

## CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Series:	Scripture Memory	Pastor/Teacher
Number:	100	Gary L.W. Johnson
Text:	Ephesians 1:7, 8; 1 Thessalonians 1:10	
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### REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD

The church's one foundation  
is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
she is his new creation  
by water and the Word.  
From heaven he came and sought her  
to be his holy bride;  
With his own blood he bought her,  
and for her life he died.

These are well-known words from Samuel Stone's hymn *The Church's One Foundation* (p. 347 in *The Trinity Hymnal*). B. B. Warfield, in an address to incoming students at Princeton Theological Seminary, argued that "there is no one of the titles of Christ which is more precious to Christian hearts than Redeemer." Warfield went on to say that this is so because it "is the name specifically of the Christ of the cross. Whenever we pronounce it, the cross is placarded before our eyes and our hearts are filled with loving remembrance not only that Christ has given us salvation, but that he paid a mighty price for it."<sup>1</sup> Of course, I need not tell any of you the glorious significance of the name *Redeemer*. The name of this church is a constant reminder of this central feature of the gospel, which serves to remind us that we have been rescued. "It is this concept of rescue which underlines much of what the Bible says about the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. He died in order to rescue us. We were unable to rescue ourselves from the power and punishment of our own sin, but *Christ died for the ungodly . . . God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Rom. 5:6, 8). One Greek word for *rescue* is used in Galatians 1:4 to describe the purpose of the Saviour's sacrifice on the cross: *who gave himself for our sins to rescue us*. This term implies great danger as well as the inability of the people concerned to escape from the danger by their own efforts. On the cross, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ achieved a special rescue operation and one which it was impossible for any human or angel to accomplish. The same idea of rescue occurs again in 1 Thessalonians 1:10: . . . *Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath*. Only believers are rescued from God's anger, but notice that it is the Lord Jesus *alone* who rescues us from this *coming wrath*.<sup>2</sup>

- I. **REDEMPTION STATED.** Redemption, observed Thomas Goodwin, "is larger than forgiveness of sins; for redemption reacheth to glory also. Glory was to be purchased anew. And why? Because, though we were predestinated to glory in our relation unto Christ's person as our head, yet we forfeited it all, and it must therefore be bought again; and therefore the glory of heaven, in Luke 21:28, is called redemption. *Lift up your heads, for your redemption draws nigh*, saith Christ, speaking of the latter day. You have the like place, Rom. 8:23, *We groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of our bodies*. And Titus 2:14, sanctification itself is called redemption, *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. Redemption is a large word; for Christ was fain to buy all that God intended us,

because we lost it.”<sup>3</sup> There are *three* important terms used in the New Testament to express redemption. The first is *agorazo*. It comes from the marketplace and means *to buy or purchase* and always involves the thought of a transaction.<sup>4</sup> It closely parallels the Hebrew *gaal*, “to redeem,” (Ruth 4:1-8) and *kofer*, “a ransom price” (Psalm 49:7). The second term is *exagorazo*. As you can see, this is simply *agorazo* with the prefix *ex* and conveys the thought of buying *out of* the marketplace. The third word is *luo* (and its derivatives *lutroo*, *lutron*, *lutrosis* and *apolutrosis*); it means “to loose, set free or deliver.”

- II. **THE REDEEMER.** This redemption is procured by Christ; “in Him we have redemption.” Paul is here speaking of Christ’s work of redemption. The extent of this work is defined by the context. Who are redeemed? The very same ones that are chosen and predestinated in Him. These and no others are the recipients of Christ’s redeeming work. Note that Christ is declared to be God’s beloved (1:6). Chrysostom, one of the early church fathers, declared, “It is strange, infinitely strange, that he that was God’s beloved whom he delighteth in as in himself, that God should ever send him to be a Redeemer, and to shed his blood for sinners. What! Was he God’s beloved, and have you redemption in him too? Should God sacrifice his beloved? God chose us to be holy in heaven with him, to be sons with him there, to delight in us there. Let that plot stand, let them never come to be sinful, let me have them up in heaven presently with my Son. One would have thought God might have said this. No, God would commend his love yet further. He would let them fall into sins; to redeem them, he would sacrifice this beloved. He had so much love in his heart that he could commend it to us no way but by sacrificing his beloved. He might have chosen whether he had done so or no; he might have made us as happy in heaven as now we shall be; it needed not have cost him the blood of his Son. But now he wonderfully sets out his love to us, in that we have redemption in his beloved.”
- III. **THE PRICE OF REDEMPTION.** It was through “his blood” that sinners are redeemed. Paul tells us elsewhere that we are “bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23). This price is identified as being His blood. “But what is meant by his blood? His blood is only mentioned; not that his active obedience doth not go into it. Take all Christ, good brethren. But because his blood was the last part of the payment that cancelled all the bond, therefore his blood is still mentioned in Scripture. And his blood is more mentioned than the other. Why? To answer the expression of the type in the old law. There was the blood poured out, you know, and there was blood laid upon the horns of the altar, and all things were sprinkled with blood. What did the blood signify in the Old Testament? Blood in the Old Testament signified the soul of the beast; saith he, the life of it, or the soul of it, lieth in the blood. So in the New Testament still, the blood of Christ is mentioned, to signify the sufferings of his soul; and it is mentioned, too, to answer the type. In the Lord’s Supper you have bread, to signify the breaking of his body; but you shall find that he ascribeth more peculiarly his sufferings to his blood, signified by the wine, to represent the sufferings of his soul; and therefore his soul is said to be *poured forth*. Fall down, my brethren, before the Lord Jesus Christ. *Thou art worthy to receive all honour and glory, for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood*, say the angels and saints, Rev. 5:9.”<sup>5</sup>
- IV. **THE RESULT OF REDEMPTION.** Redemption secures for sinners the forgiveness of their sins (Colossians 2:13). Rightly did Richard Sibbes once declare, “We can never bless God too much, nor sufficiently, for Christ. *Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Eph. 1:3. Now we may think of sin without shame and despair. O blessed state, when a man can think of his former odious, and filthy, loathsome sins, and yet not despair! Because, when he believes in Christ, the blood of Christ purgeth all away, takes away all sin. He hath taken them away.”<sup>6</sup>
- V. **THE SOURCE OF REDEMPTION.** What caused God to be redemptive? “The riches of his grace.” And what is grace? I doubt if there is a biblical term that is more distorted or

misunderstood. It is very typical, even for professing evangelicals, to say something like this, “If you do this, then God will be gracious.” In this scheme “grace” is something God does in response to what we do first. The grace of God cannot be earned or merited or in any way solicited from God. The word properly understood always signifies God’s sovereign freedom to exercise His love and compassion. Therefore, the love of God is called grace as is His mercy. George Smeaton, in his classic work on the atonement, observed: “The passage further shows the consistency between Christ’s atoning blood, the price of pardon, and the exercise of free grace. Though it has been much urged that one of these elements must of necessity exclude the other, both are here affirmed, and perfectly consistent. Though not found together in human transactions, they are found in the moral government of God; for the divine administration differs from that of man in this respect, that God’s rights are inalienable. He could not recede from His rights even when He purposed to redeem and pardon, but vindicated them to the full; and this single text meets all cavils against the consistency of these two things – complete satisfaction and free grace. While pardon, therefore, is to us a gratuitous gift, it was procured by the payment of a price.”<sup>7</sup>

**CONCLUSION:** The great work of redemption which the Apostle glories in is little understood and even less appreciated in many churches today. Until we take seriously the Bible’s teaching on sin and God’s holiness, we will never be captivated the way Paul was with Christ the Redeemer. Bavinck, writing about a hundred years ago, said, “True, there are many who try to banish these serious thoughts from their minds and plunge into life as though there were no God and no commandment. They deceive themselves with the hope that there is no God (Ps. 14:1), that He does not bother about the sins of men, so that whoever does evil is good in His sight (Mal. 2:17), that He does not remember evil nor see it (Ps. 10:11 and 94:7), or else that, as perfect Love, He may not seek out and punish the wrong (Ps. 10:14). And whoever holds to the demand of the moral law and lets the ethical ideal stand in its loftiness can only agree that God must punish the wrong. God is love, indeed, but this glorious confession comes into its own only when love in the Divine being is understood as being a holy love in perfect harmony with justice. There is room for the grace of God only if the justice of God is first fully established.”<sup>8</sup> Our deepest problem is not that we do not share the Father’s horror of sin, or his understanding of what it deserves. Rather we deserve what sin actually deserves. Unless Christ bears this for me, he cannot redeem me. It is not enough that in some sense he absorbs the wrath of God, but does not bear it. To be our Savior he must bear the wrath to which we are liable and *deliver us from the wrath to come* (1 Thess. 1:10).<sup>9</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> B. B. Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ* (rpt. P&R, 1950), p. 325.

<sup>2</sup> Eryl Davies, *The Ultimate Rescue: Christ’s Saving Work on the Cross* (Evangelical Press, 1995), p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> *The Works of Thomas Goodwin I* (rpt. Tanski, 1996), p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> This word is found 25 times in the New Testament with its usual commercial meaning, mostly in the gospels (Matthew 13:44; Luke 22:36), but on five other occasions it describes the “buying of Christians out of the bondage of sin” (1 Corinthians 6:19; 7:23; Revelation 14:3); cf. *Dictionary of New Testament Theology I*, ed. C. Brown (Zondervan, 1975), p. 268.

<sup>5</sup> Goodwin, p. 124.

<sup>6</sup> *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes II* (James Nichol, 1862), p. 262.

<sup>7</sup> G. Smeaton, *The Apostle’s Doctrine of The Atonement* (rpt. Alpha Publications, 1979), p. 270.

<sup>8</sup> H. Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (rpt. Baker, 1977), p. 260.

<sup>9</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological and Pastoral Perspective*, eds. D. Gibson & J. Gibson (Crossway, 2013), p. 622.