

# Redemption.

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The history of redemption is bound up with the whole truth of grace, reaching back to the counsels of God in eternity, including the incarnation, the life, the death, the finished work of Christ on the cross, as also His resurrection, and reaching onward to the accomplishment of God's purposes in the conformity of His people to the image of His Son in glory. (Rom. 8: 29.) The word itself is only used once (see Gen. 48: 16) before its application to the deliverance of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt; and though found in the English version in Revelation, it is really never employed after the rapture of the Church.\* This makes it clear that we have redemption in type and figure in the history of Israel, and in fact in the work of Christ and the salvation of believers. The former was a temporal, the latter an eternal redemption; and it is because of the relation of the one to the other, as shadow and substance, that the two are often contrasted in the Scriptures. (See Heb. 9: 11, 12; 1 Peter 1: 18, 20.)

\*The word invariably used in the Apocalypse is "bought," not "redeemed." It is so, for example, in Rev. 5: 9 — "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed [ἡγόρασας, "bought"] to God by thy blood."

In pursuing our enquiry into the nature of redemption, there are three distinct things to be considered, and the first of these is the ground on which redemption is effected. We have already pointed out that the heart of God is its source, even as the apostle speaks, "All things are of God." And, indeed, grace can never be entered into or apprehended until it is perceived that redemption, with all its blessed fruits, is but the expression of the eternal love of God. (See Rom. 8: 28-39; Eph. 1; Titus 3: 5-7, etc.) But God Himself, being what He is, was powerless to act until He could be just as well as the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. But now He justifies us freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 3: 24.) It was therefore the death of Christ, the atonement for sin which He thereby made, which laid the foundation of our redemption; or, to speak more accurately (for redemption signifies a buying back), the blood of Christ was our ransom price — the price paid for our redemption. Two scriptures will explain this. "The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life" (and "the life is in the blood") "a ransom for many." (Matt. 20: 28.) Again, "Redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1: 18, 19.)

But what were we, it might well be asked, to need such a ransom? We were poor slaves of Satan, afflicted with hard bondage, even as the Israelites were bowed down under the cruel yoke of Pharaoh. And not only were we under the enemy's power, but we were there because of our sins; and thus, at the same time, under the just judgment of God. Until therefore the question of our sins, as also that of the sins of Israel, was settled, God was not free in righteousness to act for our deliverance. Thus, when He went through the land of Egypt in judgment, His own people were as guilty as their oppressors, and nothing but the blood of the passover lamb ransomed

them from the destroyer's stroke. "When I see the blood," Jehovah said, "I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12: 13.) For that blood, shadowing forth that of Christ, answered all His holy claims, and, covering up their guilt from His sight, as well as substituting for their guilt its own preciousness before His eye, effectually screened them from His wrath as the holy Judge. So with ourselves. We were guilty sinners, and had all come short of the glory of God; and as such were exposed to the condemnation and doom of sin. But God was gracious, and interposed, saying, as it were, "Deliver them from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." (See Job 33: 24.) And that ransom was the precious blood of Christ. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is an immense thing for the soul to perceive the simple truth, that God gave His only begotten Son; that it was He — He who knew what we were, and what the full extent of His claims upon us — who also provided our passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5: 7), and who declares that His blood is an all-sufficient ransom for all who receive His testimony to its value. (1 Tim. 2: 6.) For if He is satisfied who can be dissatisfied? It is He, and He alone, who can estimate its adequacy as our ransom; and hence the word to Israel was, "When I" (I, the Judge) "when I see the blood, I will pass over you."

This, then, constituted the first part of redemption — the payment of the ransom. This was done in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the shedding of His blood, when His soul was made an offering for sin, whereby He made a full, perfect, and everlasting atonement to God. The next step is the connection of those to be redeemed (we follow the order of the redemption of Israel from, Egypt) with the work of Christ, with the value of His blood. In the case of the Israelites, the manner in which this was effected is clearly seen. Had they even slain the passover lamb, and had they done nothing more, the death of the lamb alone would not have secured their immunity from judgment. The command was to take a bunch of hyssop, to dip it in the blood in the basin, and to sprinkle it upon the lintel and the two sideposts of the doors of their houses. It was the blood sprinkled therefore in the obedience of faith that procured their deliverance. The fact of the death of the lamb, and the collecting its blood in the basin, would have availed them nothing, save to increase their condemnation; but the moment they acted in faith, and put the blood upon their doors, they were infallibly safe. It is faith still that links us with the value of the blood of Christ. We thus react that God has set forth Christ as a propitiation through faith in His blood; and again, that we are justified by His blood, this being the meritorious cause of our justification, if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. (Rom. 3: 25; Rom. 5: 9.) Redemption has been wrought out through the death and resurrection of Christ, and His presence at the right hand of God is the proof of it; but we could never know redemption for ourselves unless we have been brought, through faith, under the value of His precious blood. It is grace, and grace alone, that saves us; but it is grace through faith, even though this, as well as the grace, is the gift of God. (Eph. 2: 8.)

The blood then had been shed, and in the obedience of faith it had been sprinkled; and now God stepped in to redeem. This was in accordance with His message through Moses, "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." (Exodus 6: 6.) God who, being holy, had necessarily been against His people because they were sinners in Egypt, could now, consistently with all that He was, be for them on account of the

blood of the lamb. And the blood of the lamb, under which they were sheltered, was the sole ground of His subsequent acting on their behalf.

Let us then trace out what He did in their redemption. First, God brought them out of Egypt by His power. As another has said, applying the truth to ourselves, "Sheltered from the judgment of God by the blood we are delivered by His power that acts for us, from the power of Satan, the prince of this world: The blood keeping us from the judgment was the beginning. The power which has made us alive in Christ, who has gone down into death for us, has made us free from the whole power of Satan which followed us, and from all his attacks and accusations." For the Red Sea, through which God brought His people, and which for ever delivered them from Egypt, was, in type, the death and resurrection of Christ, wherein He met the whole force of death and judgment, as well as the power of the enemy on His people's behalf. Hence redemption is not spoken of until they are on the other side of the sea of death and judgment, on the shores of which they beheld also their enemies dead. Then they could sing, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed." (Exodus 15: 13.) In Egypt they were perfectly sheltered by the blood; but now through their passage across the Red Sea, and Jehovah's acting for them in it, they were redeemed from Egypt and its doom, and from death, judgment, and the power of Satan.

But there was still more. No sooner had the word redemption escaped their lips than, as taught of the Holy Spirit, they added, "Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." All their enemies would melt away, and He who had brought them out, would "bring them in, and plant them in the mountain" of His inheritance, "in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for them to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established." (Exodus 15: 13-17.) And all this, we repeat, was the fruit of the sprinkled blood, and nothing less than this was full redemption. When across the Red Sea, and about to commence their pilgrim march through the wilderness, they were surely God's redeemed people, for in truth they had been delivered from their bondage, and set free to serve Jehovah; but not yet were they in the place prepared for them, not yet therefore in the enjoyment of what belonged to them in God's purposes of grace in their redemption. (See Ex. 3: 16, 17; Ex. 6: 6-8.) The blood of the Passover Lamb, in fact, secured not only their passage across the Iced Sea, but also their journey through the wilderness, the drying up of the waters of the Jordan, and their possession of the land of promise.

If now we refer to redemption, as found in the New Testament, - we shall see how fully the reality answers to the type. But it must be remembered that He, who was the Passover Lamb of God's own providing, took the sinner's place in His death, and that therefore when He arose from the dead, in virtue of His precious blood, redemption, eternal redemption, was accomplished. (See Heb. 9: 12; Heb. 13: 20.) The blood of atonement was the ransom-price of His people, and God has declared His infinite satisfaction with it, in that He hath raised Him up from the dead, and given Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. (1 Peter 1: 20, 21.) It is on this account that Peter can write, that we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; for as soon as we have been brought, through faith, under the value of His sacrifice, we possess in title all the blessings that have been secured by the redemption which He has obtained. We say in title, for not yet are we in the enjoyment of all the results of the work of Christ. Already we are redeemed as to our souls; for

God, on the foundation of the work of Christ, because of the value of the precious blood under which we are resting, has even now "delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." (Col. 1: 13.) This is a present blessing; and in this aspect we can say that we are redeemed, that we have been brought out from the house of bondage, out of Egypt; that through the death and resurrection of Christ we have been turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. (Compare Col. 1: 13-15.) For in truth Satan's power has been for ever broken; and we, with death and judgment behind us, have been brought to God.

But this is not all. The apostle Paul teaches that we are waiting "for the adoption, the redemption of our body," and that this is already secured to us by the fact that we possess now the firstfruits of the Spirit. (Rom. 8: 23.) This is in harmony with the truth of this epistle; for, as he shows in Romans 6, having been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Divine power therefore will act once again at the coming of the Lord, and will rescue even the bodies of His people from the corruption in which they lie, and will fashion them like unto the body of the glory of Christ, and thus complete the redemption of His people. In the epistle to the Ephesians there is another aspect of blessing, according to the truth there exhibited.\* The Holy Spirit of promise is thus said to be the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession; and we are exhorted not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Eph. 1: 14; Eph. 4: 30.) These scriptures show unmistakably, especially if we remember that, according to Eph. 1: 3, it is in Christ we have redemption through His blood, that the full fruition of the redemption work of Christ is not possessed until the whole church is presented to Him in the glory. Now we have the salvation of our souls, also our place in the heavenlies in Christ, we are fully secured against all difficulties, dangers, and enemies, our bodies will be raised from the dead, or changed, if the Lord comes before death, when death will be thus swallowed up in victory; and finally the whole church, every member of which will be conformed to His image, will be presented unto Christ a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, to be His companion both in the glories of the kingdom, as well as in those of eternity. All this, and whatever more of blessing there may be, is included in redemption, and will be the glorious result of the eternal value of the blood of Christ to God,†

\*It would be going too far in this fundamental paper to pursue this remark to its full issue; but the reader will be interested to observe that the special character of redemption in each epistle is determined by the teaching of the epistle. Thus in 1 Peter and in Hebrews it is the redemption of the soul. In Romans the body, as we have seen, is included; in Ephesians and Colossians we are carried to our position before God. And hence it is, "*In whom* we have redemption," etc.; while in Corinthians we are said to be "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . redemption."

†The question of "purchase" is outside of the above subject. It may be well, however, to remark that all men are "purchased," on the ground that the Lord tasted death for every man. (See also John 17: 2; Rom. 14: 9.) He is therefore Lord of all. Hence Peter speaks of false prophets, who denied the Lord that bought (not redeemed) them. (2 Peter 2: 1.) In Matthew it is also said that He bought the field for the sake of the treasure in it. (Matt. 13.) Redemption is applied only to God's people. Purchase is sometimes used of them, as, for example, in 1 Cor. 6: 20; 1 Cor. 7:

23, etc., to indicate that as so bought they belong wholly to God; and it is also employed in the sense stated above of all men. Ransom, as shown in the paper, is applied to the laying down of the life of the Lord Jesus, His blood-shedding as the ransom price for the redemption of His people. E. D.