

VIGIL



Volume XXXVII No. 1
January/February 2009
REDEMPTION

REDEEMED, HOW I LOVE TO PROCLAIM IT!

Ashley Kizer

It was Fanny Jane Crosby who wrote, “Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it! Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; Redeemed through His infinite mercy, His child and forever I am.” She was born in 1823 to humble parents in Southeast, New York, and at the age of six weeks she became the victim of a medical malpractice that left her blind for the rest of her life. However, this physical loss did not seem to discourage her from being one of the most well-known and prolific hymn writers of all time. Songs such as “Blessed Assurance,” “All the Way My Savior Leads Me,” and “Rescue the Perishing” came first from her lips, and she was also known for her devout prayer life and her memorization of large passages of scripture.¹

Mrs. Crosby could have chosen to be bitter about her inability to see the material world around her, but instead she decided to rejoice in the blessings found in Christ Jesus (cf. Ephesians 1:3). She learned to

“...walk by faith, not by sight...” (2 Corinthians 5:7). She could say as did Paul, “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities” (2 Corinthians 12:10). For Christ had said, “...my strength is made perfect in weakness” (v. 9). Are we able to glory in our weaknesses, knowing that Christ has seen fit to give His life for our sakes? Paul said he could endure the pains of life “...for Christ’s sake...” (v. 10).

Both Mrs. Crosby and the Apostle Paul came to the same realization when they learned that the blood of Jesus had redeemed them. Whereas Mrs. Crosby wrote, “I sing, for I cannot be silent,” Paul wrote by inspiration, “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:16)! It is the natural reaction for a mortal to rejoice when he or she has learned his or her value in Christ, for otherwise “we are of all men most miserable” (1 Corinthians 15:19). Those Christians who understand the concept of redemption are the most evangelistic because “the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus

judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead...” (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Christians love to proclaim our redemption because we are so happy! The Psalmist wrote, “My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed” (Psalms 71:23). There are some who choose not to sing during our worship services. Could it be that they do not fully understand and appreciate their redemption in Christ Jesus? Happiness is a natural response to redemption. After the Ethiopian eunuch had been baptized by Philip, “he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39). “Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (Isaiah 51:11).

Continued on page 16

¹ Osbeck, Kenneth. *101 Hymn Stories*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1982.

EDITORIAL

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE REDEEMED?

Ronnie Hayes

Redeemed – Is that just one of those Bible words like Nebuchadnezzar or superfluity? What does it mean to be redeemed?

According to Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Greek Words, there are two Greek words that are used for redeem. “(1) Exagorazo – denotes to buy out (ex for ek) especially of purchasing a slave with a view to his freedom, and (2) Lutroo – to release on receipt of ransom” (263). Vines goes on to add a note concerning both words, “While both No. 1 and No. 2 are translated to redeem, exagorazo does not signify the actual redemption, but the price paid with a view to it, lutroo signifies the actual deliverance, the setting at liberty” (263). So, when we are looking at the term “redeemed” it is dealing with the price paid and freedom provided.

How does this help me as a student of God’s word even if I know nothing about the Koine Greek language? It appears to this writer that the New Testament will bear out the emphasis of the Greek in the context of your translation. The term lutroo is used 10 times in the New Testament. 7 out of the 10 times are in Paul’s writings (cf. Romans 3:24; 8:23; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:7, 14; 4:30; Colossians 1:14). Strong emphasis seems to be placed in these passages on the deliverance or setting at liberty. Paul puts it this way, “being then made **free from sin**, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:18). David J. Williams in his book,

Paul’s Metaphors: Their context and character, writes:

“When Paul speaks of ‘redemption through the blood’ in Ephesians 1:7 he means that the blood of Christ was the cost at which the freedom of Christians was bought. In Romans 3:24-25, he declares that believers ‘are justified by [God’s] grace...through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God intended...as a propitiation by his blood” (123).

He then goes on to say:

“The price of redemption is not always mentioned. In 1 Corinthians 1:30 Paul simply says that Christ is our wisdom (all that we need to know as far as God is concerned), for Christ is our ‘righteousness from God, our holiness and our redemption’. In Col. 1:14 he asserts that in Christ ‘we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins’. These verses say nothing of what it cost Christ to redeem us...Still, Paul never entirely loses sight of the cost in his use of the term ‘redemption” (123,124).

What can we learn from a study of the term “redeemed”? First, we can get a better understanding of the word. “To redeem is to rescue or deliver from enthrallment from which one cannot deliver himself” (David Lipscomb. New Testament Commentaries on Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. p. 258).

Secondly, we can realize the great need to be redeemed. It is difficult to get individuals to do anything unless they see a need. How many of us are good about having those “annual check-ups” with our doctors? What most folks do is wait until they get completely down and then they go to the doctor. I admit it. I’m one of those who just dread going to the doctor, but I will go when I get in enough pain. The same is true in the spiritual realm. Many don’t see the need to “Go To Church” or “Live Godly”. Many feel like they don’t need a redeemer. Why? Because they don’t see where they are and that is in sin, separated

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18,19).

from God (cf. Isaiah 59:1,2)! Paul reminded the brethren at Rome, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Some will try to deny they are in sin but they are simply deceiving themselves. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). Other will try to redeem themselves to no avail! “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin” (Proverbs 20:9)? We can’t pay the price. This is why we need a redeemer.

Lastly, we can give thanks to God for the redeemer. Who willingly paid the ultimate price to set us free! “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7). “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:14). “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). And because of that price paid we can be liberated from sin. “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:18).

The question for each of us to answer is, “Have we been made free from sin by the blood of the Savior?” Have we been “REDEEMED?”

WHAT IS THE PRICE OF REDEMPTION?

Brian Gentle

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." (1 Corinthians 7:23). The word "price" simply means the cost at which something is obtained¹. In Hebrews 9:11-12 the Bible says, "*But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*" The word "redemption" "...denotes to buy out, especially of purchasing a slave with a view to his freedom."² To answer this question, what is the price of redemption, one must comprehend the nature of the "price" both for God/Jesus and us.

The price is **CONSEQUENTIAL**. Due to the sin of man (Romans 5:12), there had to be an answer for it. That is...there was a consequence. Jesus was/is that answer, or the consequence (Romans 5:8). The same is true today. There is a consequence for sin...death (Romans 6:23). Today's society believes that one does not have to be held accountable for a wrong committed. However, sin demands consequence. In reference to Genesis 1:11, 21, 24; Exodus 21:23-25; and Galatians 6:7-8, Batsell Barrett Baxter says,

"All three of the passages just noticed are emphasizing the same basic fundamental principle. What we have, we get. What we give, we receive. What we sow, we reap. It is God's law of sowing and reaping. To call it by a different name, it is God's law of cause and effect. It is one of the most fundamental of all of the basic principles that one discovers through the reading of God's word. In all realms, in every respect of life, through all the centuries it has been proved that what we sow that we also reap."³

He later makes four great points about Galatians 6:7-8. In short they are: 1) we reap exactly what we sow, 2) we reap more than we sow, 3) we reap longer than we sow, and 4) lastly concerns the time when the joy of pleasure comes from the sowing-reaping activity...all right human relationships come to their fullest enjoyment in the reaping.⁴ The time one sows is nothing compared to the time one will reap in eternity.

The price is **COSTLY**. Again, sin demands consequence, and Christ paid the ultimate price. It cost Him His body and His blood. The Hebrew writer says, "*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*" (Hebrews 9:14) and later he writes, "*By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*" (10:10). Redemption must move us to self-sacrifice. Someone said if redemption came cheap it would be worth nothing. In fact Jesus tells us to count the cost (Luke 14:27-33). Many in the church today have lessened the cost of being a Christian. That means we are paying a high price on things that do not matter. How much is eternal salvation worth to you? How much are you willing to give for this great "treasure?"

Lastly, the price is **COMPLETE**. Christ's sacrifice on the cross was once and for all (Hebrews 10:10). There was no more need for the blood of bulls and goats (Hebrews 10:4). This was noticed back in the Old Testament. "*And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the*

oppressors, and he shall send them a savior, and a great one, and he shall deliver them." (Isaiah 19:20) What the law could not do, Christ could. When He cried from the cross, "it is finished" all that was done from Genesis 3 till then was fulfilled. Nothing was left undone. He expects our complete devotion to Him. If we are going to make it to that "pearly city" we must completely obey Him in all areas of our life. He wants all of our heart, soul, and mind. (Matthew 22:37)

On a flight to California, Penelope Duckworth, a chaplain at Stanford University, talked with a Christian woman who had adopted a Jewish daughter. She explained that after Hitler had annexed Poland, the Nazis came to her village to round up Jews. She had been shopping near the train station where German soldiers were loading Jews into rail cars. Those helpless victims were destined to die in a concentration camp. That woman saw a soldier pushing a Jewess toward the station, and she had a little girl toddling behind. He stopped her and demanded, "Is she your daughter?" The terrified mother looked straight into the Christian woman's eyes, who then was standing nearby and said, "No, the child is hers." From that moment the Christian woman took that Jewish girl as her own daughter. By grace, God has claimed us for His own. We were condemned as sinner and were powerless to save ourselves. Heading for the second death, the very God we rebelled against has redeemed us through Jesus' death on the cross. The price of redemption was high, but the debt has been paid in full. A sure investment for you and your family is to take up the cross and follow Him. (Matthew 16:24).

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¹ Merriam-Webster's Dictionary.

² Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.

³ "The Consequence of Sin;" A sermon delivered by Batsell Barrett Baxter on November 27, 1966 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P.M. ⁴ Ibid.

THE NEED FOR REDEMPTION

Chance Hicks

The New Testament emphasizes repeatedly the work of Christ as it deals with the redemption of mankind. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12). Christ is described as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Christ died to redeem, or purchase the freedom with a ransom, the church (Acts 20:28). Why did Christ die to purchase redemption for mankind? Why does man need purchased freedom through the ransom of Christ? The answer can be summed up in one word: **Sin**.

Entrance of Sin

Sin entered the world with the first man and the first woman in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-21). Satan, in the form of a serpent, tempted Adam and Eve with the fruit from the forbidden tree (Genesis 3:4, 5). Both Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit transgressing the law, which God had given unto them (Genesis 2:17; cf. 1 John 3:4). Adam, then, opened the door for sin and its consequences to enter into the world. Paul wrote, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have

sinned" (Romans 5:12). Adam opened the door to allow sin into the world, but Adam's sin is not charged to my account. Individuals are not held guilty for the sin of Adam, but they are held guilty for their own sins: "The **soul that sinneth, it shall die**. The son **shall not bear the iniquity** of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20; emp. added CH).

Extent of Sin

Sin entered the world by Adam, but sin did not stop in the Garden of Eden. It continued to plague man and continues to plague man even now. Robert Taylor wrote in his book *Studies in Romans* concerning sin: "It has not vacated earthly premises a single hour since Genesis 3" (p. 100). In fact, the extent of sin is so great that it includes all of mankind. Only Jesus Christ has lived a life on the earth without sinning (Hebrews 4:15). Paul wrote, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans. 3:23). Every individual who has ever lived, apart from Christ, has transgressed and violated the law of God. This was a great problem because there was nothing than man could do to atone for his sin. Under the Law of Moses, animal sacrifices were offered, but even these could not atone for the sins of man (Hebrews 10:4). Man needed a Savior, a Redeemer, one who could make atonement for him, one who could pay the ransom!

Effects of Sin

An effect is a consequence or the result of a cause. What, then, is

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the effect of sin? One immediate effect of sin was the physical death of man. Adam's sin resulted in his removal from the Garden of Eden and separation from the tree of life which would have provided man with never-ending life (Genesis 3:22, 23). Paul wrote that death was a consequence of sin, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin..." (Romans 5:12). "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:21-22). Sin committed by man deserves death: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

End of Sin

What is the end result of sin? Where does sin lead if it has not been removed by the blood of Christ? The end result of sin is eternal punishment in the lake, which burns with fire and brimstone. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthews 25:41).

Man's only hope for deliverance from eternal punishment is redemption through the blood of Christ our Savior. Man needs redemption because of sin and the grave consequences which sin carries.

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ARE THERE ANY CONDITIONS IN REDEMPTION?

Jerry Martin

The term "redemption" means "lit., a releasing, for (on payment of ransom)." The apostle Paul declares that the payment for our release from the penalty due for our sins was the blood of Christ. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). The apostle Peter also connected the blood of Christ to this idea of redemption or ransom. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19). With the price for our redemption being so high, are there any conditions in redemption?

The plan for redemption is conditional. God demonstrated his love for man in providing His Son as the perfect redemptive sacrifice. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." yet, God demands faith on man's part, "...that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Without faith in God, His Son, and His Word, it is impossible to please God, or be redeemed from one's sins (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24). God desires for all men to be saved through having their souls purified. But, such salvation and purification comes through a knowledge of, and an obedience to, the truth (1 Timothy 2:4; 1 Peter 1:22). Christ, the author of the redemptive plan, both demonstrates and demands obedience. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the

author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrew 5:8, 9). If man wants the redemption God has provided through the blood of His Son, he must comply with the terms of God's redemptive plan.

The place of redemption is conditional. Before the foundation of the earth God planned to provide the blessings of redemption in Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love...In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:3, 4, 7). "In whom" contextually is "in Christ" (1:6). This redemption is in Christ Jesus, which means that one does not come into contact with the benefits of Jesus' death until they do whatever is necessary to be "in Christ". "In Christ" is where the blood of Jesus is available, therefore, one has not benefited from the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross until they are "in Christ." So, whatever stands between a person and being "in Christ" stands between them and the redemptive blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13). One gets into Christ through baptism (Galatians 3:26, 27; Romans 6:3, 4). If one wants redemption from his sins he must comply with the conditions for entrance into Christ.

The purpose of redemption is conditional. God's plan and place for redemption produces and procures a people who live and walk in newness of life. "For the grace of God that

bringth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12). Those redeemed from impurity are expected to maintain their purity and perform works that please their Redeemer. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:13, 14). The apostle Peter describes those redeemed and their importance by demonstrating God's redemptive plan to a world still in darkness. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). If one is redeemed from sin he ought to live a life that is pleasing to his Redeemer.

Those who recognize and comply with the conditions of redemption will appreciate the inspired assessment of the apostle Paul: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:16-18).

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SALVATION: GOD'S PART AND MAN'S PART

Michael Light

One passage of scripture that even the most faithful of the Lord's people should be reminded of is Isaiah 55:7-9:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

For some reason we humans tend to fixate on certain elements of the scripture to the exclusion of others. When it comes to salvation many (if not most) people seem convinced that our being saved is completely by the grace of God. While it is true God's grace is the source of our salvation, there is more to it than just His grace.

As we look at the scriptures as a whole we find that there has always been two sides to salvation (God's side and man's side). God's love for us motivated Him to extend salvation to us. John 3:16 reminds us of the level of God's love for sinful man. God's will is that all men be saved (2 Peter 3:9).

However, there are multitudes of passages that clearly teach the responsibility of mankind to respond in obedient faith to the gospel delivered by God.

In fact in the very first gospel sermon Peter implored the crowd to, "save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Most rational people will likewise ask the same question posed on this same

occasion, "what shall we do" (Acts 2:37)? In Acts 9:6, Paul asked, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" In Acts 16:30 the Philippian jailor asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Many more verses could be cited, but these should be enough to make the point. The New Testament clearly teaches there are some things that must be done for a sinful man to be spiritually reunited with God.

As we review Bible history we can see a clear pattern of God's part and man's part in the various types of deliverances God provided. After the fall in the Garden God allowed Cain and Abel to worship Him (Genesis 4). But even in this earliest of worship settings God had given instructions and He expected them to be followed (Hebrews 11:4; Genesis 4:3-15).

When we look at the deliverance of Noah and his family it is obvious God started that scenario by selecting Noah as worthy of salvation. However, it would be false to assert that Noah was saved by God's grace alone. He had to labor in ship construction for roughly 100 years (Genesis 6). Had he failed to fulfill what the Lord asked he and his family would have perished with the rest (Genesis 6:22).

The deliverance of the city of Jericho into the hands of Joshua and the Israelites is a mirror event to the flood. God decided to give them the city but they still had to obey seven days of marching instructions

There has always been two sides to salvation -- God's side and man's side.

(Joshua 6). To argue it was all God and that their obedience was not necessary is to go contrary to everything taught in the Book.

Other examples could be given but these should suffice to establish the fact that the Old Testament shows a dual aspect to salvation. The same is true in the New Testament. While it is true God loves us and initiated the process through which we could come back to Him, we must come back to Him on His terms.

As we read the material contained in the New Testament we learn of our lost condition (Rom. 3:23). We learn that the fate of all who die in sin is eternal damnation (Matthew 24:33ff; Romans 6:23). God's love motivated Him to offer us salvation (Romans 5:8-10; John 3:16). He allowed His Son to die for us shedding His divine blood so we could be saved (Hebrews 1:3; 5:8-9; 9:12-17; 9:4; 13:12).

But just as mentioned above God gave us some obligations to comply with. To have our sins removed we are to: (1) listen to what God has said (Romans 10:17); (2) we are to believe who Jesus is and what He did for us (John. 3:16; Romans 10:17); (3) we are to repent of our past life – sins – (Luke. 13:3; Acts 17:30); (4) we are to confess our faith in Jesus (Romans 10:10; Mark. 16:16); (5) we are to be immersed in water for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38; Mark. 16:16); (6) we must live according to God's instructions (Matthew 7:24-27).

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VIGIL is published under the oversight of the elders of the Adamsville Church of Christ **Ronnie Hayes**, Editor, and **Chance Hicks**, Associate Editor. You may go to our website www.acoc.org to read and download archived issues of **Vigil**.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES CONCERNING REDEMPTION

Bobby Liddell

Redemption of man, by the blood of Christ, is the theme of the Bible, the "Scarlet Thread" that runs from Genesis through Revelation. After Jesus' ascension to the right hand of God, Paul wrote of our Savior: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14). Man's redemption has been made possible by the grace of God, through the sacrifice of Jesus (Hebrews 9:12-15). Centuries earlier, the Psalmist penned Psalm 40:6-8, and by inspiration, the writer of Hebrews applied these words to Jesus, and the "offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," by which He made "one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Hebrews 10:5-12).

Old Testament prophecies concerning redemption trace this "Scarlet Thread" of redemption from its beginning; that is, they are the revelation, the God-breathed Word, given through the centuries of Old Testament history, of God's plan for man's salvation (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7). Of course, these prophecies necessarily focus on the then future coming of the One who would be the "Redeemer" (Job 19:25), the Messiah. Of these future events, the Old Testament prophets knew only as God revealed them, and their predictive prophecies came to pass, proving them and their prophecies to be true (cf. Deuteronomy 18:20-22). The very first Old Testament messianic prophecy foretold the victory of Jesus (the seed of the woman) over Satan; thus, making possible man's: forgiveness through the perfect sacrifice of a risen Savior, restored fellowship with God, resurrection to eternal life, and ultimate return to the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:15; Luke 1:34-35; 1 John 3:8; 1 Peter 3:18).

To understand properly the prophecies concerning redemption, one must study the Old Testament from the standpoint of its primary message: the Messiah, Who brings salvation for sinful man, is coming (cf. Luke 24:44; Acts 26:22-23; 28:23). Later, the New Testament revealed that He is come (Matthew 1-Acts 1), and that He is coming again, "the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:24-28). Recognizing and understanding Old Testament prophecies concerning redemption should heighten one's appreciation for God's inspired Word, (Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Daniel spoke of kingdoms and peoples then unknown and unable to be known to him, or to any other man, by ordinary knowledge, but revealed in prophecy, and whose risings and fallings are now historically documented to have followed precisely the predicted pattern (Daniel 2). He did so in the context of a then future messianic kingdom, the church, a kingdom that would never be destroyed, over which Christ is King (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 16:19; 1 Timothy 6:15), and in which is redemption (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23).

Bible prophecy is often very specific and detailed. With God, accuracy is not accidental, nor is it incidental, but it is significant. Of Christ's birth, Isaiah prophesied: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). Isaiah did not prophesy just that the Messiah would be born, or that He would be born of just any woman (and man), or that he would be born of just any "young" woman, but that He would be born of a virgin. Matthew declares the birth of Jesus to be the exact fulfillment of

this prophecy of Isaiah (Matthew 1:22-23).

Bible prophecy is often in contrast to human reasoning. Who would dare to predict the Son of God would be: "despised and rejected; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...(Who) hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed...for the transgression of my people *was* he stricken...Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53:3-11). Of this One Who suffered so, God declared: "Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). What man would imagine that the Redeemer, of Whom the prophets wrote that He would be mocked (Psalms 22:7-8; Matthew 27:39-44), and crucified (Psalms 22:16; Mark 15:24), would be treated so?

The Old Testament prophets, in writing of man's redemption, showed sin's deception, folly, tragedy, and awful cost, but they also pointed to a better day when the prophesied Messiah, the Redeemer, would come bringing salvation, paying the ransom for lost man, and giving hope to all who would come to Him.

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Redeemed, How I Love To Proclaim It! By Ashley Kizer -----Continued from page 1

Christians love to proclaim our redemption because we want others to be redeemed. The Psalmist prayed for Israel, “Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles” (Psalms 25:22). Those who are purchased by the blood of the Lamb, have their souls redeemed “from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight” (72:14). “With the Lord *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption” (130:7). How do we comfort our friends and family members when they are hurting? Are we able to remind them about the promises of God? God is “the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God”

(2 Corinthians 1:3, 4). Is there anything more comforting than to know that our immortal Creator loved us enough to redeem our souls with the precious blood of His Son (cf. John 3:16)?

Christians love to proclaim our redemption because we are indebted to God. We may say as the Psalmist said, “Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth” (Psalms 31:5). No amount of money could buy back our salvation (cf. Isaiah 52:3). As Jeremiah put it in Lamentations 3:58, “...thou hast redeemed my life.” How can we ever repay our Lord for redeeming us from the curse of the law, “being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree...” (Galatians 3:13). Paul considered himself

“crucified with Christ,” and said, “For me to live *is* Christ...” (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21). Christ laid down His life for us, and at least we should be willing to deny ourselves (cf. John 15:13; Luke 9:23).

We should enjoy telling others about our redemption. “Let the redeemed of the Lord say *so*, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy...” (Psalms 107:2). Are you gladly proclaiming the redemption you enjoy in Christ, or are you striving to keep it a secret? If a crown of life is worth dying for, it is worth telling others about (cf. Revelation 2:10).

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