

6 July 2014

God has redeemed us from the grave (Redeem Pt 4)

This is our fourth study on the word redeem. In our previous study we covered four points that focused on why God redeems His people:– (1) God Almighty redeemed His people in the Old Testament by His judgment, and (2) God Almighty redeems sinners in the New Testament by sending His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and (3) God Almighty never redeemed anyone in any age by corruptible things, and (4) God Almighty has offered redemption to everyone in all ages when they believe His words. In this study we ask what has God redeemed us from, and why? We seek to answer these questions from the Bible with four points, some we have briefly covered before, but today we do so in more detail:– (1) God has redeemed Israel from their enemies, and (2) God has redeemed us from the things of this world, and (3) God has redeemed us from death, and (4) God has redeemed us that we would come to the knowledge of the truth.

Let us add a little more detail to our points:

1. God redeemed Israel from their enemies.

Deut 13:5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn [you] away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in.

See also: 2Sam.7: 23, Mic 4:10, Ps.7: 1 & 136:24.

God redeemed Israel, He rescued, saved and delivered them from under the hand of their enemies. He redeemed generation after generation, each saw His redemption, they witnessed His saving grace. The children of Israel knew God was a part of something when they saw miracles of deliverance. He performed miraculous works, he redeemed them, rescued them from their enemies when they were out-numbered 100–1, God would smite their enemies so that both Israel and their enemies knew there was no other God like the Almighty! He alone redeemed His people Israel from under the hand of their enemies. You think the strength, and battle tactics of the Spartan warriors in the movie “300” were impressive. They have nothing on what God Almighty did for Israel, against each one of their enemies they faced in the wilderness, against each of the nations they defeated in the land of Canaan, the odds of them winning each battle were so remote that even the other nations heard about them and feared their God, such was the acknowledgement that it was not the skill of their warriors but the might and power of their God. They knew God was doing a new work when they saw a supernatural sign. It is for this reason that God performed signs and wonders for the early church as we see Acts 10: 7–16 with Peter, when the sheet came down from heaven, and as Paul taught in 1Cor.1: 24 – “Jews require a sign”. The book of Acts and many of Paul’s letters to the first century churches included miraculous signs to show the Jew that their God of the Old Testament was doing a new work in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Given that Paul went to the Jews first, and the church was first made up of Jews, the only way they were ever going to believe that God was doing a new work, is if they saw a miraculous sign, just as Thomas demanded to see, and then put his hands on, the nail marks of the Lord in Jn. 20: 25. If he did not see a miracle he would not believe. Why? Because that is how God showed Himself, that is how He proved to His people, and how His prophets proved to the people that He, the Lord, is God (see 1Kg.18: 37), He is God of gods (Ps.136: 2), He alone put fire on the altar for Elijah (1Kg.18: 38) and humiliated the prophets of Baal (1Kg.18: 27, 29).

Today, for those who live in war-torn countries like Iran and Syria, they would undoubtedly know that God Almighty of the Bible redeems them from their enemies, as each day that they are kept safe from their Muslim enemies would be a day that the Lord God has redeemed them. Just as God redeemed Israel in the Old Testament and His children today from under the hand of their enemies.

2. God has redeemed us from (a) all iniquity, (b) deceit and violence, and (c) destruction.

a) Tit.2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

See also: Ps.130:8

b) Ps.72:14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

c) Ps.103:4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

God has redeemed and purchased us through the blood of His only begotten Son (Acts 29: 28), He has saved our soul from deceit and violence, from all iniquity, and our life from destruction. What a phenomenal price to have paid for our sin, our filth, our iniquity! And He didn't redeem us when we were obedient, but "while we yet were sinners Christ died" (Rom.5: 8), and His sacrifice for our sin was only accepted by the Father and counted to us for righteousness because He was without sin. How? He stood on the word of God (Lk.4: 1-13), and in the strength of His heavenly Father through prayer. And in living a sinless life, His precious blood was sufficient to wash away every spot, every stain of sin that Satan holds over the lost.

On Friday on Queen street there was a man (named Gavin) that stood still long enough to share his history of being raised a Roman Catholic, and so being a "church-going man", but had sinned and fallen away. But then the Lord sent along a preacher to share the gospel with Gavin, and he heard how God had sent His Son to die for all of his sin on the cross, and if he believed that his sin was on Christ, and that God raised Him from the dead, then the blood of Christ would redeem him from all iniquity; there is no sin too great that would not be forgiven. And that there is no need for a place of future purging of his left-over sins for Christ to redeem in the future, and there no biblical evidence for a place called Purgatory.

But if God does redeem the saved sinner from all iniquity, all deceit & violence, and our life from destruction, then why does the believer continue to struggle with sin? Why do some Christians, new and old, backslide and allow the devil to snare them, and appear to give up on the Lord Jesus Christ? If we are redeemed, why does He not rescue us from the sin of this world as he rescued Israel from their enemies? Because our flesh lusts against the Spirit of God that resides within each believer, "and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye ought" (see Gal.5: 17). That is right, there is a battle going on within each believer, and the part that they feed the most, is the side that tends to assert the upper hand (as you might say). If they feed the flesh, the flesh remains snared by the devil, if they feed their spirit, then they grow in grace and in the knowledge of their God (2Pet.3: 18)

Nevertheless, the Scriptures say that God has redeemed "us from all iniquity", and purified "unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And He has redeemed our soul from "deceit and violence," and our "life from destruction". Because if He had not, we would still be in our sins. The only hope for any human being to be redeemed from their sin, their iniquity, their deceit, and violence, and destruction, is by the precious blood of Christ. You either believe the Bible, and therefore believe that Christ died for all your sin, or you do not believe.

So let us rejoice and be glad, let us share unceasingly the gospel of Christ to the lost, that they may have the opportunity to know of His redemption, to know that God has redeemed us from all deceit, violence, iniquity, and destruction, through Christ.

3. God has redeemed us from death

Ps.49:15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.
See also: Hos.13:14

In our previous point we mentioned that God has redeemed us from destruction. And the context of that destruction appears to be on the earth in the current moral depravation of this world and its acceptance of sin, iniquity, and filth, whilst despising that which is right and just in God's eyes. Whereas, the redemption established from our verse in Ps.49: 15 is clearly the grave, and therefore death, which is similar to the teaching given by Paul that the Lord Jesus gave us victory over death and the grave (1Cor.15: 55-57). This point tells something of the totality of God's redemption, the sufficiency of His saving grace in Christ, for Him to have power over death and the grave. And as we have previously mentioned, this instruction from the Scriptures on redemption excludes any possibility of a separate place of purging other than the cross of Christ, where he "purged our sins" (Heb.1: 3). Because if Christ's blood was not sufficient to wash away every sin, and every stain of iniquity, then we are all in our sin, and none of us are redeemed, as promised in the Scriptures (see Eph.1: 7, Col.1: 14 & Heb.9: 12). And if Christ's blood was not sufficient to wash away every transgression of man, then it is not feasible that He redeemed us from the power

of death and the grave, as is promised in our verse from Psalms. If God did redeem the saved man from the grave that also means he has redeemed, rescued and saved him from the pit of hell and everlasting destruction. Which is exactly what the Bible says will happen to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, those who place their trust in Him (Ps.9: 17) and believe the gospel (2Thes. 1: 8, 9). But if you know people who are caught up in other religions like the Jehovah's Witness (JW) who do not believe in the immortality of the soul (<http://e-watchman.com/life-death-and-beyond/>) then when a "Christian" dies they cease to exist until they are raised, when, according to the J.W, the righteous shall be bodily resurrected to live on the earth with Christ. And without going into all the detail the Bible says that the soul is immortal we encourage you to read an article in the NZ Protestant Vol.4, Iss. 1 Jan-July 2012, page 1. For now, let us suggest that if the JW is correct then our verse from Ps.49: 15, and others that point out that God has redeemed us from the grave, are false. Therefore, when any interpretation from passages like Gen.2: 7, include a denunciation of our soul being immortal, we know such private interpretations are incorrect when we adopt the rule that scripture interprets scripture.

God has redeemed the Christian, he has saved him, and given him victory over the grave. Let us become skilled in the word of righteousness that when the JW, and others who reject the Scriptures forsake Biblical doctrine for untruths, then we are able and ready to show them from the Holy Scriptures (not five different corrupt versions) that the work of Christ on the cross, has redeemed us from death, the grave and hell. Amen!

4. God redeemed us that all men would come to the knowledge of the truth

1Tim.2: 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

This point is a very interesting one with which to conclude this study, especially given our previous point, where we touched on false doctrines. Because this point which is taken from 1Tim.2: 4, says that the reason for God saving (by inference redeeming man through Christ), is that man would come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, when an unsaved man comes to the Scriptures he will never come to the knowledge of the truth just by reading the words on the page. He will only come to the knowledge of the truth, as distinct from error, when he believes the words of Scripture, in particular, the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who called Himself "the way and the truth" (Jn.14: 6). When a lost person calls on His name, he is saved, he is redeemed, and as such, he is then able to read the Scriptures, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, understand the words of God, and as such come to a greater knowledge of the truth. So, if Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, then how can any other man-made religion come to know the truth if they do so without coming to know Christ? They cannot! Hence God redeemed us that all men would come to the knowledge of the truth and the one who called Himself "the truth". Therefore, every "church" organisation that teaches works for salvation, and so rejects Christ's completed work on the cross, rejects His redemption, and does not know Christ and what He did for them on the cross, and therefore lacks knowledge of the truth, and is still in their sins.

Let us pray for those who are lost, that God would convict them of their sin, in righteousness, and in judgment, that they would come to know their need for a Saviour, and be redeemed, and come to the knowledge of the truth.

In this study we asked what has God redeemed us from, and why? We answered from the Bible with four points:- (1) God has redeemed Israel from their enemies, and (2) God has redeemed us from the things of this world, and (3) God has redeemed us from death, and (4) God has redeemed us that we would come to the knowledge of the truth.