

## Redemption – Bought at a Price

The underlying meaning behind the concept of redemption is that of 'buying back' something that had been lost, which did not have the capacity to retrieve itself.

*<sup>18</sup> 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 ancestors, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. <sup>20</sup> He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. (1Pet 1:18-21)*

This concept was well understood the secular world, but in Israel, the practice took on a theological dimension as part of the nation's worship of Yahweh through the required applications of God's Law.

The most touching expression of this is seen in the Book of Ruth, regarding the account of Naomi, who had moved to Moab with her husband Elimelech and two sons because of famine in Israel; both sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. However, over a ten year period, firstly, Elimelech died, and then her two sons died, leaving Naomi with two daughter's-in-law to look after.

Naomi received news from Israel that the famine was long over and life was good again there. So the decision was made to return to Israel, and Ruth decided to go back with Naomi. Because Elimelech and Naomi had left their land behind in moving to Moab, in returning to Israel, Naomi had no finance available to do anything with the land. Under Israelite law, it became the responsibility of a near-kinsman to purchase it from her in order to release finance for them, and to honour the family name.

In a beautiful story of God's divine foreknowledge, grace, and provision, resulting in respectful human interactions between Ruth and Boaz, Boaz was able to become the near-kinsman who redeemed Naomi and all that was hers. As a result, he married Ruth, fulfilling a promise he had made to her, and in the process of time became the great-grandfather of King David.

*<sup>8</sup> So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, 'Buy it yourself.' And he removed his sandal.<sup>9</sup> Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, 'Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. <sup>10</sup> I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his home town. Today you are witnesses!'*

(Ruth 4:8-10)

So, Boaz, while not the closest kinsman, was able to take that role when the man who was the closest kinsman declined the role. We can see clearly the desperate need that Naomi and Ruth were in with no resources other than their land, and no available finance to develop their land. This is precisely how redemption works – a guardian-redeemer, or close-kinsman, steps into the breach as a benefactor, buying back the property so that it remains within the family and the family name is honoured.

As we come to the New Testament, it is Jesus himself, who clearly establishes the purpose of his ministry in having come to take on human life on earth:

*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* (Mk 10:45)

Here, Jesus specifically states that his purpose in coming to earth in human flesh, was to pay the 'ransom price' in order to redeem us back to God, which only he, as the perfect Son of God/Son of Man, healing the breach between both God and us. He does this for us as our near-kinsman, buying us back and keeping us in God's family, and so honours God's name.

This very short and straightforward statement summarises everything that Jesus accomplished on our behalf and the manner in which it was done:

- The voluntary nature of his decision – he came to serve us.
- The costliness of his decision – he gave his human life for us.
- The substitutionary nature of his action – he did for us what we could not do.
- The free scope of God's intention – whosoever will, can come.

The Greek word-group is translated as 'redeem', 'ransom', 'redemption', 'redeemer', etc. The intent is always about a price being paid by someone else to secure freedom from a death penalty through the forgiveness of sins that they were unable secure for themselves.

A number of examples:

<sup>24</sup> *...and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ.* (Rom 3:24)

<sup>7</sup> *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.* (Eph 1:7)

As in the Old Testament, the emphasis in the New Testament is also strong, regarding the costliness, or sacrificial nature, of the redemption that Jesus provides through his blood – recognising the willing laying down of his human life for *our sins* on our behalf.

<sup>18</sup> *...you were redeemed...* <sup>19</sup> *...with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.* (1Pet 1:18-19)

<sup>19</sup> *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;* <sup>20</sup> *you were bought at a price.* (1Cor 6:19-20)

### **An In-depth Exposé of what Jesus Achieved for Us**

The writer of the Book of Hebrews opens up the thoroughly Hebraic understanding behind the Old Testament sacrificial system of offerings, which were all pointing toward the one great sacrifice that Jesus would undergo through his death, burial, and resurrection on behalf of humanity in Hebrews 9:11-15 – (read out in full and explain as I go)

<sup>12</sup> *He did not enter by means of the blood of goats or calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.* (Heb 9:12)

One last scripture passage to simply affirm everything that we have already looked at today:

<sup>3</sup> *This...pleases God our Saviour,* <sup>4</sup> *who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.* <sup>5</sup> *For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,* <sup>6</sup> *who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.* (1Tim 2:1-6)