
Redemption

Redemption is a term used in the Bible to refer to the special intervention of God for the salvation of mankind. This use of the word deals with the work of Jesus Christ on the cross in which He paid the price to purchase human beings and set them free from their slavery to sin. On account of Christ's substitutionary atonement, He is called the redeemer.

There are other ideas closely related to the primary concept of redemption which relate to the necessity for redemption and its various aspects and to the effects of the ministry of God's grace in the life of the Christian believer.

Old Testament Background and Typology

Redemption of Firstborn Sons, Firstlings of the Flock, First Fruits

The word "redemption" in the Old Testament is the translation of the Hebrew word *pādāh*, meaning "to deliver" or "to sever". It was continuously stressed to the Israelites that they belonged to Jehovah because He had redeemed them (severed them from bondage in Egypt) and had provided the land of Canaan for them to use as a gift from God and for His glory. For this reason, all Israel owed their lives and their service to God, in effect making the whole nation a kingdom of priests, at least in spirit.

However, only Levi and the descendants of his tribe, who became known as the priestly tribe, were actually set apart for the service of the tabernacle. Everyone else from the eleven other tribes was to be redeemed, or purchased, from service by redeeming the firstborn of both men and animals.

A son was considered firstborn if he was the first son born to his mother. If a man had more than one wife, each wife could have a firstborn son. Each firstborn son was presented to the Lord on the 40th day after his birth and redeemed by a payment of five shekels of silver to the priests (Num. 18:16; Ex. 13:15; Luke 2:27).

The firstlings of oxen, sheep and goats were to be brought to the sanctuary within a year and eight days after their birth, and sacrificed (Num. 18:17). The firstborn of an ass, which was an unclean animal, was redeemed by sacrificing a sheep in its place; or, if not redeemed in this manner, was put to death itself (Ex. 13:12 ff; 34:20). Later, the law provided that the ass could be redeemed with money, the amount to be determined by the market value of the ass plus twenty percent, according to the priest's valuation (Lev. 27:27; Num. 18:15).

The firstfruits of the harvest were sacred to Jehovah because He is the Lord of the soil (Ex. 23:19). These were given to the priest to be presented as an offering. The whole congregation was required to offer an annual thanksgiving offering at harvest time by presenting a firstfruits sheaf at the Passover. These were not to be burned but were to be given to the priests for their use, with the provision that only those priests who were ceremonially clean could eat the firstfruits. The amount of offering of firstfruits was not specified by the Law but was left to each person's discretion.

Later in Jewish history, the children of Israel began to be called the redeemed of the Lord, after they had been set free from the Babylonian captivity (; Isa. 51:11). The two verses do not fit this context.

The Kinsman Redeemer

According to the laws regarding punishment and retribution for crime, when a person was assaulted, robbed or murdered, it fell to the nearest kinsman to bring the criminal to justice and to protect the lives and property of relatives. This obligation was called "redeeming and the man who was responsible for fulfilling this duty was known as a redeemer (Heb. *go-el*). The job of redeemer would fall to full brothers first, then to uncles who were the father's brothers, then to full cousins, and finally to the other blood relatives of the family

(Lev. 25:48). The kinsman redeemer of the Old Testament was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ as redeemer. There were four requirements for the redeemer, both in the type and in Christ:

1. The redeemer must be a near kinsman. To fulfill this Christ took on human form.
2. The redeemer must be able to redeem. The price of man's redemption was the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
3. The redeemer must be willing to redeem (Heb. 10:4-10). Christ was willing to be our redeemer.
4. The redeemer must be free from that which caused the need for redemption; that is, the redeemer cannot redeem himself. This was true of Christ, because He needed no redemption.

READ Ruth 3:9-13; 4:1-11.

The nation of Israel as a whole required a redeemer to redeem the lands which had been taken over by foreign powers, so they looked to Jehovah to become their *go-el*. The period of exile gave an even greater force and meaning to the term redeemer than it had before; and the book of Isaiah contains nineteen of the thirty-three Old Testament references to God as Israel's covenant redeemer.

Redemption in the New Testament

Slavery to Sin

In the New Testament we see that all people are slaves because all are sold under sin and in spiritual bondage.

Rom. 7:14, "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin."

Acts 8:23 uses the phrase "the bond of iniquity".

READ John 8:31-36

READ Romans 6:12-18

See also Rom. 7:23; 2 Tim. 2:26; 2 Pet. 2:19.

Furthermore, all people are helplessly condemned to die.

Ezek. 18:4, "Behold, all souls are mine, saith the Lord. As the soul of the father, so also the

soul of the son is mine. The soul that sins, it shall die."

1 Cor. 15:22, "As in Adam all die..."

See also John 3:18, 36; Rom. 3:19; Gal. 3:10.

The Principle of Redemption

The principle of redemption, then, is the concept of bondage to the slavery of sin and freedom from its domination (John 8:31-36). To be redeemed means to be purchased from slavery.

The Greek word (**lutroo**), means "to release for ransom; to liberate; to redeem". It comes from the word (**luo**) meaning "to loosen; to unbind; to set at liberty". It is used in 1 Pet. 1:18,19, "Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed (**lutroo**) 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."

Titus 2:14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem (lutroo) us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

The noun (**lutron**) means "the price paid; the ransom", as in

Matt. 20:28, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom (lutron) for many."

Jesus Christ purchased our freedom; and His blood is the payment for the redemption. Psalm 34:22; 1 Peter 1:18,19; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 1 John 1:7.

Therefore, Jesus Christ is man's redeemer, and as such He is divinely appointed. The redemption that He brought represents both His own love and that of the Father for the whole world.

The word (**agoradzo**) means "to buy; to redeem; to acquire by paying ransom". Derived from **agora**, "marketplace".

1 Cor. 6:20, "For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This is analogous to the OT idea in which the Israelites owed their very existence to God.

Rev. 5:9, "And they sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

See also 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 14:3.

The word (**exagoradzo**) means "to buy out of the hands of a person; to redeem; to set free."

Gal. 3:13, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree."

The word (**apolutrosis**) means "to dismiss for ransom paid; redemption".

1 Cor. 1:30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Rom. 3:23,24, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Eph. 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace."

Heb. 9:15, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Rom. 8:22,23, "For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until not. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."

Eph. 1:13,14, "In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom after you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Some Implications of the Doctrine of Redemption

Redemption is the basis of our eternal inheritance. See Eph. 1:13,14 and Heb. 9:15 above.

Redemption is the basis of justification. Rom. 3:23, 24 (above).

Redemption includes the total forgiveness of sins; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14.

Redemption results in adoption.

Gal. 4:4-6, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, To redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

The doctrine of redemption is used to orient believers in time of stress.

Job 19:25, "I know that my Redeemer liveth..."

At the point of redemption we can have peace of mind, stability, a relaxed mental attitude by knowing the doctrine and that God has paid for and provided for everything.