

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Series:	Scripture Memory		Pastor/Teacher
Number:	74		Gary L.W. Johnson
Text:	1 Peter 1:18-19, 2:21-24, 3:18		
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SET FREE FROM THE BONDAGE TO SIN

First Peter is a short epistle. Five chapters and only 105 verses. All three of the passages we will be examining today highlight the importance of Christ's atoning works. The late Simon Kistemaker provides us with this breakdown of 1 Peter 2:24:

"We observe these points:

- I. **MANNER.** The first item we notice is the similarity between this verse and the prophecy of Isaiah 53. Peter follows the wording of the Septuagint, but even in English we see the resemblance. Here are three lines from chapter 53:

He took up our infirmities (v. 4).

He will bear their iniquities (v. 11).

He bore the sin of many (v. 12).

"Next, we point out that Peter sees this prophecy fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Thus he places the verse within the setting of Jesus' earthly life. He refers to Jesus' death on the cross. For the word *cross* he uses the expression *tree*, which is an idiom borrowed from the Old Testament (see Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29). The law explicitly states, *If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse.* [Deut. 21:22-23; also see Gal. 3:13]. Peter implies that Jesus endured God's curse when he suffered and died on the cross. He teaches that Christ gave his body as a sacrifice for our sins (compare John 1:29; Heb. 9:28; 10:10). That is, Jesus the sinless One became a substitute for us who are burdened by sin. Voluntarily he took upon himself the curse that was pronounced upon us and by his death removed it.

- II. **SIGNIFICANCE.** What is the purpose of Christ's sacrificial death? Peter answers, *So that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.* Literally Peter says, *That we might be utterly alienated from our sins.* By his death, Jesus has set us free from the bondage of sin, so that we are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ (consult Rom. 6:2-13; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:20). We appropriate our freedom from sin's tyranny when we come to God in repentance and faith. And we demonstrate our life in Christ when we obediently submit to God and do his will.

- III. **CONSEQUENCE.** Peter concludes this verse with a quotation from Isaiah 53:5, *By his wounds we are healed.* Because he is addressing the readers, Peter changes the first person plural to the second person plural: *By his wounds you have been healed.* Although the translation has the plural noun *wounds*, the Greek has the singular form, which actually means *a wound that is caused by flogging.* The slaves who were beaten unjustly by their masters could undoubtedly relate to Peter's description of Jesus' suffering. The expression *healed*

means *to be forgiven*. Peter is saying that the scourging Jesus received before he was crucified and the wounds inflicted on him when he was crucified were the penalty Jesus paid for the redemption of the believer. The word *healed* has a figurative meaning, for it *denotes the restoration of divine fellowship through the forgiveness of sins, and all the saving benefits which accompany it.*¹

This theme of being set free from the bondage to sin is taught elsewhere in the New Testament:

“We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” (Romans 6:2)

“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:11).

“. . . The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Galatians 6:14)

“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” (Colossians 3:3)

“Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.” (1 Peter 4:1)

“Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Romans 6:3-4; see 7:6 and Colossians 2:12)

CONCLUSION: The old Scottish commentator Robert Leighton rightly concluded by saying, “So, then, there is a union betwixt believers and Jesus Christ, by which this interchange is made; He being charged with their sins, and they clothed with His satisfaction and righteousness. This union is founded, **first**, in God’s decree of Election, running to this effect, that they should live in Christ, and so, choosing the Head and the whole mystical Body as one, and reckoning their debt as his, in His own purpose, that He might receive satisfaction, and they salvation, in their Head, Christ. The execution of that purpose and union began in Christ’s incarnation, it being for them, though the nature He assumed is theirs in common with other men. It is said, Heb. ii. 16, *He took not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham*, the company of believers: He became man for their sakes, because they are men. That He is of the same nature with unbelieving men who perish, is but by accident, as it were; there is no good to them in that, but the great evil of deeper condemnation, if they hear of Him, and believe not; but He was made man to be like, yea, to be one with the Elect, *and He is not ashamed to call them brethren*, as the Apostle there says, Heb. ii. 11. **Secondly**, this union is also founded in the actual intention of the Son so made man; He presenting himself to the Father in all He did and suffered, *as for them*, having them, and them only, in His eye and thoughts, in all. *For their sakes do I sanctify myself*. John xvii. 1, 9. Again, **thirdly**, this union is applied and performed in them, when they are converted and ingrafted into Jesus Christ by faith; and this doth actually discharge them of their own sins, and entitle them to His righteousness, and so, justify them in the sight of God. **Fourthly**, the consummation of this union, is in glory, which is the result and fruit of all the former. As it began in heaven, it is completed there; but betwixt these two in heaven, the intervention of those other two degrees of it on earth was necessary, being intended in the first, as tending to the attainment of the last. These four steps of it are all distinctly expressed in our Lord’s own prayer, John xvii.”²

ENDNOTES

¹Simon Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude: New Testament Commentary* (Baker, 1987), p. 111.

²Robert Leighton, *Commentary On First Peter* (rpt. Kregel, 1972), p. 228.