ's Expense." That's *grace*. "Mercy" is that you *do not get* what you *deserve*. "Grace" is that you *get* what you *do not deserve*—which is salvation.

Then He says that His grace is "lavished on us." I think they [the NASB-1995 translators] picked *exactly* the right word when they said "lavished." It comes from a Greek word that means, if you're talking about a number: to exceed it. If you're talking about a measure of something, it's "over and above"—in *superabundance* (cf. Ps. 103:8b; Lk. 6:38; Rom. 8:37; 10:12), and that's how God's grace comes to us; it comes in *overflowing* measure, it's *boundless* (cf. Jn. 1:16; Eph. 3:20; 1 Tim. 1:14). If you were going to write a song about it, you might say it is the "marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, freely bestowed on all who believe!" Why, it is "Grace greater than all our sin," "Grace Greater Than Our Sin," 1910, Julia H. Johnston—but don't write the song; turn to Hymn #78, it's already there! Why did she say that? She had read Ephesians Chapter 1, and other places.

The Meaning Of Redemption—you've been set free from your bondage. The Person Of Redemption is Christ. The Price Of Redemption is His death. The Result Of Redemption is our forgiveness. The Source Of Redemption is God's grace.

And now, look at The Outcome Of Redemption. Pick it up in the middle of Verse 8, and we'll read all the way through Verse 10—"In all wisdom and insight"—okay, let's stop there. "Wisdom" is the knowledge of spiritual things, and the right use of that knowledge (see 1 Cor. 2:6-7). "Insight" is the earthly application of "wisdom." The word "insight" is related to the word "think," for how you think. So he says: "In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth."

I remember translating this sentence for the first time, and just saying, "Wow! What a *package* we have of all these spiritual blessings!" And attached to redemption, look at what this says; there are parallel thoughts in this two-and-a-half-verse expression: "His will" (vs. 9) is parallel to "His good pleasure" (vs. 9, NKJV; "kind intention," NASB-1995) which is parallel to "His purpose" (vs. 9, "He purposed"). "His will" implies His sovereign choice—"He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4); now, He's working out His will in time (cf. Gal. 1:15-16a). "His good pleasure" implies what He *desires* and what He approves, or what He likes. And His "purpose" implies His predetermination (cf. Eph. 1:11).

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So in other words: In Christ, to His redeemed people, God has chosen to reveal, by His own desire and predetermination, His mystery—His formerly hidden "mystery" (Col. 1:26)—as to the culmination "of all things in Christ." He has "made known to us the mystery." That means that now, in Christ, we have revelation of something that wasn't known in Old Testament times (Rom. 16:25-26). That's what the word "mystery" means.

And the Book of Ephesians is where the most is written in one place about this "mystery," which, as we will see it unfold, is all about the Church—the Body of Christ—that has brought together people of all backgrounds—and that includes Jews and Gentiles, who had *nothing* to do with each other, didn't like each other at all (Acts 10:28; 16:20). Jews, if they had to go from Jerusalem to Galilee, they would add a whole day to their trip so they could go cross the Jordan River, go up the other side, and cross the Jordan River again, so they wouldn't even set foot in the dirt that belonged to the "Samaritans" (Jn. 4:9)—and they were Jewish half-breeds! And they *all* hated the Gentiles! And the Gentiles didn't have anything to do with them.

And he says, in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28)—*none of those things matter*, because there is *one redemption* for all (see Eph. 2:16; 4:4-5).

If you want a further sniff of what we're going to study in depth later, you might want to go ahead and read Ephesians 3:1-6. Some of you have mentioned that you've already had the joy of taking me up on my challenge to read through Ephesians each week as we go, or read a chapter a day. Well, you might want to go connect that to what we're saying today.

The concept of the "mystery" that is now revealed was first introduced by Jesus. Remember the setting of Matthew Chapter 12—the Pharisees, the leaders of the Jews, made their full public rejection of Jesus; and so it says from then on, He didn't teach the same way in public; He started speaking in parables, illustrating things to come. And when His disciples asked Him why, He said, "To you it has been granted to know the *mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 13:11)—which is exactly the same as "the kingdom of God." There are "mysteries" about that. "What mysteries?" Well, you don't know them because they haven't been revealed yet!

He gives parables about a time of a kingdom with the king gone, a time that is a long period of planting and waiting, and sowing and reaping; and there's harvesting; and it's like bringing in a net full of fish, and some are good and some are bad. He's describing something that they didn't know; He *began* to reveal those mysteries. And then, through the Apostle Paul, most of the rest of it is revealed to us.

Well, Verse 10 in our text is the elaboration of this: "With a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth." What a *fascinating* phrase—"administration suitable to the fullness of the times." "The fullness of the times"—that's the time of Christ. Galatians Chapter 4, Verse 4, says that Christ came in "the fullness of the time."

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And then He talks about this word "administration *suitable to the fullness of the times.*" If you've ever heard the word "dispensation"—perhaps you've looked at a King James Version; its translators used the word "dispensation" to translate this word four of the six times that it occurs in the New Testament. But what it actually means is: a managing of things; it comes from a word that is a combination of "house" and "manage."

We don't *use* the word "dispensation" all that often in our world, but in the sense of this use of the word, we would be what people call "Dispensational" as that word is usually used; meaning: we recognize different "dispensations"—or, different "administrations," or, different "rules of the house," different ways that things are managed—in different eras. So you can think of a "dispensation" as a period of Bible history—past or future—which is, in a certain sense, distinguished from the era before it and the era after it.

So, here is your mini-course in dispensations: The major transitions from one era to another—when there is a big change, when there is new revelation given—here are the main ones: And you can find Dispensationalists that will argue over whether two dispensations, three dispensations, six dispensations, *seven* dispensations, *twelve* dispensations...but nobody can argue with these; here are *big* change-points in human history: The Fall—things were different before and after sin came into the world (Gen. 3:14-14); the Flood—things were different before and after the Flood; the giving of the Mosaic Law—that was a big one; the life, death, and resurrection of Christ—*that's* huge; the coming of the Holy Spirit—*that's* huge (Jn. 14:17); the Rapture of the Church, when God removes the Church from the Earth—that's huge (1 Thess. 4:16-17; cf. Rev. 3:10); then seven years later, the Second Coming—that's huge (Rev. 19:11-21); there's the Millennial Kingdom, the thousand-year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:4-6); and then there's the "new heaven" and the "new earth" (Rev. 21:1).

Now, here's the idea: There are various terms applied to these eras between those events; and Dispensationalists differ on how to label them. We essentially live in the era that is best described as the Dispensation of Grace—we "stand" in the "grace" of God (Rom. 5:2; cf. 6:14; Jn. 1:17; Gal. 3:19). But the most essential understanding of "Dispensationalism" is recognizing that there is a difference between the Church and the Nation of Israel—that they are distinct (Rom. 11:7-32). Israel is not swallowed up by the Church, and the Church is not the "new version" of Israel (see Jer. 31:35-37). God will fulfill all of His promises to Israel eventually, in the Millennial Kingdom (see Matt. 8:11; 18:28; Lk. 22:30).

So there *are* those points of transition and change. There *are* different eras, with different "rules" in force, if you will. There are always many things—most things *carried over* from one dispensation to the next, but there are always *new* things that are added; and some of those nullify some of the things that were in force before them (e.g., Mk. 7:19; 2 Cor. 3:6-11; Gal. 5:2, 6; Col. 2:16-17). But as you look at all those points of transition and change, understand: This is all *one continuous unfolding* of the plan of redemption! And if you exegete each passage on its own, and then you put them all together, you observe both the amazing unity and continuity within the Bible, as well as certain *discontinuity* as the plan unfolds; both of those things are true.

Sermon Title: In Him We Have Redemption
Scripture Text: Eph. 1:7-10 (Ephesians #5)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 5-30-21

Now, you say, "I *thought* he was in Ephesians, but he headed somewhere for the desert south of Mountain Home (Idaho)." Okay. What I want you to see is that this word—translated "administration" here; the King James Version translates it "dispensation" four of the six times that it occurs—it's a slightly different form of the word that is usually translated "steward" or "stewardship." The verb form means "to manage." It's *not used* primarily as a period of time; but that word has been adopted that way, so we'll use it when we talk about dispensations. The component parts of the word translated "administration" are "house," as I said, and "manage." So the New American Standard captures well the sense of this word with our word "administration"—or, "house rules." This means that there is an administration by God of a certain period of human history in which we happen to live. It speaks of the ways that God works in and through all of the events of all of the peoples of all of the eras of human history, to fulfill His will.

So, we have "redemption" in Christ—back to Verse 10—"with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times"—that's referring to Christ's coming—"that is, the summing up of all things in Christ"—which goes on through the Tribulation time and the Kingdom time—"things in the heavens and things on the earth." So he's talking about when Christ came—and subsequent to that, we have redemption.

"Summing up" is one of those fancy words in Greek that is a polysyllabic word—I think it's about six syllables long; it's a translation of one Greek word, the core of which is the word for "head," and the idea is of it all coming together again *under one Head* in Christ. So our redemption is all about the plan of God "in Christ" to bring everything together. We are part of that now, in the Church—but there is even more to come in the future; we're going to see that later in the chapter, and we're going to see that later, several more times, in Ephesians.

So, the key word today is "redemption." Here's your overview of redemption, from Ephesians 1:7-10: The Meaning—We have been purchased out of slavery to sin. The Person Of Redemption—obviously, is Christ; He is the One who did the redeeming. The Price Of Redemption is nothing less than His "life" (Jn. 10:15)—or His "death" (Heb. 2:14), depending on how you want to view it. The Result Of Redemption is the forgiveness of sins. The Source Of Redemption is God's grace; you didn't do anything to redeem yourself—you *can't* do anything to redeem yourself because, well, you're not perfect...and it requires the perfect sacrifice (Deut. 15:21; Mal. 1:8). The Outcome Of Redemption is that God is in the process of bringing everything together under Christ.

So, what do you do about it? Well, please don't go home and say, "Oh, wow, what a great sentence that is in Ephesians 1:3-14. It *is* a great sentence; it is a great collection. But what are you supposed to *do* about it? Well, remember those two verses I read you at the beginning, where Paul used that basic word *agorazō*, about buying something in the marketplace? Remember, they were both in First Corinthians? And First Corinthians was, amazingly, written to the church at Corinth. Corinth was *so messed up* that, when Chuck Swindoll started preaching on First Corinthians, he called it "First Californians." Think of people who have heard the Gospel and they have believed, but they still have *a whole lot to figure out* about what to do with it.

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So, here's what to do with the Doctrine of Redemption: First Corinthians 6:20—"For you have been bought with a price: therefore"—this is what you're supposed to do about it—"glorify God in your body." Glorify God in how you live on this Earth (2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:25; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 2:15; Col. 2:6; 3:17; Titus 2:10).

How do you *do* that? Well, you might even say, based on "the mercies of God...present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God" (Rom. 12:1), because that's what God wants you to do.

Realize: It's a "free gift" (Rom. 5:15; 6:23). You didn't contribute *anything* to your redemption (Phil. 3:9); you *can't* contribute anything (Rom. 8:8). All the work is accomplished by God through what Christ did on the Cross. You need to *receive* "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24; cf. 1 Cor. 15:1).

How many slaves do you think had served a cruel master who then decided to sell them to somebody else, and somebody comes along and says, "Okay, I want to pay the price for that one and that one and that one," and then say, "Okay, you're free to go"—how many of them do you think would say, "Nah; I kind of like this cage"? *No!*

You have received your redemption! So, "glorify God in your body." You have received redemption in Christ *so that* you can now live a redeemed life (Rom. 6:3-14)—and He even gives you the power to live the redeemed life by putting His Holy Spirit within you (Eph. 3:16). You just need to *receive* the "free gift," if you will.

Remember John 1:12 and 13. It says in Verse 11 that "He came to His own" world that He created, and His own people rejected Him. But then it says: "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

Remember last time, we talked about "adoption"? That's what we are elected *to*, if you will (Eph. 1:5)—that we become the adopted children of God (Gal. 4:5). "To those who believe in His name," you "become" His "children."

So, now that you understand redemption, if it's the cry of your heart to have this and you *don't*, then tell that to God. Ask Him to give you the "free gift." Ask Him to invade your life in the person of Christ. Tell Him you don't any longer want to be a slave to your sin.

He will do what He has promised: you *will be* the recipient of redemption (Ps. 86:5, 15; Is. 55:7; Acts 2:21)—oh, and *everything else* that is described as "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." (see Rom. 10:12; cf. Ps. 103:4)

My friends, we are "*redeemed*" (Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). We've been *set free* (Lk. 4:18; Rom. 8:2; cf. Jn. 8:36). Let's glorify God in how we live (Ps. 116:12; cf. Ps. 50:15; 71:23; 103:2; 107:2; Is. 59:20; Col. 3:1; 1 Jn. 5:3; Rev. 14:12).

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And let's pray:

Our Father, thank You that we can come to You in the name of Your Son, knowing that we stand in Him, knowing that we have all the riches of Your grace that You have lavished upon us in Christ. Father, please don't let someone go away from here, still choosing bondage rather than freedom in the Savior. And Father, there are people all around us who need to hear the message: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...He was buried...He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Put that message on our lips, and give us opportunity, give us boldness, to speak the truth in love to those who most desperately need us. And Father, may our redeemed lives provoke people around us to ask about our Redeemer, because it is all for His glory, and it is only by His power that we could ever be instruments of spreading Your grace. So use us to that end, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.