

Christ, Our Redeemer

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The words *redeem*, *redeemed*, *redeemer*, and *redemption* appear often in the Old Testament, forecasting a redeemer of God's people yet to come. The Jews and even the twelve apostles mistook these prophecies to mean a physical restoration of the worldly nation of Israel. In Luke 24:20-21, the twelve told the Lord after his resurrection, "The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel." In this context, Jesus chastised them: "25 He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." Luke 24:25-27. From the patriarchal age, the faithful understood that true redemption was the eternal redemption of the soul. Job, recording prior to Moses, said in Job 19:25-26, "But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth, and at last he will stand up upon the earth: 26 And after my skin, (even) this (body), is destroyed, Then without my flesh shall I see God (ASV)." Thus, it was clear, from the beginning that salvation was the redemption of the soul: "He redeemed my soul from going down to the pit, and I will live to enjoy the light." Job 33:28.

Both Jews and Gentiles Redeemed

God offered His son as a redeemer to both the Jew and Gentile. Of the Jews, Gal 4:4-5 reads, "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." Of the Gentiles, Gal 3: 14 similarly says, "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." Therefore, redemption was to Jew and Gentile alike. All mankind needed the redemption that God provided. Romans 3:23-25 teaches, "23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood." The redemption came through Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God (John 3:16), to all mankind. Paul wrote,

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Titus 2:11-14.

The Purchase Price of Redemption, the Blood of Christ

To redeem is to buy back, requiring a price to be paid. The purchase price of redemption is the blood of Christ. John 3:16 teaches, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." This eternal life is free to us, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom 6:23. Peter explained what happened in 1 Peter 1:18-21:

18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

The redeeming power and the forgiveness of sins are through the blood of Christ, in accordance with the will of God. Eph 1:7-8 teaches, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding."

Redeemed in the Church

Having said no to ungodliness and worldly passion and having said yes to upright and godly living (Titus 2:11-14), the redeemed are added to the church (Acts 2:47) at the point of their salvation from their sins. When asked what to do to attain this redemption from sin, Peter told them to repent and be baptized in Acts 2:37-38: "When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' 38 Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Those redeemed from sin by the blood of Jesus, shed upon the cross, become the church. Paul admonished the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:28-29, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood." The church, so redeemed, is holy, cleansed, and radiant, without stain or any blemish. Penitent and baptized believers are the redeemed, and the redeemed are the church, washed with the water and the word: "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." Eph 5:25-27

Our Eternal Redemption, A Guaranteed Inheritance

We are given the promised gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) who insures our eternal redemption. Paul wrote in Eph 1:13-14: "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory."

Through this gift of the promised Holy Spirit, we know that God eternally redeems us by the blood of Christ. Paul wrote in Rom 8:16-17, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." Therefore we, like Job, know that our bodies will be redeemed eternally with Christ and the Father: ". . . we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, . . . as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently." Rom 8:23-25

Conclusion

All heaven rejoices in the redemption of all mankind through the blood of Christ:

9 And they sang a new song:
"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation. Rev 5:9-10

Study Questions

1. Why did Job say that he knew that his redeemer lives? _____
2. What did God have to do with our redemption? _____
3. What did Christ have to do with our redemption? _____
4. What must we do to attain our redemption? _____
5. To what does the Holy Spirit bear witness? _____
6. Who is in the church? _____
7. What is our eternal hope? _____