

DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION

- I. Introduction.
 - A. Redemption is one of the foundational teachings that belong to the broad category of doctrines that are part of the general realm of soteriology.
 - B. In the process of progressive revelation, this concept began in terms of physical redemptions (buying something back) and has been advanced to teach moral and spiritual conceptions (related to the soul and the forgiveness of sins).
 - C. Originally, the Hebrew verbs dealt with the payment required for the transfer of ownership in commercial terms and with redemption/deliverance from various troubles. Job 5:20, 6:23; Ps. 25:22
 - D. While the Old Testament usages of the term have little to do with the concept of sin, the New Testament deals with redemption almost exclusively in those terms. Ps. 49:8; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14
 - E. While we would not argue that God is the Deliverer from all misfortune into which man falls, the Scriptural emphasis in the New Testament moves increasingly toward the principle of deliverance from sin.

- II. Vocabulary.
 - A. Hebrew vocabulary.
 1. גָּאֵל (ga'al), the primary meaning of this verb is to fulfill the part of a kinsman and to redeem one's relative from difficulty or danger.
 - a. גֹּאֵל (go'el), this participial form of the verb became a noun in its own right and is used to denote the kinsman redeemer.
 2. פָּדָה (padhah), this verb basically denotes the transfer of ownership from one to another through the payment of a price or some equivalent substitute.
 - B. Greek vocabulary.
 1. ἀγοράζω (agorazo), verb, 3X, literally, to buy, purchase, or do business in the marketplace. Figuratively, to be set free from sin, using the analogy of buying a slave's freedom with a price paid by a benefactor.
 2. ἐξαγοράζω (exagorazo), verb, 4X, literally, to buy out from, to buy back; figuratively to deliver or redeem.
 3. λυτρόω (lutroo), verb, 3X, only used in middle/passive in the New Testament; in middle, to set free or deliver; passively, to be redeemed, to be set free.
 - a. λύτρωσις (lutrosis), f.noun, 3X, the act of providing a ransom, to release one from slavery or captivity. Lk. 2:38
 - b. λύτρον (lutron), n.noun, 2X, the price paid for release from slavery or captivity, the means by which one is set free. Matt. 20:28
 - c. λυτρωτής (lutrotes), m.noun, 1X, one who sets slaves or captives free, a liberator or deliverer. Acts 7:35
 - d. ἀντίλυτρον (antilutron), n.noun, 1X, the price paid or means used to set someone free from captivity or bondage. The first part of the compound emphasizes the principle of substitution. I Tim. 2:6

- e. ἀπολύτρωσις (apolutrosis), f.noun, 10X, literally, the action of buying back a slave or captive through payment of a ransom; hence to set free or release. The preposition ἀπό (apo) indicates movement away from the condition.

III. Definition and description.

- A. Webster defines the act of redemption as regaining possession of something by the payment of a stipulated price, to repurchase.
- B. There are two distinct elements contained in the concept of redemption; the first deals with the deliverance from the situation, which is viewed as something that binds or oppresses the individual.
- C. The second element focuses on the positive movement of the one who has been relieved from his burden and the resultant deliverance into a better and fuller life.
- D. Redemption is simply deliverance from some sort of bondage, a release of someone or something from an alien power that has a claim on it.
- E. The biblical idea of redemption also involves the deliverer and what he must do to effect the deliverance.
- F. What he must do or the price he must pay is known as the redemption price or ransom.
- G. Release from the claim must be effected by someone who, for whatever reason, has a prior or more fundamental claim toward what is to be delivered.
- H. While it was occasionally possible for someone to deliver himself, more characteristically the redeemer was someone else. Lev. 25:47-49
- I. It should be noted that what the redeemer does in order to accomplish the redemption, or the price he must pay, is not always the same. Ex. 21:30
- J. Ryrie has pretty well summarized the major concepts of redemption as follows, “*People are redeemed FROM something--namely, from the marketplace or slavery to sin; people are redeemed BY something--namely by the payment of a price, the blood of Christ; people are redeemed TO something--namely, to a state of freedom.*”

IV. The need for redemption.

- A. Adam, the first member of the human race, was created perfect and sinless in the image of God and placed in perfect environment. Gen. 1:26-27, 2:7-8
- B. However, part of that image demanded that man be provided volition and be allowed to determine his own destiny.
- C. Adam used his volition to commit the first sin, which was imputed to the flesh that brought it forth, creating a genetic alteration that produced the sin nature, which is the source of death among mankind. Rom. 5:12; ICor. 15:22
 - 1. Paul’s argument in Romans 5 is that there is a universal effect, which is spiritual death, and there must be a universal cause, which he declares to be the sin nature.
 - 2. He argues that the personal sin of Adam is not an issue since people did not sin in the same manner that Adam did. Rom. 5:14 *The concept of the original sin of Adam being imputed to each individual and not the sin nature is not biblical and is remarkably close to Augustine’s doctrine of original sin.*
 - 3. This genetic sin nature (OSN/STA) is passed to his progeny via procreation, with the result that every subsequent human being is judged at birth with the same judgment passed on Adam for possession of a sin nature, which is spiritual death.
- D. Mankind is then viewed as being in bondage or slavery to the sin nature by virtue of our position in Adam, and in need of deliverance.

- E. Mankind is unable to deliver itself since it resides in a state of spiritual death and continues to perpetuate violations of the righteousness of God through personal sinning. IJn. 1:8,10
 - F. Therefore, the human race must have someone that is not under the penalty of spiritual death (not a slave) to set it free from its plight.
- V. The only qualified redeemer is Jesus Christ and the ransom price was His life, which is consistently referred to in terms of His blood. Rev. 1:5, 5:9
- A. In order to redeem those that were in bondage/slavery, the redeemer must first be a free man with no obligations and the necessary wherewithal in order to pay the ransom price.
 - B. By implication, anyone who would attempt to redeem the human race must not be born with a genetic sin nature, which brings the condemnation of spiritual death. Rom. 5:12 ...**the spiritual death through the agency of the sin nature...**
 - C. Christ was qualified on this front via the doctrine of the virgin birth, a doctrine which has never been effectively discredited. Lk. 1:26-38
 - D. However, the redeemer could not incur debt that would make him a slave or he would be disqualified from redeeming those that were enslaved.
 - E. Jesus Christ repeatedly demonstrated His righteousness and consistently made assertions, which were also not effectively discredited, that He did nothing apart from the will of the Father and had no personal sin. Jn. 8:28,46, 19:4; IICor. 5:21
 - F. Therefore, He was qualified to redeem those that suffered under the slavery of spiritual death, with its resultant personal sinning.
 - G. The redeemer also had to be willing to fulfill all that was necessary in order to effect the redemption; in this case, God's sovereignty and Jesus' human volition were in complete agreement. Lk. 22:42; Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:8
 - H. The work of bearing sins on the cross effectively purchased the freedom of all mankind (positionally only), and is universal in its scope. ITim. 2:5-6
 - I. In order to redeem us and set us free, Christ had to be willing to forfeit His spiritual life as the ransom price, which is consistently referred to as the blood of Christ. Rom. 3:25; Eph. 1:7, 2:13; IPet. 1:18-19
- VI. The results of His redemption.
- A. When considering this doctrine, one must recognize that we cannot effectively eliminate the response of the individual volition to the work of God.
 - B. In a case of physical slavery, it would be assumed that anyone in that position would be overjoyed at the prospect of being ransomed and set free.
 - C. However, one cannot employ this doctrine to suggest that redemption brings all men (universal salvation) to cleansing and forgiveness apart from the assent of their own wills. Rom. 3:27-28; Acts 13:39
 - 1. False teachers are viewed as those that have rejected the fact that Christ purchased their freedom through the ransom of Himself and will not participate in the benefits of redemption. IIPet. 2:1
 - D. Therefore, Christ provided His redemption in only a positional sense; God requires those that would experience deliverance and the resulting freedom to accept their redemption by faith. Gal. 3:22; Rom. 3:24-25a
 - E. The first issue we should address deals with the ransom payment that was required to obtain the freedom of the human race.
 - F. Some have suggested that the ransom price was paid to Satan, who is viewed as being the slave owner.

1. Some of the early church fathers viewed the atonement as a victory over Satan, procured through the ransom of Christ.
 2. The view held by Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine was that the ransom was paid to Satan, since he held humanity captive until Christ came.
 3. This view was by no means universal; Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and many of the other Reformers did not accept it.
- G. However, this is not taught anywhere in the Bible and the concept of redemption is never spoken of in terms of a payment to Satan.
- H. At issue is the righteousness of God and our violations of that righteousness, which flow directly from our position in Adam; therefore, the concept of redemption is linked with the doctrine of propitiation in Romans 3:24-25.
- I. Redemption is defined in a number of passages in terms of the great reality of the forgiveness of sins, which comes from God and not from Satan. Isa. 44:22; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14
- J. Since mankind is viewed as being under a curse (God requires +R, which we cannot and will not deliver), Christ redeems us by providing what God's righteousness demands. Deut. 27:26
- K. Therefore, the next result of redemption is that we are freed from the curse of the Mosaic Law. Gal. 3:13; Rom. 8:1-3
1. The Mosaic Law cannot produce righteousness; all it can do is condemn those that do not produce the righteousness that it demands. Rom. 8:3
- L. The redemption that Christ provides forms the basis for the imputation of +R and the principle of justification. Rom. 3:24
- M. The payment of the ransom price is the basis for our Ph₂ sanctification. Eph. 5:25-26
- N. Redemption is the basis by which we can receive the adoption as sons, which again comes only from the exercise of our faith in Christ. Gal. 4:5; Jn. 1:12
- O. His sacrifice on our behalf provides the potential for SG₃ and the associated eternal blessings. Heb. 9:15

VII. The three aspects of redemption.

- A. It must be noted that redemption is both an act and a process in that the emphasis is on both the payment that frees one and the freedom that results.
- B. In other words, the purpose of redemption is not only to free the person from his burden but also to bring the redeemed to freedom and the experience of greater life. Gal. 5:1
- C. It should be clear that when Jesus Christ said that He came so **they might have life and might have it abundantly** that He was making provision for mankind to enjoy the life of God that was resident in Him. Jn. 1:4
- D. Therefore, the Ph₁ concept of redemption involves the ransoming of individuals from their pre-salvation existence and delivering them to the reality of life in Christ. Jn. 10:10

 1. That pre-salvation experience is described by Peter as being a life of futility, which we inherited from our ancestors. IPet. 1:18
 2. The grace of God was the basis for the work of Christ on the cross, which must be accessed by the principle of faith and becomes efficacious only to those that believe. Rom. 3:24,26
 3. This aspect of redemption involves redeeming the soul of the one that believes in Christ. Ps. 49:8
 4. We have been set free from the continual domination of the STA under which all unbelievers spend their days. Rom. 8:1-2

- E. The Ph₂ aspect involves the continuation of enjoyment of that spiritual life in Christ, which should be coupled with the knowledge of the previous redemption. ICor. 6:20; Col. 2:13
 - 1. We are exhorted to remember the fact that the redemption of our souls involved the greatest sacrifice in the history of the world and live our lives in a manner that is compatible with the will of our Redeemer. IPet. 1:14-18
 - 2. The Ph₂ purpose of our redemption is clearly set forth in the book of Titus and relates to a life that is characterized by zeal for Divine good production. Tit. 2:14
 - 3. There is an exhortation not to be taken captive by legalism in terms of salvation or spirituality, which is viewed as a return to slavery. Gal. 5:1; ICor. 7:23
- F. There is also a Ph₃ aspect of redemption that involves the physical body, which will ultimately be conformed to the perfect image of Christ. Rom. 8:23
 - 1. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the pledge that God fully intends to redeem the body in the future. Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30
 - 2. For the Church Age believer, redemption is fully accomplished at the rapture, when we will see Him for the first time. IJn. 3:2
- G. Therefore, the believer will ultimately be redeemed body, soul, and spirit, and conformed fully to the image of His Redeemer. Rom. 8:29; IJn. 3:2
- H. There is also a future redemption for the physical creation, at which time it will be freed from its slavery and enter a new phase of freedom. Rom. 8:21

VIII. Old Testament types of redemption.

- A. The doctrine of redemption is illustrated in Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt.
 - 1. Israel was being held in bondage in Egypt due to a change of power in the land and not through any fault of its own. Ex. 2:8
 - 2. God possessed a more fundamental right to the seed of Abraham than the Egyptians did since He had designated them as His people. Ex. 3:7,10
 - 3. Further, the promises to the patriarchs mandated that God give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham, which He could not do while they were in bondage to Egypt. Ex. 6:8
 - 4. In this case, pharaoh would not accept any ransom price and determined to keep God's people in bondage in opposition to the will of God. Ex. 7:3-4
 - 5. The ransom price was an exhibition of God's omnipotence and a series of judgments on the land of Egypt that devastated the Egyptians. Ex. 6:6
 - 6. The result of the ten plagues and the massive display of God's power was the release of the people. Ex. 13:3; Deut. 7:8
 - 7. Although God was the primary agent in delivering His people, Moses is designated as a redeemer in Acts 7:35 based on his part in leading God's people.
 - 8. The purpose and result of the release was entrance into a new and better life as seen in the conquest and inheritance of the land of Canaan. Ex. 23:20; Deut. 4:38
- B. The doctrine of redemption is next seen in the law of the first born.
 - 1. Since God spared the Hebrews from the final plague in Egypt, He established a claim on all the first-born male children and cattle, which were then to be dedicated to God's service. Ex. 13:2
 - 2. However, God replaced the first-born with the tribe of Levi and its cattle and dedicated them to His service. Num. 3:12-13,41,45
 - 3. Since there were not enough of them to provide a substitute for all the first-born, God required the Israelites to redeem the remaining first-born with a sum of money. Num. 3:46-51

4. This method released the first-born from God's claim on them and restored them to their lives and families.
 5. From this time forward, the first-born male children were redeemed by the payment of the required ransom. Ex. 13:12-13, 34:19-20
 6. This was designed to typologically represent the reality that Jesus Christ would ransom us by means of the proper payment; the coin of the realm is His blood.
 7. The first-born of all unclean animals was to be redeemed with a lamb or else the owner was required to break the neck of the animal as portrayed by the donkey. Num. 18:15; Ex. 34:20
 - a. The donkey was an unclean animal, which represents the human race with its need to be redeemed or suffer the consequences.
 - b. The donkey that was redeemed represents the segment of humanity that is positive and the substitute lamb pictures Jesus Christ.
 - c. The neck is a regular method of portraying the doctrine of volition, and the stiff neck represents negative volition. Deut. 10:16; IIChron. 30:8; Acts 7:51
 - d. The donkey that was not redeemed represents negative volition and the breaking of its neck portrays the negative unbeliever and his final disposition in the lake of fire, which is the second death.
- C. The law of the kinsman redeemer forms the last Old Testament type of the doctrine of redemption. Lev. 25:23-28,39-55
1. While it was occasionally possible for someone to deliver himself, more characteristically the redeemer was someone else.
 2. In the case of the kinsman redeemer, it was the nearest blood relative who because of his position in the family possessed the right and the obligation of redemption.
 3. One that had the right as a blood relative to redeem persons or property, whether he exercised it or not, was called the redeemer (Heb. *go'el*).
 4. The three things that were required of the *go'el* was that he must be a blood relative, he must be willing to redeem, and have the means to actually redeem the person or object in question.
 5. In the case of redeeming another person, the redeemer must have the added qualification of being free himself; a slave could not redeem another slave.
 6. In effect, the kinsman redeemer was a wealthy benefactor, a blood relative who could free the debtor by paying the required ransom price.
 7. The kinsman redeemer had the right to redeem property (Lev. 25:23-28), other persons (Lev. 25:39-55), and the right to act as the blood avenger. Num. 35:12-27 *See Doctrine of the Kinsman Redeemer*
 8. The incarnation qualified God the Son to act as our kinsman redeemer, redeem the human race, and ultimately restore the planet to its rightful heirs. Rev. 5:9