

# Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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## The Great Salvation: Redemption

Hello. We are going to think about our subject of "Redemption" in six sections.

### Firstly, "The Results of Sin."

In very simple terms, "sin" is going our own way instead of going God's way. Sin has plunged us into guilt, and has brought us face to face with condemnation. It has also entangled us in a bondage from which we are utterly unable to pull ourselves free. Thankfully, we have the Gospel. It proclaims forgiveness in relation to our guilt, and justification instead of condemnation. It reveals to us God, acting as Redeemer, delivering His people from bondage and, thereby, freeing His inheritance from all the hindrances under which formerly it lay.

### Secondly, "A Definition of Redemption."

There is a good deal about redemption in the Old Testament, and one of the words used for it there has the meaning: "*freeing, whether by avenging or repaying.*" In the New Testament, the word has the same meaning: "*a setting free*" or "*loosing away*", usually as the result of a payment. If we consider a hostage situation, the victim may be set free by a successful assault on the captor. This is redemption by power. That power acts against the captor on behalf of the prisoner. On the other hand, the hostage may be set free when the required ransom is paid. This is redemption by payment. In the redemption of God, the victims are blessed and the captors are punished.

### Thirdly, "An Old Testament Type of Redemption."

In the book Exodus we find the great type of redemption seen in the setting free of the Hebrew slaves from the bondage of Egypt. A *type* is "a figure or representation of something yet to happen". The word "type" comes from the Greek word "*Tupos*" which means "the mark of a stroke or a blow". It has the sense of a coin being minted. An impression is made which forms a pattern or design of some kind. Through Moses the LORD spoke to the down-trodden Hebrew slaves in this way: "*And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments; And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.*" (Exodus 6:5-8).

The Lord was true to His word. The plagues which He sent as judgments upon Egypt were completed with the deaths of all the firstborn. Only the children of Israel were protected from that final judgment because they obeyed God's word by slaying a lamb and, using hyssop, brushing its blood upon the doorposts and lintels of their homes. Seeing the blood, the avenging angel passed over them. So this was clearly a case of redemption by *avenging judgments* upon the wrongs of Egypt (though we also see the repayment of what the Hebrews owed to God as sinners in the shed blood of the lamb). When all was effectively accomplished, we find Israel on the further bank of the Red Sea, singing, "*Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed*" (Exodus 15:13).

We can see a parallel to this redemption in the New Testament where we read in John 8:36: "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*" The Christian is set free from the burdens of sin just as the children of Israel were set free from the burdens of Egypt. Christians are set free from the rule of sin and yield themselves to righteousness just as Israel was set free from the bondage of Egypt and were subject to God. Christians are set free through the work of the arm of the Lord - the Lord Jesus Christ - at the cross (where He received the judgment of God against sin) just as Israel was redeemed by a stretched out arm and by judgments. Christians are accepted in Christ, God's Beloved Son. They are God's people just as Israel was taken to be His people in Old Testament times. However, they are privileged to be both children of God, and sons of the Father. Christians have a Shepherd and Bishop of their souls who leads them through life, just as the Lord himself brought Israel out of Egypt. Finally, just as Israel were given an earthly inheritance, so God gives the Christian a heavenly inheritance.

#### Fourthly, “An Old Testament Illustration of Redemption.”

Furthermore, a striking *illustration* of redemption is given to us in the book of Ruth. An “illustration” uses stories in which people, things and events make a principle or other meaning clear. The story may be summarised as follows:

There was a family which left Bethlehem in a time of famine. It consisted of Elimelech and his wife, Naomi, and their two sons. They went to the idolatrous country of Moab. After a while Elimelech died. The sons, against the Law of God, were then married to women of that country. These were called Orpah and Ruth. After about ten years the two sons died. Naomi decided to return to her own land. Ruth was determined to go with her, and did. Orpah stayed in Moab. Upon their return, it was written in the Law that the near kinsman to Naomi was to take her husband’s place and raise up children to her previous husband’s name. Well, Naomi was too old for this; but Ruth wasn’t. Therefore, a near relative was discovered whose name was Boaz. Naomi and Ruth thought that he would be able to take up this responsibility. However, Boaz found that there was a man who was more closely related to them. He had the first right to redeem all that belonged to Elimelech. Therefore, Boaz spoke with this person who allowed Boaz to buy all that belonged to the family of Elimelech, including Naomi and Ruth. (The fellow would not buy the inheritance himself because it included Ruth who was a Moabitess). So Ruth became the wife of Boaz instead. Boaz redeemed Elimelech’s inheritance by payment, and became responsible to raise up of the name of the dead by taking Ruth. Boaz took to himself both the wife and the inheritance - by right of redemption. It was not long afterwards that Ruth gave birth to Obed who was to become the grandfather of David. How gracious God is!

Both in the type and in the illustration, bondage of one sort or another was in question. In the *type*, Israel were in sore bondage under Pharaoh, and again and again in reference to them Egypt is called “the house of bondage”. In the *illustration*, the inheritance of the dead Elimelech was in danger of passing into other hands, and the widow and daughter-in-law of lapsing into slavery. This disaster was averted by Boaz who took the necessary action as their kinsman redeemer.

#### Fifthly, “Redemption in the New Testament.”

Turning to the New Testament, we find that redemption, as well as justification, is mentioned in Romans 3:24. Christians are said to be “*justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*”. There we find that the grace of God is the source of our justification and the redemptive work of Christ is the means of it. We gain it through faith in Christ Jesus. This is confirmed in Ephesians 1:7 where we read: “*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*” Furthermore, this serves to emphasize an important point: namely, that these different aspects of the work of Christ (and its effects) are so closely connected that we cannot have one without the other. Yet, though never to be *divided* the one from the other, they are clearly to be *distinguished*. The earlier part of Romans 3 has brought before us not only the guilt and condemnation of sin, but also its bondage. The word itself is not actually used until chapter 8 is reached, yet the idea is there, for the Apostle says, “*We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin*” (Romans 3:9). To be “under sin” is to be under the power of it, that is, to be in bondage to it. You might call it Sin the Master. Christ has done the great work which more than adequately pays off all the liabilities under which we lay, and thus redemption is in Him for us.

If we read on through the Epistle to the Romans, we discover, in chapter 6 and the early part of chapter 8, how we are actually set free from the tyranny of sin and the yoke of the law; all of which had proved us to be in “the bondage of corruption”. This phrase is actually used in 8:21, where we learn that the whole earthly creation lies under its degrading captivity, but that all shall be delivered in a day to come, and shall be brought into “*the liberty of the glory of the children of God*”. How wonderful that, when the Lord Jesus appears as King of Kings, the children of God shall stand forth in all their glory. Only then will there be proclaimed a jubilee of liberty for all creation.

For that moment we wait, and in verse 23 it is said that for us the Lord’s coming will involve, “*the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies*”. Here again redemption appears, since the point in question is deliverance from bondage; and the redemption of our bodies is presented to us as a freedom gained by avenging, as God says in Hosea 13:14, “*I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy destruction*”. This scripture is alluded to and applied to the resurrection of the body in 1 Corinthians 15:55. In that glad day, the bodies of all God’s saints will be delivered from the grip of death which is the last enemy. As far as *our* bodies are concerned, the moment will arrive at the coming of the Lord Jesus for His saints. That having taken place, the Lord will set His hand to the work of redeeming by power, from the hand of the enemy, all the rest of that possession which He purchased by His blood.

This coming redemption by power is a great theme of Old Testament prophecy. It is particularly prominent in the latter part of Isaiah. Israel needed redemption for he was being trodden down by the Gentiles and hence is addressed as “*thou worm Jacob*”: and the Lord announces Himself as, “*thy Redeemer; the Holy One of Israel*” (Isaiah 41:14). Having introduced Himself in this light, He continues to speak of Himself as Redeemer until chapter 63 is reached, where the prophet sees Him in vision, coming forth from Edom and Bozrah, because at last, as He says, “*The day of*

*vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come*" (verse 4). The redemption of the true Israel of God means vengeance upon all their foes.

Yet, in the midst of these striking chapters with their many promises of a coming redemption by means of the avenging might of God, we get a most marvellous prediction concerning the yet deeper matter of redemption by means of the death of Christ. We read in Isaiah 52:3, "*Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money*". This is followed by the heart-moving chapter wherein the blessed Servant of the Lord is portrayed as the suffering, dying One, whose soul is made an offering for sin by the Lord Himself. The Redeemer is going to "*come to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob*" (Isaiah 59:20), but this is only possible inasmuch as He has first redeemed them without money as the result of the travail of His soul.

The hymn-writer, PP Bliss reminds us that the Son of God is our Redeemer:

*I will sing of my Redeemer,  
And His wondrous love to me:  
On the cruel cross He suffered,  
From the curse to set me free.*

*Sing, O sing of my Redeemer!  
With His blood He purchased me!  
On the cross He sealed my pardon,  
Paid the debt and made me free.*

The third verse of this hymn states:

*I will praise my dear Redeemer,  
His triumphant power I'll tell;  
How the victory He giveth  
Over sin and death and hell.*

Finally: "**Questions About Redemption.**"

*We sometimes hear people speak of "the finished work of redemption". But is it quite correct to speak in this way in view of the fact that we still wait for the redemption of our bodies?*

When people speak of the "finished work of redemption" they are usually thinking specifically about the work of redemption by blood. 1 Peter 1:18-19 state: "*Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*". Isaiah 52 speaks of our being "*redeemed without money*" (verse 3), while Isaiah 53 tells of the One who "*had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth*" (verse 9), and yet "*He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter*" (verse 7) for our redemption. That part of the great work is indeed finished, and never to be repeated. Propitiation has been made once and for all. So when it is a question of that, or of forgiveness, or of justification, there is *no future* aspect to be considered. But there is a future aspect of redemption, as we have seen, and it is well to remember this, and to speak with care, in case we obscure the finishing touches which are to be given to the work of redemption in the day to come. So it is not strictly correct to speak of Redemption as a finished work.

*On the other hand, some may say - as there is this future aspect of redemption, is it quite right if we speak of ourselves as having been redeemed? Ought we not rather to speak of ourselves as being redeemed?*

"*We have redemption through His blood*" - so says Scripture twice over (Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14). Therefore, we cannot be wrong if we say with all boldness that we have it. But it is through His blood, you notice. Redemption, in that aspect of it, is wholly in the past. The redemption of our bodies is wholly in the future. But redemption is never presented in Scripture as a process which is going on. It is *never* said that we are being redeemed day by day, though there is such a thing as day-by-day salvation.

*Others may argue that it is a rather uncomfortable doctrine which teaches that redemption, or a certain part of it at least, lies in the future? Might there not be a loophole here for just a little uncertainty to creep in?*

If redemption were a human work, or *if* even a small human element entered the question, there would be uncertainty right enough - not just a *little* creeping in, but a *flood* of it sweeping everything before it. We may well thank God that redemption is a divine work. God always completes His work. This we may see typically in the history of the redemption which He brought about in Egypt. He did not redeem the children of Israel by the blood of the Paschal

Lamb and then forget them, so that they remained under the taskmasters of Egypt. No. All those whom He redeemed by blood, He also redeemed by His mighty power clean out of Egypt. Each, down to the youngest child, had to go. In fact, not even a hoof was to be left behind. In like manner, God will complete His work concerning us. Every one redeemed by the precious blood of Christ will be there when, at His second coming, He redeems the bodies of His saints.

*It may be also asked: Is redemption the great end that God has in view for His people?*

The answer is "No". It is not the end in view, but rather the all-important *means* to that end. In Old Testament times, the purpose that God had in view was that Israel should be His own special nation, serving Him in the land He had given them. He had to redeem them out of Egypt in order that this might be brought to pass, for they could not serve Him so long as they were slaves to Pharaoh. In our case, the end in view is of a much higher order.

It is the purpose of God that we should be sons before Him in love. Ephesians 1:5 speaks of this, and we find that redemption is necessary as a means to that end. Colossians 1:12 shows that we are made fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; and, again, redemption is mentioned as necessary for this. Peter, in his first epistle, instructs us that God purposes to have us as a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5); but as a preliminary to this, he speaks of our having been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Other scriptures to the same effect might be cited. God has many thoughts for us His people, but their fulfilment is only possible upon the basis of redemption. First, we must be redeemed from every adverse power. Then God has His way with us to carry out His bright designs.

It is our prayer that you have put your trust in the Son of the living God, in order that you will share in this redemption; and that you will continue, as Christians, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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